



CORNERSTONE

Sermon Based Study Guide

Advent 2016

Immanuel: Eden

November 27, 2016 – Kyle Bokma

Leader's Guide: Do not feel like you need to use all these questions for your CG discussion. Pick and choose what you think would be best for your group. After listening to the sermon, you may have your own points for discussion.

Here is the link to the sermon podcasts and archives of these Study Guides:

<http://cornerstonesimi.com/#/resourcesmediaclasses>

1. Discuss what it means that we are made in the image of God. Talk about all the different aspects of that: purpose, value, personality, etc. How do you think we should live our lives based on the fact that we are made in the image of God? Do you think you are pretty good 'image-bearer'? How can you bear His image more accurately?

2. Kyle talked about how important relationship was in the Garden of Eden. Because of sin, that aspect of relationship is broken. But we can still have a relationship with God. In fact, much of the Bible talks about the different ways God has worked to restore relationship with Him. We will see some of those ways over the next few Sundays of Advent.

Discuss these questions:

- Why is having a relationship with God so important?
- How do we nurture that relationship? What are the ways we build that relationship?
- How does the 'longing' for relationship with God manifest itself in your life? What does that longing look like for you?
- What frustrates you about trying to build a relationship with God?
- What aspects of having a relationship with God do you feel are still inadequate or are still in the future?
- Do you long for those unfulfilled aspects of relationship? What does that feel like? If you don't long for those 'not-yet' aspects of relationship with God, why not? What needs to change?

3. Human relationships can be most wonderful things on earth; and can also cause the most pain. How have you experienced the longing for relationship with other people? How has that desire for relationship been crushed and damaged? How have you put up walls or closed yourself off from relationship because of the pain? Think about, pray about, maybe discuss some steps that you could take to move out from behind those walls and pursue relationship once again.

This has the potential to be a very vulnerable and painful discussion. So proceed carefully and gently.



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Immanuel: The Tabernacle

December 4, 2016 – Christian Burkhardt

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1. Ice Breaker: Share about a time when you really 'felt' God's presence in a unique and special way.
2. Last week we talked about how much God wants to have a relationship with us. How does His name Immanuel (Matt. 1:23) reassure us of this desire? How does this give you comfort or reassurance?
3. After hearing Christian explain what it was like at Mt. Sinai, discuss the implications and emotions of God wanting to be with His people. See Exodus 19:16-22. Talk about how the Israelites of that day might feel about God wanting to be with them. How is it different today? Why is it different today?
4. At first glance, a study of the Tabernacle doesn't seem very much like Christmas. But how does the Tabernacle explain Christmas? How is the purpose of the Tabernacle like the purpose of Christmas? How are they different?
5. Take some time and talk about some very specific ways you can prevent Christmas from becoming so commercialized and "non-Christ-centered." What can you do to slow down, to reduce busy-ness, to keep the focus on Jesus?



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Advent 2016

Immanuel: The Savior

John 1:1-18

December 11, 2016 – Todd Nighswonger

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1. Todd talked about how Christ made things more beautiful by undoing the effects of the fall through His miracles, interaction with people, etc. For an ice breaker, go around the group and everyone share a way in which Christ made things more beautiful while he was on earth, that has impacted you the most.
2. Last week we learned that God wants to be present with us. This week we learn that God wants to change us. What do these two truths teach us about God's character?
3. Jesus undid the curse of the fall in small pockets around Palestine while He was on earth. He healed sickness and even raised some people back to life. Then He explained that He also came to unleash a movement of people who would do the same thing—reversing the effects of the curse in small pockets all over the world. To do this, however, he had to first do an internal work in these people. We know that the curse has impacted the world, but why do you think that we tend to see the problems in our lives as merely external and not also internal? How does this affect how we approach our friendships, marriages, families, work environment, politics, etc.?
4. The idea of being “born again” is essential to the Christian faith. The Apostle Paul explained the outcome of new birth in this way: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Cor 5:17). Since receiving Christ (John 1:12), how do you see that you have been made new and beautiful? What areas of your life do you see that still need to be beautified?
5. To prepare us for next week, think about the people that have brought grace or beauty to your life. How have you brought grace or beauty to other people's lives? How can you be more intentional about bringing grace and beauty to other people's lives?



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Advent 2016
Immanuel: The Kingdom

December 18, 2016 – Joshua Walker

Leader's Guide: Do not feel like you need to use all these questions for your CG discussion. Pick and choose what you think would be best for your group. After listening to the sermon, you may have your own points for discussion.

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1. Take a few minutes and review the past 4 weeks of Advent. The theme has been: *Immanuel, God With Us*. Talk about how The Garden, The Tabernacle, The Savior, and The Kingdom all manifest 'God with us'. Discuss the similarities and the differences in these 4 manifestations of God's presence. Talk about how Christmas is all about this theme.
2. What are some of the things Jesus did to make the world more beautiful? What are some things the church has done to make the world more beautiful (think back over the past 2000 years)? How can you bring grace and beauty to the world around you? What have you done, or what can you do, to make the world more beautiful?
3. Now imagine how we could bring grace and beauty to the New Creation when there are no restrictions of sin or flesh on us! Use your imaginations, and what you know about the New Creation, and imagine how beautiful, and how grace-filled it will be! Talk about how you personally might add to the grace and beauty of the New Creation.
4. The church is a continuation of Immanuel, God with us. How has the church (think specific local churches like Cornerstone) manifested 'God with us'? How has the church (think specific local churches like Cornerstone) failed to manifest 'God with us'? What can you do, or what can your group do, to manifest to the world around us that 'God is with us'?
5. Today in the church, God manifests His presence with us via the Holy Spirit, who lives within every true follower of Jesus. This is a reality of God's presence that the Old Testament believers could have only imagined. Talk about how much better it is now. Talk about how we take His presence for granted. Discuss ways we can be more aware of the constant presence of the Holy Spirit.