

GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

By John Piper

Week 3 Small Group Questions

December 16th-25th

December 16

GOD'S MOST SUCCESSFUL SETBACK

Philippians 2:6-11 (ESV) ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

How has God used divinely appointed setbacks (defeats, failures) in your life to bring about success?

December 17

THE GREATEST SALVATION IMAGINABLE

Jeremiah 31:31, 33, 34 (ESV) ³¹“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah... ³³For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

How has experiencing the greatest Reality, Jesus, produced freedom and joy in your life?

December 18

THE CHRISTMAS MODEL FOR MISSIONS

John 17:18 (ESV) ¹⁸As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

To die giving one's life for the mission demonstrates trust in God's mercy; Dying for the mission is the highest honor. If we distrust God's mercy, how might we sabotage the mission?

December 19

CHRISTMAS IS FOR FREEDOM

Hebrews 2:14-15 (ESV) ¹⁴Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

What fears keep you from being truly and fully free in Christ? What is the antidote for these fears?

December 20

CHRISTMAS SOLIDARITY

1 John 3:8b (ESV) ⁸...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

How have you seen Jesus destroying the works of the devil in you, i.e. how have you seen God's Spirit conquering distrust and disobedience in your life?

December 21

THE BIRTH OF THE ANCIENT OF DAYS

John 18:37 (ESV) ³⁷Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

What is the mystery of Christ’s birth and how would you explain it to a non-believer?

December 22

THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

John 20:30-31 (ESV) ³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

How can you recapture the joy, the excitement, the wonder of first believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?

December 23

GOD’S INDESCRIBABLE GIFT

Romans 5:10-11 (ESV) ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

What do you see in the portrait of Jesus Christ from the Scriptures that causes you to exult in God?

December 24

THE SON OF GOD APPEARED

1 John 3:7-8 (ESV) ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

We have already answered the question of how we've seen Jesus destroying the works of the devil in us (see December 20th); now let's consider how you've seen God's Spirit equipping you to practice righteousness?

December 25

THREE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

1 John 3:7-8 (ESV) ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

1. A clear purpose for living: Practically speaking, how is trusting Jesus equipping you to love people?
2. Hope that our failures will be forgiven: Share with the group a change you are considering, perhaps a sinful habit you want victory over. How does freedom (in Christ) to fail give you hope in making this change or overcoming this habit?
3. Christ will help us: How have you already experienced Christ's help in overcoming sin?

Conclusion

MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS TEXT

Philippians 2:6-8 (ESV) ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This Christmas morning, consider Jesus! Meditate upon Philippians 2:6-8. Ponder the implications of Christ's humility and servant-hood for you and your family!