

IMMANUEL: GOD WITH US
MATTHEW 1:18-24

Introduction - The Christmas name of Jesus (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22)

- The crisis faced by Ahaz
- The reassurance given by Isaiah
- The birth foreshadowed

I. God wants to draw near us

A. We were made for relationship with God

- *Genesis 1:26*

B. God draws near to individuals

- *Genesis 3:9; 5:22,24; Job 29:4; II Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23; Exodus 33:11*

C. God drew near to the near of Israel

- *Deuteronomy 7:7,8*
- *Genesis 12:3; I Kings 8:41-43; Isaiah 49:6; 56:7*

D. God drew near in Jesus

- *John 1:14; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 2:9 – 3:1*

II. God wants to be with us forever

- *Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8*
- *John 14:1-3; Matthew 28:20; Revelation 21:3,4; I Thessalonians 4:16-17*

III. God's method of spreading the message is still the same

- *Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 1:8;*
- *Colossians 1:27*

We believe that each culture and sub-culture needs to hear the message of Jesus and to see the life of Jesus in words and forms that it can understand. We do not want to perpetuate traditions or practices that create unnecessary barriers to people receiving and embracing the good news of Jesus. We desire to adapt in every way we can, while remaining faithful to God's Word, in order to communicate clearly and effectively to the diversity of generations and sub-cultures around us.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS
DECEMBER 8-14

Follow-throughs

Monday **II Chronicles 32:1-8**

Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, also faced a deadly threat from a foreign invader. How did he encourage his people? Where do you need to be reassured that God is with you today?

Tuesday **II Chronicles 20:1-30**

A few generations before Hezekiah, King Jehoshaphat gave similar encouragement to his people, reassuring them that God was with them. How did Jehoshaphat meet the threat against his people? What actions did he take? What sort of godly action do you need to take today, in view of the threats you are facing?

Wednesday **John 1:1-18**

Meditate on the wonder of the eternal God drawing near to us in Jesus, the Word of God. Think of some of the experiences and feelings you have been having this week. In what ways can Jesus identify with you, because of his incarnation?

Thursday **Hebrews 2:1 – 3:6**

How is Jesus described? In what ways is he like us? What has he done for us?

Friday **Colossians 1:24 – 2:15**

How does Paul describe Jesus Christ? How does Paul describe us as believers in Jesus Christ? What are the implications of our identification with Christ? Meditate on that phrase “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27) as you go through your day, and especially as you meet people who do not yet know Jesus personally.

Warm-ups

Saturday **I Corinthians 9:19-23**

In what ways did Paul adapt in order to communicate to the people he wanted to reach? Are there any appropriate ways that you can or should adapt in order to identify more closely with people around you who need Jesus?

Sunday **I Corinthians 9:24-27**

What implications does Paul draw from each athletic metaphor? What costs are you willing to pay in order to be more effective in reaching people around you for Jesus? What costs should we be willing to pay as a church?