

Study Guide

Session 1: Emmanuel, God with Us

**SESSION GOALS**

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

**Main Idea:** God has sent his son to dispel our darkness, saving us from sin and death.

**Head Change:** To know Jesus promises his presence to anyone who receives him.

**Heart Change:** To feel God’s nearness in every circumstance.

**Life Change:** To rely on Christ, even when our path is dark and unclear.

**OPEN**

**What do you love most about Christmas? What holiday traditions do you get most excited about this time of year?**

Christmas is one of our most important and beloved holidays, but it takes place during the darkest time of the year. That is a strange contrast, but it’s not an accident. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. It reminds us that God has entered our wintry darkness of sin to bring us light, love, joy, and peace. Jesus has come so that we might be with God now and into eternity.

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**REVIEW**

In the book of Isaiah, God uses multiple names to describe Jesus. God calls him Emmanuel, Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, and Everlasting Father. These names are rich with meaning—meaning that will change your life. In this first session, J.D. Greear discussed the first name, Emmanuel, and the powerful truth of God being with us.

Emmanuel literally means “God with us.” **In what ways have you recognized that God is with you? What, if anything, can make you think he is not with you?**

It can be easy to feel disconnected from the people and promises of the Old Testament. But, while we are not in the same situation as the ancient Israelites, we all are living in some kind of darkness, be it the darkness of fear, betrayal, illness, loss, or hopelessness. **What darkness are you currently living in?**

**What in your life do you wish God would rescue you from?**

Think about God’s promise to his people. He promised he would send Emmanuel, God with us. J.D. said that if God is with you, he will work everything out for your good and his glory. This is good news! **In what ways would your life change if you believed that every situation would work out for your good?**

**What could it look like for you to glorify God in your current circumstances?**

J.D. said Jesus took on death so that we would only have to experience its shadow. If you trust Christ, your current darkness is passing. **In what ways does seeing your darkness as a passing shadow change your perspective on your circumstances?**

If you are not a Christian or are just learning about Jesus, the name Emmanuel is an invitation. God came because our lives were shrouded in darkness. If you feel like you are in darkness, know that for *you* a child has been born. To *you* a son has been given. Jesus came for *you* in your darkness. **What, in your mind, makes Jesus’s arrival good news? What questions do you have about Jesus?**

Horizontal lines for writing.







