



A Christmas Series – Lesson 4

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Leader Outline

Lesson: December 26th and Beyond

Main text: Romans 6:23

Description: Christmas reminds us of how amazing the story of Christ is and how it changed the world forever. Don't let the joy and wonder of Christmas be something that fades away when the Christmas tree comes down—take it into every area of your life.

Supplies:

- A large, wrapped gift box
- Two flashlights
- Ten Christmas decorations of any kind
- Small gift boxes or bags for the students with pieces of paper in them—some should say **not worrying**, some should say **reading**, some should say **remembering**, and some should say **giving**.

Game: A lamp for my feet

Small Group Questions:

1. What's an example of a way you act differently at Christmas than you do the rest of the year?
2. Do you think about Jesus more during Christmas?
3. Do you worry more or less around Christmastime?
4. Jesus is a gift—do we treat Him like He is?
5. Do you read your Bible at home? Is it something that makes you feel closer to Jesus?
6. Do you think you give to others more at Christmas than you do during the rest of the year?
7. What are some ways you can give to others around you?
8. We have eternal life through Jesus—how can we celebrate that in our day-to-day life?

9. Are you going to spend more time this year thinking about how great of a gift Jesus' birth was? Do you think maybe you'll read "the Christmas story" several times this year?

10. How does it make you feel to give to others? How do you think Jesus feels when we give to others?

Game

Turn the lights off and designate a path for this game. Scatter the Christmas decorations messily on the path.

Split the group into two teams. Tell them that the objective is to get to the end of the path without tripping over anything. *Also tell them to walk, not run, so that when they do trip, they won't hurt themselves.*

If they trip, they have to find a bell hidden in the room and ring it before they can start over.

Let the first two or three people go. After a few people have gone, give the next two players flashlights to use, but tell them they can't turn them on; they can only hold them.

Let a few more players play this way. Then, give the next players flashlights and allow them to turn them on and use them. Chances are, they won't have to ring the bell and start over at all.

The first team to get all of their players to the end without tripping wins!

Teach

Wow, you guys certainly are clumsy! Are some of you wondering why I gave you the flashlight but didn't let you turn it on? Well, we'll get to that soon! First, we're going to talk about Christmas.

Christmas is a wonderful time that often causes us to think more about Jesus than we do the rest of the year. There's just something about seeing Christmas trees everywhere and hearing *Silent Night* on the radio every day that makes us think about what Christmas really means. Everyone's joyful and giving, you have a break to spend time with your friends and family, and life can just feel magical.

And then, December 26th happens. You wake up, and all the magic is over.

Sure, it's not *really* over. But the Christmas trees start coming down, the music everywhere goes back to normal, and everything is a little less sparkly and a little less joyful.

We go back to our normal lives, back to work, back to school, back to practices. And little by little, we forget about how great of a mood we've been in for the last few weeks, how loved we felt when we were sitting around with our family on Christmas morning.

And that's okay. If it was Christmas all the time, we probably wouldn't like it as much!

But there's one thing that we sometimes let slip away after Christmas that we absolutely shouldn't.

And that's the remembrance of Jesus.

Because, let's just be real for a minute, it's easier to think about Jesus at Christmastime. I mean, how many times did you guys hear the words "reason for the season" this year? I'm guessing a lot.

If you know Jesus, it's impossible to go through the Christmas season without thinking of Him and realizing that the whole reason we celebrate is because of Him. You can't hear *Silent Night* without thinking about how Jesus was actually born in a stable. You can't read the Christmas story without being so thankful that Jesus was born for you.

And that's something that should stick around long after the Christmas tree comes down.

So tonight, I thought we'd talk about some ways we can keep Christmas around all year long—not the music or the decorations—but the joy and wonder that comes along with this time of year.

1. Don't Worry.

If we went around the room and took turns saying how Christmastime makes us feel, we'd probably have a variety of different answers. But I bet that not a lot of you would say Christmas makes you feel *worried*.

Christmas isn't a time of worry; it's a time of being happy! Even if things aren't going so well around December, it's just easier to be happy when everyone around us is celebrating.

But did you know that God doesn't ever want us to worry, no matter what time of year it is?

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: they do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?" - Luke 12:22-26

Jesus has a pretty good point here. No matter how hard we worry—and I know some of you guys are professional worriers—we can't so much as add an hour to our life. So, to quote Jesus, "Why do you worry about the rest?"

You shouldn't. Jesus is straight up telling you, "Listen, you can't do it." You can't take care of yourself all the time. But do you know who can? Your heavenly Father. And you are so valuable in His eyes. So stop worrying!

God's provision for you lasts all year long; so not worrying should be something you practice all year long.

2. Remember that Jesus is a Gift.

We all know that the reason we celebrate Christmas is the birth of Jesus. It's worth celebrating! But we have to remember; He also died for us so that our sins could be forgiven. That's the greatest gift ever, and it's one we should celebrate!

