

WHO NEEDS CHRISTMAS



INTRODUCTION

Who needs Christmas? Seriously. Who? Well, as it turns out, we all do.

USING THIS GUIDE

1. Print a copy of the guide for each member of your group.
 2. Watch the video as a group and use the guide to following along and take notes.
 3. Complete the discussion questions when prompted by the video.
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PART I : THE WORLD DID VIDEO NOTES

The Lord had said to **Abram**, “Go from your **country**, your **people** and your **father’s household** to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great **nation**, and I will **bless** you; I will make your name **great**, and you will be a **blessing**. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and **all** peoples on earth will be **blessed through you**.” Genesis 12:1-3

**BLESSED?
CONQUERED
ENSLAVED
PLUNDERED**

**ABRAHAM BELIEVED THE
UNBELIEVABLE.**

“I will also make you a **light** for the Gentiles, that my **salvation** may reach to the ends of the **earth**.” Isaiah 49:6

My **name** will be great among the **nations**, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In **every place** incense and pure offerings will be brought to **me**, because **my name** will be **great** among the **nations**,” says the Lord Almighty. Malachi 1:11

All the nations would **not** be **blessed** through Abraham.

Israel would **not** be a **light** to the Gentiles.

The Jewish God would **not** be **worshipped** throughout the world.

When the **set time** had fully come . . . God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of **David**. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly **favor**ed! The Lord is with you.” You have found **favor** with God. You will

*conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him **Jesus**. He will be **great** and will be called the **Son of the Most High**. The Lord God will give him the **throne** of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; . . . his kingdom will never end."*
Galatians 4:4; Luke 1:26–33

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Is the Christmas season a positive or negative time for you? How would you typically describe the holidays?

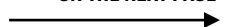
- Stressful
- Delightful
- Nostalgic
- Lonely
- Joyful
- Dreadful
- Family-filled
- Frustrating
- Lighthearted
- Sad

2. In the video, Andy traced how the Christmas story unfolded over two thousand years until, as the apostle Paul said, "The set time had fully come"—until the conditions were exactly how God wanted them.

When has God's timing been different than the timing you hoped or even prayed for?

How did you feel at the time? How does hindsight change your feelings?

3. The struggling nation of Israel had no reason to believe God's promises given their dire circumstances. Talk about a time when you've seen someone trust God despite challenging or seemingly hopeless circumstances.
4. The full Christmas story—from God's promises to Abraham all the way to the birth of Jesus—is a reminder of God's timing and his faithfulness. Which of those do you need to be reminded of this season?



PART 2 : GOD DID VIDEO NOTES

But when the set time had fully come, God **sent** his Son, **born** of a woman, **born** under the law, to **redeem** those under the law, that we might receive **adoption** to **sonship**. Galatians 4:4-5

Demonstration: Jesus' death was a demonstration of how much he was **for us**.

Why couldn't Jesus just **pronounce** everybody **forgiven**?

TO DISHONOR THE SOURCE OF **LIFE** IS AN EXPRESSION OF INGRATITUDE DESERVING THE **FORFEITURE** OF LIFE.

But God **demonstrates** his own love **for us** in this: While we were still **sinners**, Christ died **for us**. Romans 5:8

You disowned the **Holy** and **Righteous** One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You **killed** the **author of life**, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. Acts 3:14-15

JESUS' DEATH DEMONSTRATED THE **MAGNITUDE** OF OUR **INGRATITUDE** AND THE **MAGNITUDE** OF HIS **LOVE** FOR US.

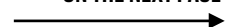
Very **rarely** will anyone die for a **righteous** person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But **God demonstrates** his own love for us in this: While we were **still sinners**, Christ died for us. Romans 5:7-8

“Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he will save his people from their **sins**.” All this took place to **fulfill** what the Lord had said through the prophet [Isaiah]: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him **Immanuel**” (which means “God **with us**”). Matthew 1:20-23

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Did your family have any unique Christmas traditions when you were a child? If so, share one.

QUESTIONS CONTINUE
ON THE NEXT PAGE



2. Andy brought up a few questions that are central to the message of Christmas (e.g., *Why did God have to come as a baby? Why did Jesus have to die?*). What questions about Jesus or the Christmas story have you wrestled with at some point?
3. Have you ever needed to “see it to believe it”? What were you unconvinced about? How did seeing proof change your opinion?
4. God needed Christmas because he needed a way to *demonstrate* his love—“love must be shown to be known.” How has someone in your life shown love for you through action or sacrifice?
5. In the message, Andy said, “The only way God could demonstrate his love for you at a personal level was to make a sacrifice *you* would know about.” How does this change your view of what we celebrate at Christmas?

PART 3 : WE DO

VIDEO NOTES

*This is how the birth of **Jesus the Messiah** came about: His mother Mary was **pledged** to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was **found** to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the **law**, and yet did not want to expose her to **public disgrace**, he had in mind to divorce her **quietly**. But after he had **considered** this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph **son of David**, do not be **afraid** to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a **son**, and you are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he will **save** his people from **their sins**.” Matthew 1:18–21*

ROME NEEDS SAVING FROM SIN. WE NEED SAVING FROM ROME.

*When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had **commanded** him and took Mary home as his wife. Matthew 1:24*

*You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people **from their sins**.”
You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will **forgive** his people **of their sins**.”
Matthew 1:21 (2nd verse is paraphrased)*



WE REDUCE CHRISTMAS TO FORGIVENESS.

Nobody's perfect, but God forgives.

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have **life**, and have it to the **full**.* John 10:10

*Therefore do not let **sin reign** in your mortal body so that you **obey** its evil desires. Do not **offer** any part of yourself to **sin** as an instrument of wickedness, **but** rather **offer yourselves to God** as those who have been brought **from** death **to** life. For **sin** shall no longer be your **master**. For the wages of **sin** is **death**, but the **gift of God** is eternal **life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

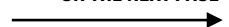
Romans 6:12-14, 23

FORGIVENESS FOR FREEDOM FROM

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. What's the best (or worst) Christmas gift you've ever received?
2. Which detail in the Christmas story seems the most far-fetched? Do you agree with Andy's argument that these unbelievable details are exactly why we can believe the story?
3. In the message, Andy said, "Sin always kills something"—maybe a marriage, a career, or a person's self-esteem. What are some other things that may die as a result of our sin?
4. Have you or someone you know experienced the difference between *forgiveness* for sin and freedom from sin? Did following Jesus play a role in the situation?

QUESTIONS CONTINUE
ON THE NEXT PAGE



5. In John 10:10, Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” In other words, Jesus came to free us from our slavery to sin. So what freedom—what type of abundant life—are you wishing for this Christmas? Here are a few examples to get you started . . .

MASTERED BY SIN	ABUNDANT LIFE
<i>Impulsive spending</i>	<i>Financial margin (enough money to be generous)</i>
<i>Anger</i>	<i>Peace (not hurting people with my words)</i>
<i>Addiction</i>	<i>Self-control (forgiving pain instead of numbing it)</i>