



The Purpose of Christmas DVD Study Guide
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HOST TIP: Welcome! If you are doing this study with a small group, give everyone a chance to introduce themselves and briefly share how they came to be a part of the group. Then take a few minutes to review the Group Guidelines on pages 57–58. These guidelines will help everyone know what to expect and how to contribute to a meaningful small group time.

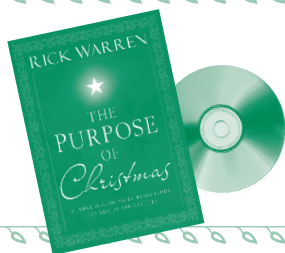
LOOKING AHEAD

1. Briefly share your favorite Christmas memory.
2. Is anything distracting you from the joy of this season?

KEY VERSE

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

John 3:16 NIV



Watch the Session One video now and fill in the blanks in the outline on pages 13–15. Refer back to the outline during your discussion time.



A TIME FOR CELEBRATION

The birth of Jesus Christ is the most significant event in the history of mankind. It split history into BC and AD. Every time you write a check, celebrate a birthday, fill out an application form, or any time you use a date, you're using the birth of Jesus Christ as the basis for measuring time.

Christmas was God's idea. He planned when it would happen, how it would happen, where it would happen, and why it would happen. And since it was his idea, we should find out what he had in mind.

On the night Jesus Christ was born, God sent an angel to announce his arrival. In that birth announcement, we find God's three purposes of Christmas.

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." (Luke 2:8 – 10 NIV)

The first purpose of Christmas is _____.

Three Reasons to Celebrate

1. God _____ you.

*"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
(John 3:16 NIV)*

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What God is saying to you at Christmas is, “I love you. It’s not just the world I love — it’s *you* that I love.” God’s love isn’t based on what you do. His love is based on who he is.

³⁵Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? . . . ³⁷No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. ³⁸And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow — not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. ³⁹No power in the sky above or in the earth below — indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35 – 39 NLT)

2. God is _____ you.

⁷Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. ⁹If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, ¹⁰even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. (Psalm 139:7 – 10 NIV)

“I will never leave you; I will never abandon you.” (Hebrews 13:5 TEV)

God will never abandon you. You may not feel like he’s near, but that just means you’re not tuned in. You’re not connected. You’re not plugged into the source.

“It is not good for the man to be alone.” (Genesis 2:18 NIV)

God sets the lonely in families. (Psalm 68:6 NIV)

A Time for Celebration



3. God is _____ you.

God is not against you. He's not out to get you or make you miserable. He's on your side. He wants to give your life purpose and meaning.

"God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it." (John 3:17 LB)

If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31 NIV)

The God who created the universe, and who set the stars in their places and the world on its axis, says, "I love you, I am with you, I am for you." No matter who you are, where you've come from, or what you've done in your life, the Good News is for you. And that is worth celebrating!

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following statements is the most meaningful to you in this season of your life and why? God loves you. God is with you. God is for you.
2. Read Romans 8:35 – 39 in the outline (see page 14) and underline the phrase that means the most to you. Briefly explain why you selected that phrase.

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3. Psalm 68:6 says, “*God sets the lonely in families.*” How has God used your family, friends, or even this group to help you experience his love?

4. If you really believe God is for you and not against you, what is one thought, attitude, or behavior that you need to change?

5. Now that you know how much God loves you, how will that affect the way you celebrate Christmas this year?

LIVING ON PURPOSE: FELLOWSHIP

Do you have a friend or family member who needs to hear the truths you learned today? Why not invite them to join your group? Turn to the Circles of Life diagram on page 59 of this study guide. Take a moment to ask God to bring to your mind the names of people for each category in the diagram. Then commit to your small group that you will invite at least one person from your Circles of Life diagram to your next group meeting. Prepare for growth! Surveys have found that at least half of those invited to a small group accept the invitation.



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

1. *The Purpose of Christmas*, by Rick Warren, is the perfect complement to this DVD study. Read pages 3 – 37 this week. Be prepared to share your thoughts and insights with the group in your next session.
2. It's party time! Pastor Rick challenged your group to host a simple Christmas party for your friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers. What's important right now is to decide who is going to host it and when you are going to have it. The best person to host the party is usually the most outgoing person in your group. But everybody has to get involved by bringing something and inviting someone. This could be a cookie exchange, a potluck, a night of caroling, etc. Take a moment to write down the names of a couple people you could invite, and then discuss plans with your group.



PRAYER DIRECTION

HOST TIP: If your group has more than seven or eight people, you may want to break into smaller groups for prayer.

Following you will find two sections, one for personal prayer and one for group prayer requests. Take a few minutes to write a personal prayer based on today's session and what you're most thankful about. Then write down a few of the group prayer requests before you pray together.

Sometimes talking to God can be scary, but nothing can be scarier than being asked to pray out loud. After personal and group prayer requests are made you may want to have people pray, "Lord I thank you

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for _____. God I need help with _____.
Jesus, I'm trusting you with _____.”
This may help everyone get started.

Personal Prayer

Father, today I learned ... _____

Thank you, Lord, for ... _____



Group Prayer

Name	Request
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

DAILY CHRISTMAS PRAYER JOURNAL

God desires to have a relationship with you where you connect with him throughout the day. This comes naturally for some people, but for others this is not so easy. That's why we have created this Daily Christmas Prayer Journal where you can write your daily conversations with God.

This journal is uniquely designed to help you record your thoughts and reflections to God on a daily basis. You will find simple suggestions to help get you started each day in a conversation with God. This journal is perfect for those who are not accustomed to journaling. For those who are, it's like your own daily Advent journal. Discover the beauty of the Christmas season and a deeper connection with God by completing your Daily Christmas Prayer Journal.

Now turn the page to begin your Daily Christmas Prayer Journal.

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DAILY CHRISTMAS PRAYER JOURNAL

Dear God, this Christmas I hope ...

December 1

Lord, I am so grateful ...

December 2

Father, help me see ...

December 3

A Time for Celebration



Lord, help me celebrate ...

December 4

Forgive me, Lord, for ...

December 5

Father, I pray for ...

December 6

Lord, help my family to see ...

December 7
