

# **A Christmas Journey**

*Filled with Wonder, Marked by the Cross*

A devotional study guide

## ***1. What If Jesus Never Came?***

How can we say that the real joy of Christmas lies outside our circumstances?  
Has Jesus' coming made a difference in how you process your hardest Christmas?  
Can we really celebrate Christmas without moving from the cradle to the cross?  
If Jesus had never come how would your life be different?

## ***2. Jesus Is God***

Why is the worship of Jesus at the center of the Christmas celebration?  
How does everything depend on the true identity of Jesus and our relationship to him?  
How can it be that although we may be greatly loved by family and friends we are as good as unloved?  
We cannot grasp all that is meant by Jesus being fully God and fully human. But can we grasp what this means for our relationship to God?

## ***3. A Christian Christmas***

What is the difference between a traditional Christmas and a Christian Christmas?  
Can you have a real Christmas without celebrating in Norman Rockwell fashion?  
What is the material existence that defies the world's materialism?  
How does the God-intended austerity of Christ in the manger challenge our faith?

## ***4. The Prince of Peace***

Can you identify with the problem of the Christmas luncheon?  
What does your search for peace look like this year?  
How is the peace of the world different from the peace of God?  
If God's shalom is not imposed, earned, or achieved, how can we receive it?

## ***5. Ground Zero***

When you read, "Nothing about Bethlehem was ever meant to be sentimental," what did you think?  
Why is Bethlehem special in salvation history?  
How does the Book of Revelation (12:1-5) give us a different perspective on Bethlehem as ground zero in the Lord's cosmic conflict with the devil?  
Why is the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem consistent with the believer's new birth (John 3:7)?

## ***6. No Ordinary People***

Do you see yourself in the celebrants of the first Christmas?  
What did C. S. Lewis mean when he said there are no ordinary people?  
Who in that first group of celebrants do you resonate with the most?  
How can you choose joy this Christmas?

## ***7. Perfect Timing***

How have you experienced the difference between *chronos* time and *kairos* time?

If we are going to discern the true meaning of life, why do we need more than information? Why do we need revelation?

In what sense did Jesus come in the fullness of time?

What is significant about the universal truth of the universe, that is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ taking place in history?

## ***8. God Sent His Son***

Why did God invade the mess of the human condition in the most personal and costly way imaginable?

How did the sending God hint that he would invade “enemy-occupied territory” the way he did?

What is the difference between grasping the Father’s love in the sending of his Son with deep emotion versus celebrating it sentimentally?

Offer your take on the statement: It is easy to celebrate the mood of Christmas without Jesus, but it is impossible to celebrate the meaning of Christmas without Jesus?

## ***9. Born of a Woman***

How should we tell the Christmas story?

What makes the miracle of the virgin birth and the Incarnation of God reasonable?

How does Mary model the meaning of true discipleship?

Is science an obstacle to faith in God or a powerful witness?

## ***10. Born Under the Law***

How is the truth about the human condition hidden in our holiday cheer?

Why is the law of God important for understanding the grace of God?

How do our old Christmas carols drive home the meaning of Christmas?

A person who needs a heart-transplant knows exactly the gift she needs, but do we know the gift that we need?

## ***11. Coming Home for Christmas***

Have you experienced God’s love?

Can you affirm that God made the first move toward us and has continued the movement ever since?

Reflect on the truth that we are all children of Adam in search of our true and lasting home.

Are you in the family of God? Do you know that you have been adopted in Christ?