

“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 25th 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 fullness 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.

