

**QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION
& SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION
FOR DECEMBER 4 THRU DECEMBER 10, 2022**

—Over the next few weeks we'll be drawing our attention toward why and how we celebrate Christmas in the midst of a culture that typically enjoys the fun that surrounds Christmas, but wants to avoid or ignore the most important aspects of what it really means. The title of our series of sermons is, "Emmanuel: The Personal Appearance of God." Since we're celebrating the Lord's Supper this week, our message is connecting the dots between Christ's birth and death. God's Word never instructs, commands, or specifically directs us to celebrate Christmas —(or Easter). But it's vital for us to realize that each and every time we participate in the Lord's Supper, we're celebrating Christmas and Easter at the same time!

Here are some quotes that might provoke some interesting and productive discussion.

—“At the heart of the present significance of the Lord's Supper is our communion or fellowship with Christ, hence the term “communion service.” In coming to this service the believer comes to meet with Christ and have fellowship with Him at His invitation. The examination takes place because it would be hypocrisy for us to pretend that we are in communion with the Holy One while actually cherishing known sin in our hearts.”

—James Montgomery Boice

—“We should remember that it is through Christ's death that we are reconciled to God and each other. He has made us one, and we set our hearts on pursuing unity in love. The Lord's Supper is a great time to pray and plan for oneness with our brothers and sisters. It is a time to explore new ways to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving.”

—Ed Welch

—“What you have in the Bible is the truth of God verbally. What you have in the ordinances is the truth of God visibly.”

—Alistair Begg

—“In the Lord's Supper we remember the past. God's perfect plan that brings us the forgiveness of sins was fulfilled by the shedding of Christ's blood. The Lord instituted the Supper on the eve of His impending death in the context of a Passover meal. “Remembrance” itself is a word of faithfulness. The Israelites were often commanded to “remember” God's acts of promised faithfulness. In the Supper, Jesus has given us an ordinance by which we continually remember that our blessings were purchased through a costly price.”

—anonymous

—“The Lord's Supper (communion) draws believers together and strengthens our relationship with God by carving out space that enables remembrance and appreciation of what Christ has done for us. If we conduct communion improperly, the results can be extremely dangerous.”

—David Jeremiah

—“Never mind that bread and wine, unless you can use them as folks often use their spectacles. What do they use them for? To look at? No, to look through them. So, use the bread and wine as a pair of spectacles. Look through them, and do not be satisfied until you can say, ‘Yes, yes, I can see the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’”

—Charles Spurgeon

—“If we haven't learned to be worshippers it doesn't really matter how well we do anything else. Worship changes us or it has not been worship. To stand before the Holy One of eternity is to change. Worship begins in holy expectancy, it ends in holy obedience.”

—Erwin Lutzer

—“Hell exists because unbelievers are eternally guilty. The powerful lesson to be learned is that no human being's suffering can ever be a payment for sin. If our suffering could erase even the most insignificant sin, then those in hell would eventually be freed after their debt was paid. But all human goodness and suffering from the beginning of time, if added together, could not cancel so much as a single sin. Could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow, all for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone. “Rock of Ages”

—Erwin Lutzer

—“Our proper participation in the Lord’s Supper acknowledges that God redeemed his people by the provision of a substitute who would bear the judgment of a holy God upon sin.” —Alistair Begg

—“Emmanuel. God with us. He who resided in Heaven, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, willingly descended into our world. He breathed our air, felt our pain, knew our sorrows, and died for our sins. He didn’t come to frighten us, but to show us the way to warmth and safety.” —Chuck Swindoll

—“What a paradox that a babe in a manger should be called mighty! Yet even as a baby, Jesus Christ revealed power. His birth affected the heavens as that star appeared. The star affected the Magi, and they left their homes and made that long journey to Jerusalem. Their announcement shook King Herod and his court. Jesus’ birth brought angels from heaven and simple shepherds from their flocks on the hillside. Midnight became midday as the glory of the Lord appeared to men.” —Warren Wiersbe

—“You find joy in your inclusion in his work of redemption. You find hope in the glorious future that is to come. **You are amazed by the fact that because Emmanuel has invaded your life by his grace, you are never, ever alone. You find peace in the fact that grace means you are never left to the small resources of your own wisdom, righteousness, and strength.** You meditate on God’s glory and goodness, then celebrate. You rejoice in the fact that you no longer have to look for life in the people, situations, and locations around you, but you’ve been given life—life that is eternal.” —Paul David Tripp

—**These questions are designed to motivate us to dig deeper into God’s Word and to consider how to apply the truths presented in this study. Please observe/use Philippians 1:27–2:18 & 1 Corinthians 11:17–26 as a resource.**

1) Based on what we find in Philippians 1:27–2:18, but especially in 2:1–11, how is our behavior related to our understanding and application of scripture?

- How are our actions related to our attitude?
- How is our behavior connected with humility?
- How can a proud person grow in humility?
- What steps should he take?
- How does a humble person avoid becoming a doormat?

2) What is the relationship between trusting in the Lord as Savior and acknowledging His Lordship over our lives? Is it possible to separate belief/faith/trust in Christ as Savior from submission to Him as Lord?

3) Why did Jesus come to earth?

- Why was it essential for Him to become a human?
- Why is it important to recognize the Lord’s humility?
- What impact does Christ’s death on a cross have on our faith?

4) Emmanuel (or Immanuel) is intended to be an encouraging reality for us who have placed our trust (dependence) in Christ. Do you think we place enough emphasis on this? God’s personal presence in the life of every genuine follower of Christ is an extremely important privilege. How can we encourage one another to experience and enjoy this blessing in a more significant way?

5) What should our motives be in celebrating the Lord’s Table?
—What personal influence/impact does it have in our life?

6) Why is it beneficial to prepare spiritually for participating in the Lord’s Supper? What steps should we take in examining our lives? How does confessing our sins improve our relationship with the Lord?