

Christmas

WEEK 1
PERSONAL SATISFACTION
DANNY ANDERSON

...but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you **good news** that will bring great **joy** to all people. The **Savior**-yes, the **Messiah**, the **Lord** has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David." *Luke 2:10-11*

What is the Good News that Christmas brings?

1. Christmas brings personal satisfaction.

"My purpose is to give them a **rich** and **satisfying** life." *John 10:10*

"Anyone who is **thirsty** may come to me! Anyone who believes in me may come and **drink!** For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of **living water** will flow from his heart.'" (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the **Spirit**, who would be given to everyone believing in him.) *John 7:37-39*

2. Christmas brings healing in relationships.

"If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much!" *Luke 6:33-34*

3. Christmas brings fellowship with God.

For God was in Christ, **reconciling** the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. *2 Corinthians 5:19*

How do we prevent ourselves from being distracted?

1. Release expectations.

As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. *Luke 10:38, 40*

2. Spend time with God.

Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he **taught**. *Luke 10:39*

But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only **one thing** worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her." *Luke 10:41-42*

"If you want to get warm you must stand near the fire: if you want to get wet you must get into the water. If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to or even into, the thing that has them."

C.S. Lewis

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For Group Discussion

Answer these questions prior to your Small Group meeting this week.

Introduction

It's Christmas time! The time of the year when we celebrate Jesus coming into the world to bring redemption, restoration, and transformation. Unfortunately, Christmas often comes and goes, and the busyness and expectations of the holiday season distract us from focusing on the most important thing - Jesus.

Discussion Questions

1. In the Christmas story found in Luke 2, the angel says, "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people." What are some things about the Christmas season that bring you great joy? Is there anything about the Christmas season that you really don't enjoy? Why?

2. Christmas is supposed to be a time when we experience more of what we were designed for - personal satisfaction, healthy relationships, and fellowship with God - but we can get distracted by the expectations of the holiday season. Read Luke 10:38-40. Much like us, Martha got distracted when Jesus visited her home. What are some expectations of the holiday season that might distract you? What is it about each of those expectations that make them a potential distraction?

3. Read Luke 10:41-42. Martha's sister, Mary, decided to push back on the expectations, avoid the distractions, and spend time listening to Jesus teach. If you evaluate your normal approach to the Christmas season, would you say you most relate to Martha - distracted, full of anxiety over the expectations of the holiday - or Mary - focused on the most important things? Why?

What holiday expectations do you need to drop? What steps will you take to eliminate those distractions?

4. In John 10:10 Jesus said, "My purpose is to give them rich and satisfying life." If we want to experience rich and satisfying life during this Christmas season, we must eliminate distractions that keep us from being focused on Jesus. When and where will you spend more time with Jesus?

OUTREACH: GROUPS IN ACTION

1. Make a decision to go on a short-term mission trip. Emmanuel is putting together a team to go to Nicaragua, and YOU can join. Check out eclife.org/next-steps/serve/global/ for more details. After you prayerfully commit, you'll experience serving and giving in a way you have never experienced.

2. Help someone stay warm this winter. Drop off hats, gloves, and scarves for all ages by December 24. The collection box is located at the Information Desk in the lobby. All items collected will be given to individuals in need in our communities.

Action Step

Fill in the blanks below for this upcoming week.

My action steps are _____.

I'm accountable for _____, and their action steps are _____.

My memory verse is _____.

This coming week, I'm praying for:
