



Week 1  
Discipleship Study  
Questions



## **A Weary World Rejoices**

As we draw nearer to Christmas, we struggle to find peace and joy in what is meant to be the most wonderful time of the year. We are weary from feeling troubled, from busyness, from loneliness, and more. In this series, we will look at the hope found in the Christmas story for the weary soul looking for some rest.

### **Read the Scripture:**

*Individual:* Read the passage from two or three different translations.

*Group:* Have two different group members read the passage using different Bible translations.

### **Speak the Scripture:**

*Individual:* Recite the story aloud from memory (as best you can) or tell it to a friend or family member. The goal here is to get the essence of the passage in your heart.

*Group:* Have someone volunteer to recite the passage aloud in their own words, as best they can.

### **Understand the Scripture:**

*Individual or Group:* Use the Discovery Questions to help ensure you understand the passage.

### **Dig Deeper into the Scripture:**

*Individual:* Work through the Digging Deeper 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 Digging Deeper 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.

# Small Group Guidelines

## **This is a Safe Group**

Confidentiality is key—what is said in the group stays in the group. Be aware how you are affecting the environment with your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening up and sharing.

## **No Crosstalk**

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations, phone time, texting etc.

## **Listen**

Let's value one another by listening to what is being shared. Allow a pause after someone shares to allow them to finish and others to consider what was said. Eye contact and body posture play key roles in creating a positive or negative group environment.

## **No Rescuing or Fixing**

We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Avoid the tendency to rescue when someone is struggling to get the words out or shares a struggle or conviction.

## **Use "I" Statements**

It's easy to talk about the issues of others, or respond with "we," "us," or "the church," but for us to grow as disciples and build relationships, we want to use "I" statements.

## **Don't Over-Talk**

We want to create time for all members of the group to participate in the discussion. Be careful not to always be the first responder or regularly give long responses.

## **Fight for Relationship**

It's not if conflict or hurt feelings will happen, but when. We commit to fight for relationship with each other. Go to the person and share your struggle or seek wise advice if you are not sure how to handle the conflict.

## Week 1

**Background:** This passage was written by the Apostle Paul as an encouragement to the Philippian church. They were a church facing hardship and challenge, and Paul wanted to remind them that because Christ came to earth and is coming back some day, we can approach the difficulties of this world differently.

**Read:** *Philippians 4:6-8*

### **Discovery Questions:**

What do we learn about God in this passage?

What do we learn about what it means to be a follower of Christ in this passage?

What do you think the Holy Spirit might be teaching you personally through this passage?

Is there anything God is leading you to do after reading this passage?

### **Digging Deeper:**

Why do you think it's difficult for us to push through anxiety so we can pray?

Why is thankfulness a way to help combat anxiety that shows up in our lives?

Why do you think Paul makes sure the Philippians know that God's peace is beyond our circumstances?

### **End this time with a prayer.**

*If you aren't sure what to pray, try praying the Scriptures you studied today. For example, "Father, thank You that instead of being anxious, I can pray. Help me to have a heart filled with gratitude. Help me to bring my requests to You, and not try to carry my own burdens. I ask for Your perfect peace, which is beyond my circumstances, to be like a shield around my heart and mind. In Jesus name I pray, amen."*

### **Optional Advent moment (this can be done alone, with your family, or with a discipleship group)**

*-Light a candle, and say "today, Lord, I light this candle as the candle of Peace. We remember that on that day You were born in Bethlehem, the Prince of Peace came to dwell among humanity, in the midst of our darkness. Praise You Lord, the bringer of peace!"*

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

*If you'd like to learn more about how to handle troubling emotions like anxiety, depression, anger, fear, or more, here are a few resources to consider:*

### **Podcasts:**

- Fresh Hope for Mental Health
- The Allender Center Podcast
- The Wild at Heart Podcast

### **Blog:**

www.emotionallyhealthy.org/blog

### **Books:**

- Resilient* by John Eldridge
- Redeeming Heartache* by Dan Allender
- Redefining Anxiety* by Dr. John Delony
- Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Pete Scazzero
- Bright Days; Dark Nights* by Elizabeth Ruth Skoglund with Charles Spurgeon

**Counseling Resources:** go to [www.christtherock.org/counseling](http://www.christtherock.org/counseling)