Preparing Your Heart & Home for a Christ-Centered Christmas

a study based on-Psalm 86:11-13



the



INTRODUCTION

Notes

WHEN?

Scripture References This Lesson

| Psalm 86:11-13 | WHERE? | | |
|---------------------------|---|------|---------------------|
| Isaiah 64:1-4 | | | |
| Galatians 4:4-7 | | | |
| John 1:1-18 | WHO? | | |
| Matthew 1:18-25 | READ: Matthew 1:18-2:23 and Luke 1:5-2:40 Note each character, their role/significance and at least one character trait. | | |
| Micah 5:2 | | | |
| Matthew 2:1-18 | NAME/SCRIPTURE REFERENCE | ROLE | CHARACTER QUALITIES |
| Luke 2:1-7 | Caesar Augustus - Lk 2:1-7 | | |
| Luke 1:1-80 | Herod - Mt 2:1:12,16-18, 2:19-23; Lk 1: | 5 | |
| Revelation 22:13 | Gabriel - Lk 1:11-19, 26-29 | | |
| 2 Peter 3:8-18 | | | |
| 1 Peter 5:5-11 | Zechariah -Lk 1:5-25, 67-80 | | |
| 2 Peter 1:3-11 | Elizabeth - Lk 1:39-45, 57-66 | | |
| | Mary - Lk 1:26-36, 56 | | |
| "We think of our lives in | Joseph - Mt 1:16, 18-25, 2:13-15,19-23 | | |

"We think of our lives in terms of past, present, and future. It isn't that way with God. He is outside of time. We need to remember this when we wonder about God's plans and purposes. We cannot understand this about God, because he is so different from us in this respect. But we can accept it and respond by worshiping such a great God and entrusting him with our lives. – Ann Hibbard

Magi/Wise Men -Mt 2:1-12

Shepherds - Lk 2:8-21

Simeon - Lk 2:22-38

Anna - Lk 2:22-38

Preparing Our Homes

• Your Christmas List - Make a list of your normal Christmas/Holiday schedule of activities. Pray over this list and examine your heart. What can you do to make your Christmas more intentionally focused on Christ?



Week 1

Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; -Psalm 86:11a

Notes

tapeinophrosyne (G5012) humiliation of mind; having a humble opinion of one's self; For the sinner it involves the confession of his sin and a deep realization of his unworthiness to receive God's marvelous grace. Acts 20:19 Ephesians 4:2 Philippians 2:3 Colossians 3:12 1 Peter 5:5-6

prautes (G4240)

meekness, the attitude that we accept God's dealings with us as good and do not dispute or resist; James 1:21, 3:13 Ephesians 4:2 1 Peter 3:4, 3:15 Matthew 5:5

akouo (G191)

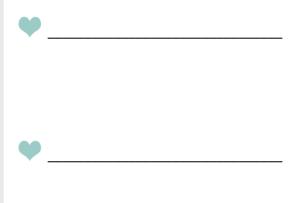
to attend to; to give the audience of; consider what has been said; to hear with attention, listen, obey. Luke 2:18, 20 Matthew 11:15 Hebrews 3:7-19 Hebrews 4:2-3

blepo (G991)

to turn the eyes to anything: to look at; to heed; to have (the power of) understanding to discern mentally, observe, perceive, discover, understand to turn the thoughts or direct the mind to a thing, to consider, contemplate, to look at, to weigh carefully, examine. 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Colossians 2:8 Hebrews 2:9 Hebrews 3:12

"We live our lives in time, marked by minutes, days, weeks, and years. Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." He exists in eternity, outside of time. How can we possibly understand this? Yet Jesus entered our world and let himself be chained to our time. In the face of such a mystery, the only adequate response is worship." —Ann Hibbard

WHAT characterizes one who walks in Truth?



HOW will this affect your Christmas and every day life? 2 Peter 3:8-18

HOMEWORK

- -Preparing Our Hearts
 - **Read Isaiah 53:1-12**. How are we like straying sheep? What happens to us when we stray from God's way? What did God do about our sin? Is there an area of your life where you are going your way instead of God's way?
 - **Read Isaiah 53:4-6.** What does it mean to you to know that Jesus has borne your grief, carried your sorrow, was pierced for your transgressions, crushed for your iniquities and by His wounds you are healed and have been brought to a place of peace? Does peace characterize your life and describe your typical Christmas season? What changes need to be made to make this truth a reality in your heart and home this year?
 - **Read John 10:1-18 with Isaiah 40:11**. Look for words and themes associated with shepherd images. To what did Jesus liken himself? What did Jesus say about voices? What point does Jesus make about life?
 - **Compare Isaiah 53:7-9 with 1 Peter 2:19-25.** What encouragement does this give you as one desiring to walk in truth? How does this change your attitude and mindset this Christmas season (particularly with regard to relationships)?
 - **Read Matthew 24:1-41**. Write down all the signs of Jesus's coming revealed in these verses. What will be the signs of Jesus's coming? Describe the picture you see in your mind when you hear these words of Jesus. How will Jesus's second coming be like his first coming? How will it be different? Why might the nations of the earth mourn? What will happen to those who love God, or his elect?