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
– Romans 6:23

The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus. How amazing is that? We're all sinners; I think we can all agree on that. But because of the amazing gift of Jesus, we have eternal life! What a gift!

I need a volunteer to come up here.

Get out wrapped box.

Okay, let's say it's Christmas, and I'm giving you a gift. If you could have anything you wanted, anything at all, what would it be? Use your wildest imagination here. What's the greatest gift you can imagine?

Wait for them to come up with an answer.

Wow, that is a good gift. Okay, lucky for you, that's what I got you for Christmas! Here you go; it's all wrapped up for you!

Hand them the box.

Now, I've just given you the best gift you could imagine in that box, now what are you going to do with it?

Wait until they start to open it, then yell as loud as you can.

STOP!

Whoa, what are you doing? Why are you opening that? I know I gave it to you, but it's a *Christmas* gift. It's not Christmas right now, so why are you opening it? Here, just give it back to me. I'll give it to you again next Christmas.

Now, how silly would that be? To get a really awesome gift for Christmas, and to only get to enjoy it *on* Christmas?

But isn't that how we act about Jesus sometimes?

I'm going to ask you a question. You don't have to answer out loud, but I want you to be honest with yourself. When it's not Christmas, how many times do you think about how great of a gift the birth of Jesus was?

This is something we should be celebrating every single day!

3. Read Your Bible.

Whether you realize it or not, Christmas is a time when you just can't avoid the Bible! Even if you haven't read the Christmas story yourself this year, chances are that you've heard it here or somewhere else.

You see verses written on decorations and in store windows. Even most Christmas songs have parts of the Bible in them!

The Bible is way too important to only read on Christmas.

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. – Psalm 119:105

Just take a guess here—how many times this year do you think you’re going to say something along the lines of, “I have no idea what to do” or “I have no clue what direction my life should be going” or something like that? Probably a lot!

But here we have this verse talking about the Bible, which is the Word of God.

In the game we played tonight, where did you point the light? Not up, not only straight ahead of you. No, you pointed it at your feet. Why? Because you knew there were going to be things you were going to trip over. You needed to see where your feet were going.

That’s exactly what this verse is talking about. Life is kind of like the way the room was when we played that game—dark and full of obstacles and unknown twists and turns.

We’re pretty much in the dark when it comes to life. We know we can trust God and that He has a plan for us, but we don’t know everything that plan includes. We don’t even know what’s going to happen tomorrow. So it goes without saying that there are going to be times when we’re very confused about where we should go and what we should do.

Times when we’re going to need a light on our path.

And what do you know, that’s exactly what we have. God’s Word is so full of wisdom and instruction and love that reading it will be a light for our path. How? Because it instructs us. It tells us how to live, what to do, how to pray. It’s full of so many helpful things!

If you were in a dark room and were given a flashlight, what good would it do you if you didn’t turn it on? None at all!

It’s the same with the Bible. You have to open it and read it!

4. Keep on Giving.

When we talk about our favorite parts of Christmas in groups like this, we usually leave out presents because we’re afraid that we’ll sound selfish or like we don’t know what Christmas is really about.

But let’s be real...we all love presents.

We’ve already talked about how we’ve been given the greatest gift of all through Jesus, but what about gifts that we can give?

One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
– Proverbs 11:24-25

This verse is so cool because it tells us how much we gain from giving to others. It says that when we give, we gain even more.

If you've ever given a Christmas gift to someone you care about, you know what this verse is talking about. Sure, you're giving the gift. But getting to see them so happy because of something you did is worth way more than the gift was.

You can't go wrong with being generous! We're not only talking about money here—we're talking about everything. Be generous with your love for others, with your friendship. That's a greater gift that money could ever buy!

Be generous with your forgiveness and with your help. Be generous in taking care of others—it says here that if you refresh others, you'll be refreshed yourself.

Don't let the spirit of giving be something stays in December. Take it with you all year long.

Small Group Questions

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Teach – Wrap-Up

Tonight, you've learned four ways you can "keep Christmas alive" all year long. But really, that's not what it's about. It's how you can honor Jesus all year long. How you can keep the joy over His gifts to you alive all year long. How you can celebrate the fact that Jesus came *for you* all year long.

Pass out little gift boxes or bags.

Inside of these bags are one of the four things we've learned about tonight—either remembering, giving, reading, or not worrying. This week, I want you to practice that specific thing.

If your piece of paper says giving, then go out of your way to give to others this week. If it says reading, then spend some extra time getting to know God through His Word. If it says remembering, set aside time to remember how great of a gift Jesus is, and thank Him for it every day. If it says not worrying, then every time you start to worry this week, give that worry over to God. Then next week, do that thing, plus one of the other three.

Hopefully, this time next year, you will be able to look back and see that you did all four of these things all year long, and that your relationship with Jesus is much better because of it.