



**Educate  
+ Engage**



REDISCOVERING  
CHRISTMAS



Rediscovering  
Love

### OVERVIEW

Beautiful decorations, harmonious carols, delicious meals, and heartwarming presents all pale in comparison to the profound message of love that is offered during the Christmas season—a love so deep and sacrificial that it compelled God to manifest Himself in the flesh for us. Today let's rediscover the transformative power of love as demonstrated in the birth of Jesus Christ.

#### **Scripture Passage**

John 3:16–17 (KJV)

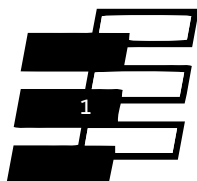
For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

### EDUCATE

Likely by now, everyone has their Christmas decorations up, your parents are planning the meals, and you've been singing Christmas carols for a while. We have talked in the previous lessons about how easy it is to get this season twisted up and focus on the wrong things. It cannot be stressed enough that this season is only about one thing: the undeniable love God has for us. It wasn't enough for the Lord to simply act through signs and wonders in our world; it wasn't enough for God to speak through prophets and teachers; He became flesh. He so loved the world that he gave.

#### **The Depth of God's Love**

We can know the depth of someone's love for us in a few ways. Sacrifice often reveals the depth of someone's love. Think honestly about how much your parents love you and what they give you despite how little you bring to the table. We can know the depth of someone's love for us based on the freedom of that love. If someone was forced to love you, that love wouldn't feel genuine. When considering the purpose of Jesus being born into this world, the ultimate cost would be His death. He was born to die for our sins.



Ephesians 5:1–2 (ESV) encourages us to be imitators of God, who “gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.” Christ gave *all* of Himself, not just His time, talent, or treasures. He gave the ultimate sacrifice, His own life. His birth signifies the start of a thirty-three-year span of time that would change humanity. (*Share a story about how you received something you did not deserve.*)

*Discussion Question: What gifts have you received that you know you did not deserve? How did that make you feel?*

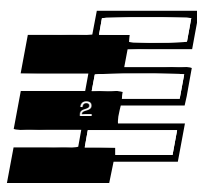
### Love in Action

The birth of Jesus Christ was not only a symbolic gesture of God’s love; it was a tangible demonstration of love in action. The very act of the Incarnation—the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us (John 1:14)—is the ultimate expression of God’s love. God entered into human history, taking on the form of a vulnerable baby born in humble circumstances. This act of self-emptying, of God coming as one of us, reveals the depth of His love and desire to be intimately connected with His creation.

Living quietly, Jesus didn’t garner much attention until He was an adult. When He began His ministry, He didn’t slow down loving and giving of Himself. Jesus lived out His life as a living, breathing billboard of love in action. He showed compassion to those who were marginalized. He healed people who were sick and afflicted. He exemplified treating people with dignity and respect. He flipped the tables on people who were turning God’s house into a corrupt business. He called out the hypocrites. Ultimately, His giving included sacrificing His own life.

### Receiving and Sharing Love

Undeniably, Christmas is a time of giving and receiving, but above all, it’s a time to experience *and share* the love of Christ with others. The “Pay It Forward” movement is a social phenomenon based on the idea of reciprocal kindness and generosity. The idea is simple: instead of repaying a favor or act of kindness directly to the person who helped you, you pay it forward by doing something kind for someone else. The hope is that these acts of kindness will create a ripple effect, inspiring others to do the same and ultimately fostering a more compassionate and caring society. At times this movement, although well-intended, can seem a little disingenuous.



For example, when there's a long string of cars that pay for the car behind them in line at a coffee shop, is it really paying it forward, or is it just paying for a drink like you were planning to anyway? In reality, the first person in the line was truly genuine. The beauty in the love Jesus shared was the fact that He gave His life for us, and there's nothing we can do to repay Him. So how do we respond? We share the gospel with as many people as we can. We can show the most gratitude to our loving Savior by sharing Him with others. We can be the hands and feet of Christ by loving and serving people who can do nothing for us in return.

*Discussion Questions: Who in your life can you share the love of Christ with? What in your life can you give, whether financially or with your time or with your talents?*

### Closing

The love of God that is ultimately revealed at the end of Jesus' earthly life strangely enough begins in a humble stable made for animals. Matthew 20:28 teaches that God "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." His love for us was so deep that He looked at the chaos, the turmoil, and the failures of humanity and decided to free us from bondage. His love for us spurred Him into action. *(Share your personal testimony here.)*

### ENGAGE

Make a list of three people with whom you can share your testimony sometime during this Christmas season. If God has been good to you, share with someone. If the gospel has been evidenced in your life, share that love with others. Celebrating Jesus without sharing Jesus would be a massive oversight during this month. Of course we should be sharing Jesus every month, but let's not forget about the real reason for this season. If you have an opportunity to serve in your community, say yes.