- When considering Jesus' coming, does this stir up hope or fear in your heart? If you knew Jesus were coming tomorrow, what would you do differently today?
- **Read through the list of prophecies concering Jesus' birth and how He fulfilled them**. What does this teach us about the character of God? Write a prayer praising God for these attributes.

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- **Prophecy Jar/Chain** read one prophecy from Old Testament and one from New Testament each night and discuss how Jesus fulfilled each of these.
- **Nativity** If you have children at home, consider setting up the Nativity over a period of weeks leading up to Christmas and place characters into the setting as it happens in Scripture. This is a great way to teach our children the story of Christmas. It's a wonderful activity to go alongside the Prophecy Jar/Chain activity.

44 Prophecies Jesus Christ Fulfilled

Prophecies About Jesus with Old Testament scripture and New Testament fulfillment scripture:

1 Messiah would be born of a woman.

Genesis 3:15 Matthew 1:20 Galatians 4:4

2 Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2 Matthew 2:1 Luke 2:4-6

3 Messiah would be born of a virgin.

Isaiah 7:14 Matthew 1:22-23 Luke 1:26-31

4 Messiah would come from the line of Abraham.

Genesis 12:3 Genesis 22:18 Matthew 1:1 Romans 9:5

5 Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac.

Genesis 17:19 Genesis 21:12 Luke 3:34

6 Messiah would be a descendant of Jacob.

Numbers 24:17 Matthew 1:2

7 Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah.

