

GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

By John Piper

Week 1 Small Group Questions

December 1st-7th

INTRODUCTION

John 17:24 (ESV) ²⁴Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Meditate on the thought that Jesus wants you with him, not because you are special, but because he is special.

Personalize it in prayer: “Thank you Jesus that you want me with you so that I can see your glory. May I be consumed with a passion for your glory this Christmas season like never before. Amen”

December 1

PREPARE THE WAY

Luke 1:16–17 (ESV) ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

We spend a lot of time preparing for the Christmas season. We plan meals, make cookies, go shopping, and send Christmas cards. Piper gives us four ways to be prepared spiritually: (1) meditate on our need for a Savior, (2) engage in sober self-examination, (3) build God-centered anticipation, expectancy, and excitement into your home, and (4) be much in Scripture and memorize great passages.

List three practical ways you can build God-centered anticipation, expectancy, and excitement into your home?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

December 2

MARY'S MAGNIFICENT GOD

Luke 1:46–55 (ESV) ⁴⁶And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; ⁵²he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

What reactions do you have to God occupying himself with two obscure, humble women? What does it speak about God and who he is?

December 3

THE LONG-AWAITED VISITATION

Luke 1:68–71 (ESV) ⁶⁸“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people ⁶⁹and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, ⁷⁰as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, ⁷¹that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us

Today, we have the privilege to look back and see how God worked through people and events surrounding Jesus' First Advent. God's promised act took place in the incarnation and ultimately, in the cross. Knowing that God has promised Jesus' Second Advent, how can we show that we are anticipating it?

December 4

FOR GOD'S LITTLE PEOPLE

Luke 2:1–5 (ESV) ¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Does God's sovereignty over politicians cause you to think differently about the laws enacted that seem insignificant or even burdensome? Give an example and explain.

December 5

NO DETOUR FROM CALVARY

Luke 2:6–7 (ESV) ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Knowing that God can do anything, be transparent and name one thing that He has not given you or that you would like to have. After writing it down, take time to thank God that as of right now, you are glad He has not willed it be.

December 6

PEACE TO THOSE WITH WHOM HE'S PLEASED

Luke 2:12–14 (ESV) ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Are you lacking peace about anything in your life right now? Who do you know right now who is not at peace with God? Write their names below. Make it a point to pray that this Christmas would be the one that God brings them into his peace, he would be pleased with them, and his favor would be upon them. Invite them to our Christmas Eve service.

Assignment: Write a short note to that person this week; include your prayer for them.

December 7

MESSIAH FOR THE MAGI

Matthew 2:1–2 (ESV) ¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

In his final words before ascending, Jesus’ gives us a **commission** (as you are going, make disciples), a **plan** (teach the gospel, baptize, and teach obedience), and an **encouragement** (I am with you always). As an individual and as a small group, how can you have a more outward focus?