

Christmas Presence Discipleship Study Questions



To be used from 12/12/21-1/1/22



This Christmas season, we want to spend some time looking at the true impact of the baby who was born in a manger that long ago Christmas Day. Jesus' presence in our lives has the power to transform us at every level, and through every phase of life. Let's take a deeper look at how Jesus changes us: past, present and future. (*Though each passage is different than the passages preached on Sundays, they help us further explore the concepts taught on Sunday.*)

Hide God's Word in Your Heart:

Individual: Take a few days and do your best to memorize, or deeply familiarize yourself with, the scripture passage for the week.

Group: Choose one person from the group to commit the week's scripture passage to memory, or thoroughly summarize it in their own words, in order to present it to the group the following week.

Read the story:

Individual: After you've committed the passage, or the essence of the passage, to memory, read two different translations of the scripture for the week.

Group: At your next group meeting, have two different group members read the story using different Bible translations.

Tell the story:

Individual: Recite the story aloud from memory, or tell it to a friend or family member.

Group: Introduce the person who has learned the story for this week. Be ready to assist them if they get stuck at any point.

Rebuild the story:

Individual: Re-read the story to fact check yourself.

Group: Use questions to help the group highlight the main points of the story and correct any omissions or misrepresentations of the story. The point is not to point out the story teller's mistakes, but rather to point people to the Word to ensure everyone understands it accurately.

Dig into the Word:

Individual: Work through the questions and pray about what God reveals to you through His word. Discuss with a Christian friend or family member, if you choose.

Group: Work through the questions as a group, celebrating the work God is already doing in each person's life, and encouraging each other to trust Him in the places that need growth.

Jesus' Presence Redeems Our Past

Week 1: Read John 4:7-26

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Jesus teaching the Samaritan woman?

What are you learning personally?

What is God calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

Read: John 6:32-40; Matthew 5:6

What similarities do you see in the way Jesus is described in John 6 compared to the passage in John 4? What can we take away from these descriptions? How do these descriptions connect with the verse in Matthew 5?

What can we learn from these descriptions about our need for God? In similar terms, how might we describe a life void of God's presence?

In what ways have you tried to fill the hunger and thirst inside of you, that only Jesus can truly satisfy? How has your relationship with Jesus changed the kind of "food" you choose to take in? If your appetites have not changed, consider why?

What state was the Samaritan woman in when she had her encounter with Jesus? What can we learn from how Jesus approached her, and how should that shape how we treat others who may be far from God?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for your gentleness in revealing and correcting our sin. Thank you for Jesus who makes repentance even possible. Thank you for your grace that covers over our past and gives us a new story going forward, with new mercies from you each and every day. Let the spiritual bread and water that you provide help love and compassion flow freely out of our own lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Jesus' Presence Transforms Our Present

Week 2: Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Paul teaching the church in Corinth?

What are you learning personally?

What is God calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

When a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly, it does not simply enter into its cocoon, grow a pair of wings, and come back out. The process inside the cocoon is utterly destructive of what was, and completely transformative. The caterpillar breaks down into its most basic cells, then those cells are reorganized into a new configuration, finally emerging from the cocoon in a totally new state, with more ability and more beauty than it ever had before.

How is our new life in Christ similar to a butterfly coming out of its cocoon?

Like a butterfly on its first flight, how did your perspective change after you became a Christ follower? What kinds of things do you now see differently, or from a different angle?

In what ways do you still think or act like a caterpillar that is stuck crawling on the ground? What do you need to do to change your perspective to align with what God has given you in Christ?

In v19-20, we are told we are Christ's ambassadors, sent to reconcile others to Him. What are you doing to help those around you find the same 'wings' you have been given in Christ?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the powerful gift of transformation. We praise you for doing the work that we could never have accomplished on our own. Help us set our hearts and minds on the things above, in the abilities you have given us through Christ. Grant us your perspective to see the things, the events, and the people around us, even ourselves, through your eyes. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Jesus' Presence Provides Hope For Our Future

Week 3: 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

Discovery Questions:

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What is Paul teaching the church at Corinth?

What are you learning personally?

What is God calling you to do with what you've learned this week?

Life Application:

Read: Ephesians 3:16-21; Colossians 3:1-4

How should the hope we have in Jesus shape how you view or endure suffering and hardship?

What can we learn from what seem like contradictory statements found in 2 Corinthians 4, v8-12 and v16-18? How are these things possible? What kind of mindset needs to be in place for these to make sense?

When balancing on two sides of a scale, the weight of eternal glory far surpasses the weight of anything that might happen to us in this world. What bearing does the weight of glory have on how you see or experience what happens to you in life?

What tends to draw your attention? Do you focus on things of the world, your status, your struggles, your ambitions, or do you find yourself able to maintain focus on the things of God? Pray this week that your eyes would be fixed on what is unseen and eternal in new ways.

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the promise of your presence, both now in our world, and in the world to come that you are preparing for us. Help us to keep an eternal perspective when looking at earthly things, so that each hold the proper weight in how we view them. May your glory weigh heavy on our hearts and minds, and may we long for the time when we will see your glory in its fullness, even while we wait, and as we endure all the hardships and distractions of our earthly lives. In the name of Jesus, amen.