# "Living in the Spirit of Christmas" INTRODUCTION

This week we pause to reflect on, and recover from, Christmas. During the holiday season so much of our energy and effort is focused on December 25<sup>th</sup> that when we finally pass that threshold, we may find ourselves depleted physically, emotionally and spiritually. Can we possibly carry on the "spirit of Christmas" as we look toward the New Year? Rather than packing away Christmas, let's unpack why we celebrate it and how that can bring about changes in our lives that last longer than a New Year's resolution.

## Ice Breaker (Optional):

Do you make New Year's resolutions? If so, what tops your list?

# STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

#### A Hope for Lasting Change

# Q1. Read Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14, Luke 2:10-12

When we make our New Year's resolutions, we only have a slim chance of keeping them. But God keeps His promises. What promises from Isaiah 9:6 and 7:14 were kept in Luke 2:10-12? What did the good news promise to bring to all people?

# Clarity in our lives

# Q2. Read Luke 2:20, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Peter 4:10-11

The news of the savior's birth had been revealed to the shepherds by the angels. What was the shepherds' reaction after they saw for themselves what the Lord had made known to them (see Luke 2:20)? What do 1 Corinthians 10:31 and 1 Peter 4:11 similarly clarify as our purpose? What are some of the things that we do to glorify God in our lives?

#### Motive

# **Q3.** Read 1 John 4:9, John 10:10, Ephesians 3:20-21, Philippians 1:6

You probably gave gifts to others this Christmas. God also gave you a gift. What was God's motive in giving His gift (1 John 4:9)? The Greek word for life in 1 John 1:9 is zoe meaning "the absolute fulness of life." Take a moment to envision what absolute fullness of life means to you. Now what does Eph 3:20 tell you about what God is

able to accomplish in your life? Paul was confident that God would accomplish His intended purpose in his life. What can you do to maintain confidence in God's purpose in your life?

#### Cost

# Q4. Read 1 Peter 2:24, 1 Peter 3:18, Mark 8:34

The gift God offers us is a costly one. He gave His son as a sacrifice to pay for our sins. Compare the cost to Christ and the benefit to us in 1 Peter 2:24 and 3:18. We indeed reap an incredible benefit, but we are also asked to pay a price. What price must we be willing to pay to follow Jesus? What are some things that we choose to deny daily to follow Jesus?

# WRAP-UP

At this time of year between Christmas and the New Year let's choose to trust in God's certain promises for hope of lasting change in our lives rather than depend on our own New Year's resolutions. God gave us His Son as the greatest gift of all. In choosing Jesus, our purpose in life is clearly to glorify and praise God. God's motive in coming to this earth was to love us and offer us abundant life. A life beyond what we can imagine, but one He is more than able to complete. Jesus paid the highest price to purchase our salvation, but we must choose to lay down our lives daily in order to receive His gift and have fullness of life.

## **Memory Verse**

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 1 John 4:9 NIV

# PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:
Pray for your group members' needs:

Challenge: This New Year's Day replace your resolutions with prayers based on the promises of God's purpose in your life.

**Q1** Isaiah 9:6 ESV - 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 7:14 KJV - 14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Luke 2:10-12 ESV - 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

#### Q2

Luke 2:20 ESV - 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- 1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV 31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- 1 Peter 4:10-11 ESV 10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

# **Q**3

1 John 4:9 ESV - 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

John 10:10 ESV - 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Ephesians 3:20-21 ESV - 20 Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Philippians 1:6 NIV - 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

#### **Q4**

1 Peter 2:24 NIV - 24 "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."

1 Peter 3:18 NIV - 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Mark 8:34 NIV - 34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Prayers Con't:	 		