

LIVING
DISCIPLESHIP



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WEEK 1

Celebrate the Presence of God

SCRIPTURE

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name *Immanuel*" (which means, God with us).
(Matthew 1: 22-23)

HYMN OF PRAISE

Emmanuel (Hallowed Manger Ground)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDQoIND3yrQ>



OBSERVATION

On this month's weekly devotion, we will ponder on the truth about Christmas celebration.

As disciples of Christ, let's reflect:

- Why do we celebrate Christmas every year?
- How do we celebrate the birth of Christ?
- What is the desired outcome of our celebration?

Let's ponder on the above questions as we begin this month of celebrating the birth of Christ.

First, please read and ponder on these realities of experiencing God.¹

SEVEN REALITIES OF EXPERIENCING GOD

1. God is always at work around you.
2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
5. God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
7. You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.

Are you able to relate to these seven realities in your faith, life and mission? These realities also point out one reality, 'God desires to be with us.'

¹ Henry T Blackaby & Richard Blackaby, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God by*, (Singapore: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004), 50.

Do you desire to be with God? Have you forsaken Him and ignored His presence? Take time to use the reflection questions below to help you practice the presence of God. This Christmas, celebrate the presence of God, for the name of Jesus is *Immanuel* (which means, God with us).

REFLECTION

1. Few people stop to be still in our busy and noisy world. I believe we can hear from God better when we remain quiet. This week, we encourage you to make an effort to find five minutes each day to sit in solitude since, to quote the psalmist, we must be "still" to know that God is God.
2. Besides taking five minutes to sit in solitude, think of what can you do to help you experience the presence of God? What kind of practices can you do to help you become aware of God's presence? For example, take a slow walk in the park or enjoy a cup of coffee in a quiet café.
3. Did you learn about God or yourself through the solitude exercises? Write down your learnings in your journal.



Journal & Prayer

WEEK 2

Celebrate Answered Prayers

SCRIPTURE

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

(Luke 2: 36-38)

HYMN OF PRAISE

My Christmas Prayer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49hQOl2NwXQ>



OBSERVATION

This month we are pondering on the truth about Christmas celebration. As disciples of Christ, why do we faithfully celebrate Christmas every year? How do we celebrate the birth of Christ? What is our desired outcome of our celebration? What do we hope to see at the end of our celebration? Let's ponder on the above questions as we begin this month of celebrating the birth of Christ.

Please read devotional “**Faithfulness in Prayer**”² from Experiencing God Day-by-Day.

Your faithfulness allows God to reveal greater insight to you than to the less faithful. Faithfulness brings opportunities to you that are not given to the unfaithful. God takes pleasure in answering prayers that come from a faithful heart. Anna had been a widow for many years. In her day, a widow had little status in society and was virtually helpless on her own.

Anna spent her time, day and night, in prayer and fasting in the temple. As she prayed, she yearned to see the Messiah. God chose few people to encounter the Savior when He was born, revealing His Son only to those whose hearts were faithful and pure.

Anna was one of those few. Jesus would later say to His followers, “It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given... . Blessed are

² <https://blackaby.org/faithfulness-in-prayer/>



your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear” (Matt. 13:11, 16).

Anna continued faithfully in prayer until her prayer was answered. The answer to her prayers did not come immediately. In fact, it came near the end of her life. But God honored her faithfulness. God's redemptive plan to send the Messiah included answering the prayers of a humble widow.

Faithful praying may mean a lifetime of waiting to receive an answer. God is looking for intercessors who are willing to continue to pray and to believe until they see God's answer.

Anna prayed faithfully until her prayer was answered. She waited patiently for God to send the Messiah. We could imagine the joy and celebrative mood she experienced when she saw the child Jesus. Anna celebrated and give thanks for a good reason! And the reason is because God answered her prayer.

REFLECTION

1. Recall and write down 10 things you prayed for in the last 3 months?
2. Did God answer your prayers? How did God answer your prayers? Was it a “Yes”, “No” Or “Wait”?
3. Celebrate answered prayers! Give thanks to God for listening to your prayers. May we not take for granted of answered prayers. Be grateful to God. Write in your journal how you would like to express your gratitude to God.