Genesis 49:10 Luke 3:33 Hebrews 7:14

8 Messiah would be heir to King David's throne.

2 Samuel 7:12-13 Isaiah 9:7 Luke 1:32-33 Romans 1:3

9 Messiah's throne will be anointed and eternal.

Psalm 45:6-7 Daniel 2:44 Luke 1:33 Hebrews 1:8-12

10 Messiah would be called Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14 Matthew 1:23

11 Messiah would spend a season in Egypt. Hosea 11:1

Matthew 2:14-15

12 A massacre of children would happen at Messiah's birthplace.

Jeremiah 31:15 Matthew 2:16-18

13 A messenger would prepare the way for Messiah Isaiah 40:3-5

Luke 3:3-6

14 Messiah would be rejected by his own people.

Psalm 69:8 Isaiah 53:3 John 1:11 John 7:5

15 Messiah would be a prophet.

Deuteronomy 18:15 Acts 3:20-22

16 Messiah would be preceded by Elijah. Malachi 4:5-6

Matthew 11:13-14

17 Messiah would be declared the Son of God. Psalm 2:7

Matthew 3:16-17

18 Messiah would be called a Nazarene. Isaiah 11:1 Matthew 2:23

19 Messiah would bring light to Galilee. Isaiah 9:1-2 Matthew 4:13-16

20 Messiah would speak in parables.

Psalm 78:2-4 Isaiah 6:9-10 Matthew 13:10-15, 34-35

21 Messiah would be sent to heal the brokenhearted. Isaiah 61:1-2

Luke 4:18-19

22 Messiah would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Psalm 110:4 Hebrews 5:5-6

23 Messiah would be called King.

Psalm 2:6 Zechariah 9:9 Matthew 27:37 Mark 11:7-11

24 Messiah would be praised by little children.

Psalm 8:2 Matthew 21:16

25 Messiah would be betrayed.

Psalm 41:9 Zechariah 11:12-13 Luke 22:47-48 Matthew 26:14-16

26 Messiah's price money would be used to buy a potter's field.

Zechariah 11:12-13 Matthew 27:9-10

27 Messiah would be falsely accused.

Psalm 35:11 Mark 14:57-58

28 Messiah would be silent before his accusers.

lsaiah 53:7 Mark 15:4-5

29 Messiah would be spat upon and struck.

Isaiah 50:6 Matthew 26:67

30 Messiah would be hated without cause.

Psalm 35:19 Psalm 69:4 John 15:24-25

31 Messiah would be crucified with criminals.

Isaiah 53:12 Matthew 27:38 Mark 15:27-28

32 Messiah would be given vinegar to drink.

Psalm 69:21 Matthew 27:34 John 19:28-30

33 Messiah's hands and feet would be pierced.

Psalm 22:16 Zechariah 12:10 John 20:25-27

34 Messiah would be mocked and ridiculed.

Psalm 22:7-8 Luke 23:35

35 Soldiers would gamble for Messiah's garments.

Psalm 22:18 Luke 23:34 Matthew 27:35-36

36 Messiah's bones would not be broken.

Exodus 12:46 Psalm 34:20 John 19:33-36

37 Messiah would be forsaken by God. Psalm 22:1 Matthew 27:46

38 Messiah would pray for his enemies. Psalm 109:4 Luke 23:34

39 Soldiers would pierce Messiah's side.

Zechariah 12:10 John 19:34

40 Messiah would be buried with the rich.

Isaiah 53:9 Matthew 27:57-60

41 Messiah would resurrect from the dead.

Psalm 16:10 Psalm 49:15 Matthew 28:2-7 Acts 2:22-32

42 Messiah would ascend to heaven.

Psalm 24:7-10 Mark 16:19 Luke 24:51

43 Messiah would be seated at God's right hand.

Psalm 68:18 Psalm 110:1 Mark 16:19 Matthew 22:44

44 Messiah would be a sacrifice for sin.

Isaiah 53:5-12 Romans 5:6-8



Week 2

Give me an undivided heart that I might fear Your name; -Psalm 86:11b

Week 2



Give me an undivided heart that I might fear Your name; —Psalm 86:11b

Notes

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What does it mean to have an undivided heart?

Scripture References This Lesson

Psalm 86:11-13 Psalm 19:14 Jeremiah 32:38-40 Mark 12:30 Psalm 51:10 Matthew 6:21,33 Colossians 2:6-10 Colossians 3:1-3 Psalm 19:14 Psalm 27:8 1 Chronicles 16:11 Psalm 34:10 Psalm 119:10-11, 36-37 Psalm 73:25-26 1 Corinthians 6:17 Proverbs 3:5-6 Proverbs 4:23 Colossians 3:16 John 17:20-26 Psalm 46:10 John 9:31 John 10:25-30 Matthew 14:13 Mark 1:35

undivided - yâḥaḏ (H3161) to be (or become) one; join, unite; refers to entering into the plan or thinking of a group, uniting with them.

zeteo (G2212) to find out by thinking, meditating, reasoning; to seek, to crave.

darash (H1875)

to tread or frequent; to resort to; usually to follow (for pursuit or search); by implication, to seek or ask; specifically to worship.

How do we cultivate an undivided heart?



Mark 12:30, Psalm 51:10, Matthew 6:21, 33, Colossians 2:6-10, Colossians 3:1-3, Psalm 19:14, Psalm 27:8, 1 Chronicles 16:11, Psalm 34:10, Psalm 119:10-11, Psalm 119:36-37

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batah (H982) to trust, trust in to have confidence, be confident to be bold to be secure

pistis (G4102)

belief with the predominate idea of trust (or confidence) whether in God or in Christ, springing from faith in the same; fidelity, faithfulness the character of one who can be relied on: the conviction that God exists and is the creator and ruler of all things, the provider and bestower of eternal salvation through Christ; a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through whom we obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God.

guard - nāṣar (H5341) a verb meaning to guard, to keep, to observe, to preserve, to hide. The word refers to people's maintaining things entrusted to them, especially to keeping the truths of God in both actions and mind (Ps. 119:100, 115). God's Word is to be kept with our whole hearts (Ps. 119:69). Psalm 73:25-26, 1 Corinthians 6:17, Proverbs 3:5-6, Proverbs 4:23, Colossians 3:16, John 17:20-26

Psalm 46:10, John 9:31, John 10:25-30, Matthew 14:13, Mark 1:35

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United or Divided?

Mary Joseph Zechariah Elizabeth Shepherds Herod Wise Men

Anna

Simeon

"But of late, God has been pleased to keep my soul hungry, almost continually; so that I have been filled with a kind of pleasing pain. When I really enjoy God, I feel my desires of him the more insatiable, and my thirstings after holiness the more unquenchable; and the Lord will not allow me to feel as though I were fully supplied and satisfied, but keeps me still reaching forward. I feel barren and empty, as though I could not live without more of God; I feel ashamed and guilty before him. Oh! I see that 'the law is spiritual, but I am carnal.' I do not, I cannot live to God.

