



Light of the World, Pt. 1: From Bitterness to Love

Christmas may be the most loved and most dreaded season all at the same time. People look forward to seeing some family and friends, but dread seeing others. Each of us probably has someone we have bitterness towards, but part of God's desire for us this Christmas involves trading in bitterness for something far better.

Bottom Line: Love can replace bitterness because love is stronger.

Discussion Questions:

1. The word advent means "arrival, an appearing or coming into place." As Christians, Advent is a commemoration of Christ's first coming and an anticipation of his Second coming. When you were a child, did you have an Advent calendar? If you did, describe it and discuss with the group the significance of it in your house.
2. John describes the first Advent by saying in **John 1:9**, "The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world." Who was John describing? What did this mean for the broken world?
3. **Read Luke 2:8-18.** Shepherds in those days were thought to be unclean, lacking of character, and not the type of people who were accepted by society. Why do you think God picked the shepherds to be the first to hear that Jesus had been born? What did the shepherds do after they witnessed the birth of Jesus? How did this change the shepherds?
4. **Read Luke 2:10 again.** "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, I bring good news that will cause great joy for *all* the people.'" God wants everyone to receive his peace, good-will, and favor. Even people that cause others pain. Think about the activities you have planned this Christmas: family gatherings, office parties, etc. Are you dreading any of these activities because of a person or people you will have to see? If you're comfortable, discuss this situation with your group. Then pray this prayer each week: *God, the person I'm bitter toward, they're more than what they've done to me. What they did to me wasn't right, and what I've done back to them because of what they've done to me isn't right either. God help me see the person I resent the way You see them.*
5. What has been the most helpful thought/idea from the message this week? How has that thought/idea helped you?
6. How can the group encourage you this week?

*If time doesn't allow for you to discuss all of these questions, use only the ones you feel would be most helpful for your group.