Journal & Prayer

WEEK 3

Celebrate God's Love

SCRIPTURE

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

(John 3: 16-18)

HYMN OF PRAISE

Joy to the World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oOwa0CWWVQ>



OBSERVATION

Please read excerpt from Experiencing God devotional.³

There would be no need for Christmas had God's creatures done as they were told. Creation would have been an effortless pastime for God if His creatures had fulfilled their divine purpose. But when people defiantly rebelled against God and refused to obey their Creator, almighty God was compelled to send His perfect, sinless, obedient Son to die a horrific death to pay the just penalty for rebellious creatures. Our human minds are far too limited to grasp the magnitude of God's sacrifice for our redemption. How does one place a value on surrendering the place at the right hand of God for a manger in a cattle stall? What price do we put on God the Father watching in heaven while vile creatures of dust spit on His Son and cruelly nailed Him to a cross? The cost to God was unfathomable.

During this Christmas and holiday season, take time to reflect on the reality that God loved you so much that He paid the greatest price in history to free you from your sin and make you a child of God and fellow heir with Christ. You have been bought with an enormous price. God did not wince at the price tag for your salvation. He gladly paid it, because he loved you that much.

³ <https://blackaby.org/christmas-bills-december-29-2017/>



Why do we celebrate Christmas? The reason is Christ Jesus our Lord. Christ is the reason we celebrate Christmas! Without Christ, we not only celebrate for nothing, but we also live for nothing! Without Christ, we will continue to face eternal condemnation and remain separated with God. Celebrate Christmas because we know and believe God sent His Son, Jesus to die for our sins so that we can be reconciled to God.

REFLECTION

1. Why do you celebrate Christmas with your loved ones?

Write down three reasons why you desire to celebrate Christmas. Share these reasons with your family.

2. This Christmas season, think of **FIVE** non-believing friends, co-workers or relatives. Pray for their salvation. Pray that the Lord will make a way for them to hear the gospel (again). Pray that they will understand the gospel and eventually embrace the gospel. Pray that they will be willing to accept your invitation to our **Christmas Celebration Service** on the **25th December**.



Journal & Prayer

Overflowing Love

WORSHIP WITH SONG

I've Got Peace Like a River

I've got peace like a river x2
I've got peace like a river in my soul
I've got peace like a river x2
I've got peace like a river in my soul

I've got love like an ocean x2
I've got love like an ocean in my soul
I've got love like an ocean x2
I've got love like an ocean in my soul

I've got joy like a fountain x2
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul
I've got joy like a fountain x2
I've got joy like a fountain in my soul

I've got peace, love and joy like a river x2
I've got peace, love and joy like a river in my soul
I've got peace, love and joy like a river x2
I've got peace, love and joy like a river in my soul

ICE BREAKER⁴

Place a small clear glass in a shallow bowl. Pretend you are the empty glass and the bowl represents the people in your life. Fill a pitcher with water. Pretend that the pitcher is God and the water represents God's love. As you pour water from the pitcher into the glass, think about the love that God pours into you. Continue pouring water from the pitcher until it spills over the sides of the glass, filling the bowl.

PRAYER

Ask God to help you believe in His love and also grow deeper in love with Him so that you can show that love to others.

SCRIPTURE

“and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you,”
(1 Thessalonians 3:12)

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”
(1 John 4:11)

⁴ Faith at Home Kit by Focus on the Family Singapore. From Week 48 – Jesus frees you to love

OBSERVATION & SHARE ⁵

1. Will God's love for you ever run out?
2. How does God's love help you love others?
3. What are some ways you can show God's love to others?

SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

The Bible says in **1 Thessalonians 3:12**, “...*may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you*”. Just as the water filled the glass and overflowed into the bowl, God promises that He will give you so much love that it will overflow, and you will be able to love others. Because your love from God is more than enough, you are free to love everyone around you with the “overflow”.⁶

What is your answer to this question?

- What is the desired outcome of our Christmas celebration?

We pray that your answer is “we will love one another.” The scriptures above implied that God's love shall lead us to love others. We ought to love others because God so loved us in Christ. Christmas is not only a season of knowing God's love, it is also a season of loving others. However, we don't just love during the Christmas month, we love in all seasons of life.

⁵ Faith at Home Kit by Focus on the Family Singapore. From Week 48 – Jesus frees you to love

⁶ Faith at Home Kit by Focus on the Family Singapore. From Week 48 – Jesus frees you to love

INTERCESSION

1. Let's start loving by praying for others. Pray for your family members, co-workers, friends, and neighbors. Pray that the Lord will bless them with His love and presence.
2. Pray for yourself to grow in love for God and people. May celebrating Christmas lead us to obey God's commandment of love.
3. Pray that NLC will continue to preach Christ and God's love. Pray that NLC will be the open door for people to enter and receive God's love and mercy. Pray that the love of God will overflow from every disciple in NLC to people around us.

CLOSING PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER