

Small Group Guide: “CHRISTMAS: The Coming Love”

Opening Question: What's the most meaningful gift you've ever received? What made it so special?

Opening Prayer: *Heavenly Father, we thank You for bringing us together today. As we gather to discuss the message we received from Pastor Dan, we ask for Your presence among us. Help us to open our hearts to the lessons of love, identity, and community that You have for us. Guide our discussion and let Your truths be illuminated in our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

KEY SERMON POINTS

1. God's Love Gives Me a New Identity

- When we accept Christ, we become new creations
- Our identity should be rooted in Christ, not in our work, relationships, or possessions
- The only thing that cannot be taken from us is God's unconditional love

2. God's Love Gives Me a New Ability

- Through the Holy Spirit, we receive power, love, and self-discipline
- Our goals should be faith goals, connected to our spiritual growth
- It's about trusting God's power, not trying in our own strength

3. God's Love Gives Me a New Community

- We are adopted into God's family through Christ
- The church provides support and a foundation of truth
- In Christ, we are one body despite our differences

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Understanding God's Gift

1. Pastor Dan said, "Christmas is not about the spirit of giving, but about receiving God's gift." How does this perspective change the way you think about Christmas?
2. **Read Romans 8:32.** What are some of the "all things" God graciously gives us along with Jesus? How have you experienced these gifts in your life?
3. The sermon mentioned that "you can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving." What does this reveal about God's character and His gift of Jesus?

New Identity in Christ

4. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.** What does it mean to be a "new creation"? How is this different from just "turning over a new leaf"?
5. Personal Reflection: When you look in the mirror, do you see yourself through your past failures or through God's eyes as a new creation? What would need to change for you to see yourself as God sees you?
6. The sermon stated, "Only God knows your true identity because He's the one that created you." How can we practically shift from seeing ourselves through the world's lens to seeing ourselves through God's lens?

New Ability Through the Spirit

7. What's the difference between "trying" in our own strength and "trusting" in God's power?
8. **Read Philippians 2:13 and 2 Timothy 1:7.** How do these verses encourage you when you feel powerless to change or grow?
9. The sermon mentioned that busyness is often the enemy's tool to separate us from spiritual growth. How has busyness affected your spiritual life? What practical steps can you take to guard against this?

New Community in Christ

10. **Read 1 Timothy 3:15 and Ephesians 1:5.** What does it mean that the church is our family, not just an organization or social club?
11. **Read Galatians 3:28.** How does this vision of unity in Christ challenge cultural divisions we see today?
12. What spiritual gifts has God given you "for the common good" of the church family? How are you currently using them, or how could you begin to use them?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS (Choose 1 or 2 that apply to you.)

1. Reflect on your current identity and ask God to help you see yourself as He sees you.
2. Take some time this week to set spiritual goals for the new year, ensuring they align with God's purpose for you.
3. Assess areas in your life where you are relying on your strength rather than the power of the Holy Spirit, and commit to making changes.
4. Intentionally reach out to someone in the church community to encourage, support, or pray with them.
5. Consider how you can contribute your gifts and talents to your community group or church to help others grow.

MEMORY VERSE for the Week:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Closing Prayer: *Lord, thank You for the time we've had together to discuss Your word and its impact on our lives. As we go forth from this meeting, may Your love continue to shape our identity, empower us to live out Your will, and unite us in community. Help us to carry the lessons of Jesus' birth into our daily lives, reflecting Your love to all we meet. We ask for Your guidance and strength in all we do. In Jesus' name, amen.*