Oh for holiness! Oh for more of God in my soul! Oh this pleasing pain! It makes my soul press after God; the language of it is, 'Then shall I be satisfied, when I awake in God's likeness,' (Ps 17:15) but never, never before: and consequently I am engaged to 'press towards the mark' day by day. O that I may feel this continual hunger, and not be retarded, but rather animated by every cluster from Canaan, to reach forward in the narrow way, for the full enjoyment and possession of the heavenly inheritance! O that I may never loiter in my heavenly journey! These insatiable desires after God and holiness continued the two next days, with a great sense of his own exceeding unworthiness, and the nothingness of the things of this world." -David Brainerd, The Life and Diary of David Brainerd, ed. Jonathan Edwards.

HOMEWORK #2

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- Is your heart divided? When have you refused to pay attention to God's Word, turned a stubborn shoulder and been hard hearted? In what areas do you need softening of the heart this season? Read the following verses and note what you learn regarding a divided, hard or stubborn heart towards God: Malachi 1:6-7, 3:6-9, 2:10-17; Zechariah 7:11-13 and Amos 8:11.
- **Read Isaiah 9:6-7 and Psalm 85.** What similarities do you find between this psalm and Isaiah 9:7? Look particularly at verses 8-13. In these verses, several of God's attributes are personified. What are they pictured doing? How do these expressions find their fulfillment in Christ?
- **Read Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23 and John 1:1, 14-18.** Immanuel, God with us –how does this name fit Jesus? How does this relate to and help us to have an undivided heart?
- **Read Matthew 1 and 2.** List all the unexpected changes and challenges that Joseph faced. How did he respond? Changes and challenges often divide our hearts and tempt us to place our trust in someone or something other than God. What changes and challenges are you facing this season? What can you learn from Joseph's response that you can apply to your own challenges?
- **Read Luke 2:15-20**. What does it mean to treasure something up? What have you treasured up and pondered in your heart about Jesus? Are we too busy and distracted to ponder things in our hearts? Don't miss out on all that God has to show you.

Preparina Our Homes

Contemplate His Greatness! Find an area in your home where you can create a Contemplate His Greatness! board. It could be a bulletin board, chalkboard, dry erase board, notebook –any place that is prominent and accessible on a daily basis. Have each family member make a point to record daily an aspect of God's greatness (His character and ways) that He reveals to you through His Word and HIs working in your life.



Week 3

I will give thanks to You, Oh Lord my God, with my whole heart and I will glorify Your name forever. —Psalm 86:12

Week 3



I will give thanks to You, Oh Lord my God, with my whole heart and I will glorify Your name forever. —Psalm 86:12

Notes

Scripture References This Lesson

Psalm 86:11-13 2 Thessalonians 5:18 Matthew 12:34 Colossians 3:17 Luke 11:37-42 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 Luke 11:41 Exodus 25:2 Proverbs 3:9-10 2 Corinthians 8:1-7 Psalm 107

give thanks – eucharisteo to be thankful; to express one's gratitude; give thanks

thanksgiving – eucharistia gratidtude; grateful language; thanks to God as an act of worship.

be thankful – eucharistos thankful, mindful of favors, grateful ;used only in Colossians 3:15.

grace - charis

the divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life; that which affords joy or pleasure; of the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues; the spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace.

Preparing Our Hearts



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give thanks – yadah to acknowledge, to raise, to confess. The essential meaning is an act of acknowledging what is right about God in praise and thanksgiving. It can also mean an acknowledgement of self before God in confessing sin. Often linked with the word hallelujah which in Hebrew is: halal -to praise, boast, shine, can mean to shout and Jah - the contracted form of Jehovah or Yahweh, meaning He is.

good - hesed unfailing love, kindness, goodness, mercy, faithfulness, love. The classic text for understanding this word is in Psalm 136 where it is repeated 26 times. God's kindness and faithfulness serve as foundation for his actions and character. It is abundant, exceedingly great, without end and good.

"When it comes right down to it, these are the only two possible responses to Jesus Christ. We either want to be kings ourselves, as Herod did, or we surrender to the King of kings. We crucify him or we worship him. There is no middle ground." —Ann Hibbard Psalm 107:1-3

Psalm 107:4-9 He!_____

Psalm 107:10-16 He!_____

Psalm 107:17-22 He!_____

Psalm 107:23-32 He!_____

What would your Psalm 107 be? Write your story of how God has worked in your life and reasons for giving thanks.

Hallelujah, Praise He IS...



