

Christmas

WEEK 2
RELATIONSHIPS
DANNY ANDERSON

Christmas puts you around people.

People are difficult.

Therefore, Christmas is difficult.

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth **peace** to those on whom his favor rests.” *Luke 2:14*

“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will **save** his people from their sins.” *Matthew 1:21*

1. Be kind.

“Do to **others** whatever you would like them to do to **you**. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.” *Matthew 7:12*

2. Be gracious.

Make **allowance** for each other’s faults...and **forgive** one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive **as** the Lord forgave you. *Colossians 3:13*

Lord, if you kept a **record** of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive? *Psalms 130:3*

3. Be quiet.

Even fools are thought wise when they keep **silent**; with their mouths **shut**, they seem intelligent. *Proverbs 17:28*

Too much **talk** leads to sin. Be sensible and keep your mouth shut. *Proverbs 10:19*

4. Be prepared.

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the **name** of the Lord Jesus... *Colossians 3:17*

“But I say, **love** your **enemies**! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even **corrupt tax collectors** do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even **pagans** do that. But you are to be **perfect**, even as your Father in heaven is **perfect**.” *Matthew 5:44-48*

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: **love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. *Galatians 5:22-23*

Christmas



For Group Discussion

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

Introduction

The Christmas season puts us around people. People are difficult. Therefore, Christmas can be difficult. For some families, a successful Christmas gathering means no fights break out in the front yard! One of the many reasons Jesus came was to bring healing in relationships. Wouldn’t it be great for this Christmas season to bring relational peace where it’s needed in your life?

Discussion Questions

1. In order to have peace in our relationships, we must be kind. How would you describe kindness? How does being kind lead to peaceful relationships?

Read Matthew 7:12. The “Golden Rule” is pretty simple, but too often ignored. Why is this idea the key to resolving all relationship tensions? Which of your relationship issues would be resolved if you would put this principle into practice? How would it feel to have healing in that relationship?

2. Read Colossians 3:13. Share some times when others have made allowances for your faults. What affect does that have on the relationship?

In order to have peace in our relationships, we must be gracious. Complete this sentence: Grace is _____.

Read Psalm 130:3. How would your relationships be different during this Christmas season if you kept no record of the past? What changes do you need to make to relate to others with grace, motivated by love?

3. Sometimes, the way to have peace in our relationships is to simply be quiet. Read Romans 12:18. What topics and/or conversations can you avoid this Christmas season to foster peace with others?

Read Proverbs 17:28. A difficult question to ask ourselves is, “how are people experiencing me?” What steps can you take in order to gain more self-awareness in the relationships where tension exists?

4. In order to have peace in our relationships during this Christmas season, we must be prepared to represent the love of Jesus. Read Colossians 3:17 and John 13:34-35. In which of your relationships do you find this to be the most challenging? Why?

Read Galatians 5:22-23. This passage describes the characteristics (or “fruits”) that are to be produced in each follower of Christ. Which of these “fruits” seem to be growing in your life? Which “fruits” need more development?

What steps will you take to grow each of these characteristics of Christ in order to be prepared when you attend family or other gatherings this Christmas season?

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. There are **four spots remaining!** **Deadline extended: December 29**

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:
