

LIFEGroup Study Guide

December 19 - January 2

LIFEgroup Study Guide

This study guide follows along with LBF Church's current Sunday message series, and is intended to be a supplement in your daily passionate pursuit of Jesus.

• *Watch last Sunday's message video:*
www.lbf.church/messages

Is your group stumped? Did you come to a question that you feel needs clarification? Our church isn't too big. Contact Pastor Dan with your questions.

• *Contact Pastor Dan:*
danfranklin@lbfchurch.com

Lesson 1: God Came Near

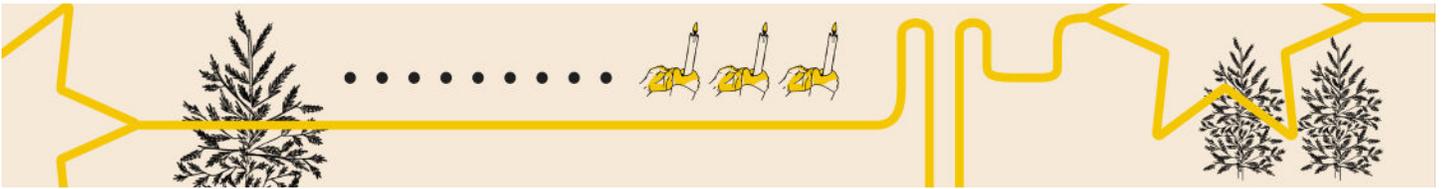
Hebrews 2:14-18 • Pg. 4-5 • December 19

Lesson 2: Always, Continually, In All Circumstances

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 • Pg. 6-7 • December 26

Lesson 3: The Light of All Mankind

John 1:1-5 • Pg. 8-9 • January 2



God Came Near

Lesson 1 • December 19 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

In Jesus, God has drawn near to every human being.

Introduction

Think of a time when you have felt terribly alone. For some of us, it may not be that hard to identify a time because we feel alone right now. Whether we are married or single, young or old, male or female, rich or poor, there are times when we feel like we have no one who is truly near to us in the ways that we long for. Even if we are surrounded by family and friends, we can still feel like we are on our own in our struggles, our sadness, our trials, and our temptations.

Christmas is not simply a time to revel in food and family. It is a time when we celebrate the amazing reality that, in Jesus, God came near. God did not simply grab a microphone and shout from heaven about how much he loved us. He came near. And he came near in the form of a baby boy, born of a Virgin, laid in a manger in a town called Bethlehem.

In this lesson we will look at what it means for us today that the eternal Son of God chose to be clothed with humanity. We'll look, not only at the implications that this has on the world, but we'll also look at what it means to live our day-to-day lives in the reality that, in Jesus, God has come near.

Getting Started

1. How would you explain the significance of Christmas in one sentence?

2. Share a story about a time that you vividly experienced God's nearness to you.

Digging In

Read Hebrews 2:14-18.

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—**15** and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. **16** For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. **17** For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. **18** Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. According to verses 14 and 15, Why did the Son of God need to share our humanity?

5. In verse 17 we read that God's Son became "fully human in every way." Share one way in which Jesus' full humanity is significant to you.

6. How were Jesus' mercy and faithfulness demonstrated through him making atonement for our sins on the cross?

7. Focus on verse 18. How does Jesus' suffering allow him able to help you when you're being tempted?
Read Hebrews 4:14-16.

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Verse 15 says that Jesus came to free us from our slavery to the fear of death. What are some ways that fear—and specifically the fear of death—can make us slaves?

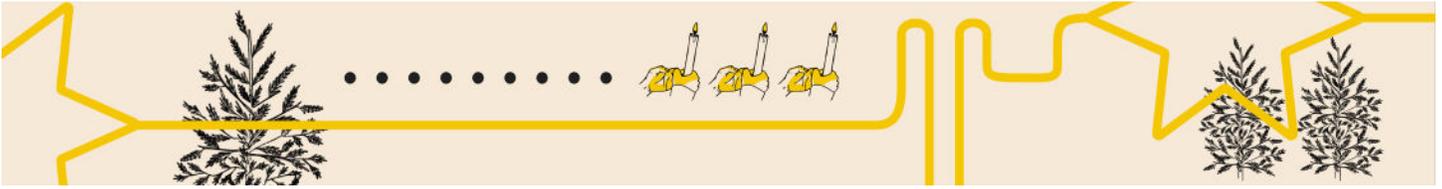
Connecting To The Gospel

9. Why is the Christmas story—the eternal Son of God choosing to share our humanity—more meaningful than if God simply announced from heaven that we had all been forgiven?