- **Read Matthew 2:1-18.** The Magi have come seeking Jesus. What was Herod's reaction to the news of Jesus? Compare Herod's response to that of the Magi?
- Read Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1-8, 16-18. How was Herod's belief different from the Magi's belief?
- **Read Romans 8.** What promises does God give us in this chapter? Do you believe that God will keep his promises? How does your belief translate into action?

- **Read Matthew 2:10-11.** The gifts of the Magi each had a special meaning; each said something about who Jesus was and what he came to do. The gold, a gift for a king, showed that Jesus was truly King of kings. The incense was a gift for a priest, who burned incense in the temple as he prayed for the people. The book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus became our Great High Priest. Myrrh was a precious ointment used to prepare bodies for burial. Christ's sacrificial death for our sins was the very reason for his birth. With the meanings of the gifts of the Magi in mind, spend some time praising and thanking God for the way these gifts impact your life.
- **Read Luke 1:46-55** (Mary's Song of Praise). What do you learn about who God is from Mary's Song of Praise? This is a compilation of Old Testament verses, what does this tell us about Mary's heart and relationship with God? What steps can you take to cultivate a heart and mind full of the Word so it flows from your life like this song from Mary? How can you cultivate this in your children's hearts?

Preparing Our Homes

Create a Thankful Tree - Create a tree for your family to use at Thanksgiving to begin your Christmas season. Grab a tree branch from the yard and place in a container. Anchor with rocks or styrofoam. Cut out leaves or cards, punch a hole in card and attach ribbon or raffia. Place them near the tree and let family members record things they are thankful for throughout the advent season and hang them on the tree. This blog site has some cute printable tags you can use for this purpose: jonesdesigncompany.com/holiday/thankful-tree-with-free-printable-tags/

Giving Thanks Scripture Chain/Jar - Print verses on giving thanks and cut into strips. Form into a chain or place strips in a jar and each day read the Scripture as a family and share something you are thankful for that day. Close in a time of prayer focused on praising God and giving thanks. Consider praying the verse for the day back to the Lord. (It's a great way to teach your children how to personalize and pray Scripture!)



Week 4

For great is Your steadfast love towards me... —Psalm 86:13

Week 4



For great is Your steadfast love towards me... —Psalm 86:13

Notes

Preparing Our Hearts

Scripture References This Lesson

Psalm 86:11-13 John 3:16 Ephesians 2:4-10 John 13:34-35 Ephesians 5:2 Colossians 2:12 Philippians 2:5-8 Psalm 147:11 The Big 🖤 Question:

"As we fix our mind's attention and our heart's affection on the glory of Christ's love, more and more we become loving." –John Piper



HOMEWORK #4

- **Read Isaiah 62:10-12.** Look at the names in verse 12 Holy People, Redeemed of the Lord, Sought After, City No Longer Deserted. How has Christ's coming changed your identity? How do the four names apply to you?
- Read John 3:16 and 1 John 4:9. How did God show us his love? How should we respond?
- **Read Isaiah 9:2**. What is it like to walk in complete darkness? What does light do to the darkness? How is sin like darkness? Why is Jesus called the light? How can you be light to those around you? Read Revelation 22:5.
- **Read Isaiah 60:1-3, 17-22**. Where was the darkness? Who is the light? What words are repeated in these verses? Can you find any opposites? What do they represent? ILook for theme of light in these verses. In the Bible, darkness often means sin and hopelessness. Glory refers to God's presence. When Jesus was born, God's presence came to earth in a special way. Jesus brings life, hope, and freedom. Theses verses find their fulfillment in the people of God, who have been redeemed by Christ. Which of these promises have been fulfilled in your life? Which ones do you look forward to seeing fulfilled?
- **Read Isaiah 11:1-3.** What do we learn about who Christ is in these verses? Do you turn to Jesus as your wisdom, counsel, power, and source of knowledge and understanding? What does He delight in? How does this encourage you? "Shoot of Jesse"....
- **Read Psalm 103.** Write a list of all the blessings God has given you as a part of his gift of eternal life in Jesus. Pray for a grateful heart during this Advent season.

Preparing Our Homes

The First Gift Tradition - Wrap a box that can be used every Christmas and fill it with white index cards that read "Jesus blessed me this year by..." (or something to this effect). Fill out as many cards as you want individually and then place them in the box on Christmas Eve. Christmas morning open the box and read them aloud to one another reminding each other of the many blessings our Messiah King has bestowed on us. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving to our giving Lord for all the many gifts he has given us. OR

Write "Jesus I thank and worship you because..." on each of the cards so that our gift to Jesus is filled with praises to him (what he truly desires).

