



Advent is God's love in action. The good news is that when God wanted to tell the world how much he loves us he didn't just send us a Christmas Card with some nice words. No, he sent his own Son, Jesus, as a baby in the manger. He is Emmanuel; God in the flesh; God with us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways is the word "love" often sentimentalized and simply talked about as an abstract concept? Why do individuals often like poems and flowery visions of love?
2. Why is it so important to know that God put his love into action by sending Jesus? How is the love of Jesus more than simply a theory?
3. Even though we proclaim that our God is a God of love, how are our actions as church people often just the opposite? In what ways are our examples as Christians often not a very good witness to the world about God's love?
4. Why is it important for us to remember that the foundation of the Bible and the New Testament is the *"Acts Of The Apostles."* How did the early church put their love into action?
5. The Book of James in the New Testament (2:17-18) says, *"Faith by itself, if it not accompanied by action, is dead."* How does one's faith involve action? In what ways is love not a "noun" but a "verb?"
6. Why does it matter so much at Calvary how we treat each other; how we handle conflicts; how we care about those in need; how we forgive those who have hurt us?
7. **Read John 3:16; John 15:13; Romans 5:8; James 2:17-18**
8. What is the difference between presents and presence? What are some specific ways you can be the hands and feet of Jesus this Christmas? Discuss some concrete plans where you will share the love of Jesus with others.

MOVING FORWARD

Christmas is not simply about beautiful lights; tasty food; about nice warm feelings on the inside. Rather, it is about our God showering us with his love through the gift of Jesus—and in us putting that love into action through deeds of love and mercy. Before you leave today take some time to reaffirm your relationship with Jesus. Commit yourself to some specific ways this week you are going to care for others; be an encourager; generously give of yourself.

PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to this world as a little baby in the manger. Thank you that Jesus is God with us—that he gives us his concrete and real love each day. Empower us, Loving God, to shine the light and love of Jesus in everything we do. Empower us to put Jesus' love into concrete action each day. Thanks, Jesus, for your amazing love. Amen