Taking It To Heart

10. In what way do you really need to experience God's nearness right now? How can you pursue experiencing his nearness?

11. Think of someone in your life who might need to be told of—or reminded of—God's nearness. How can you encourage them with how God—in the Christmas story—came near through Jesus?



Always, Continually, In All Circumstances

Lesson 2 • December 26 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

God calls believers to live in a God-awareness about the past, present, and future.

Introduction

As we finish the year 2021, it is appropriate to reflect on the past and to look ahead to the future. As believers in Jesus, we want to be able to look back and remember how we've seen God at work during this past year, and also to look ahead to how he is calling us to live by faith in the future.

First Thessalonians 5:16-18 gives three rapid-fire commands concerning activities that we are called to do at all times. They relate to rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks. As we look back and look ahead, this lesson will help us to live with thankfulness about the past, joy in the present, and prayer about the future.

Getting Started

1. Are you more likely to dwell on the past or to be preoccupied with the future?

2. Share about a significant way that you experienced God at work during 2021.

Digging In

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray continually, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. In verse 16, Paul calls believers to rejoice always. What do you think it means to have true joy, and not just surface pleasure?

5. In verse 17, Paul calls believers to pray continually. What prayer requests do you believe God is calling you to persevere in, and not to give up?

6. In verse 18, Paul calls believers to give thanks in all circumstances. How can you give thanks even when you're in difficult and painful circumstances?

7. Between the commands to rejoice, pray, and give thanks, which one do you find is easiest to do and which one do you find is hardest to do?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Paul ends verse 18 by saying that constant rejoicing, prayer, and thanksgiving are "God's will for you in Christ Jesus." As you consider what God's will is for you this next year, how does this verse help guide you?

Connecting To The Gospel

9. How does the Gospel of Jesus empower the three commands in this passage? Explain your answer for each:

Rejoice always

Pray continually

Give thanks in all circumstances

Taking It To Heart

10. What is one specific way that you are thankful to God because of something that took place during this past year?

11. What is one specific way that you are currently rejoicing because of something God has done?

12. What is one specific way that you are praying for God's work in this next year?



The Light Of All Mankind

Lesson 3 • January 2 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Jesus brings the knowledge of God to the entire world.

Introduction

Epiphany is a holiday that Christians have celebrated for over 1,600 years. It takes place every January 6th and it celebrates the visit of the Magi to Jesus (Matthew 2:1-12). This is significant because it highlights that Jesus came, not only as the Savior of the people of Israel, but for the whole world, since the Magi are Gentiles. Epiphany, then, is a celebration of Jesus making God known to the entire world.

While Epiphany is not often observed and celebrated by non-liturgical churches, we want to join with brothers and sisters in Christ around the world and observe the celebration of Epiphany this year. We want to celebrate that Jesus came to be the light of the world—not just the light for one specific group of people.

In this lesson we will focus on the first five verses of the Gospel of John. In this passage we not only get to learn about Jesus' divine status, but we also get to learn of his impact as the light of all mankind.

Getting Started

1. The holiday of Epiphany has to do with God making himself known. In the Bible, what are some ways that God made himself known to people?

2. What are some ways that you have specifically experienced God making himself known to you?

Digging In

Read John 1:1-5.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. John 1:14 makes it clear that when John says “the Word” he is referring to Jesus, God’s Son. What do you think is the significance of Jesus being referred to as “the Word”?

5. John says that Jesus—the eternal Son of God—is the light of all mankind. What are some benefits that light brings, and how do those benefits relate to what Jesus came to do?

6. What thoughts and emotions do you experience when you read that Jesus is the light *of all mankind*?

7. How does verse 5 help you understand, not only what Jesus did during his earthly ministry, but what is happening today, 2,000 years after Jesus’ earthly ministry?

Connecting To The Gospel

8. Jesus not only made God known through his words and teachings, but through his entire life. Read Romans 3:21-26. What did the death of Jesus reveal to us about God?

Taking It To Heart

9. What are some specific ways that Jesus has brought light and clarity into your life?

11. Share about a way that you long for Jesus to make himself known to you during this next year.