

Questions (cont.)

7. If you don't live in your home town; does this make you feel like you have no home? How does this affect you?
8. Do you have a close friend you feel you can confide in—someone you trust with anything?
9. What are the areas in which you strive to succeed? Have you ever felt they hurt your relationships?
10. How much time do you spend on media in a given day? What form of media? How much time does your family spend on media? Do you feel disconnected because of it?
11. What will you do to “incarnate” this Christmas season?
12. How can this commitment become a lifestyle rather than just an experiment?



Incarnate

The Meaning of Advent

The word “*advent*” means “coming.” We celebrate advent the four weeks before Christmas that look forward to the arrival of the Christ. The four candles in the wreath symbolize: *Prophecy, Love, Joy, and Peace*. The center candle is the **Christ** candle, which is lit on Christmas.

Today, we light the Peace candle.

Scripture: Isaiah 9:1-7

When God created the world, He said everything was good except one thing: “It is not good that man should _____.” (Genesis 2:18)

Israel was caught between the super-powers

_____ --to the north.

_____ --to the south.

_____ --to the west (later)

The prophets (including Isaiah) warned them not to trust these nations.

- They did and _____ gave them what they wanted.
- They may have been successful, but they weren't _____ and didn't have _____.

Many Jews believed God would _____ their situation.

God's idea of a peace-keeper is a _____. (vs 6)

God acted on behalf of humanity with His _____.

- Incarnation = "In the _____."

Three culprits of disconnection:

1. We _____ a lot.
2. The drive for _____.
3. Addiction to _____.

God's example for us is to give our _____.

- God gives grace _____.

1. Make Christmas week screen-free.
2. Spend intentional time as a family. Pull out board games.
3. Go get coffee with an old friend, a new friend, or someone you haven't seen in a while.
4. Be fully present at family get-togethers. Don't find reasons to come late or slip out early.
5. Reconcile with someone you've been at odds with.
6. Spend Christmas with someone who might otherwise be alone.
7. Make presence a lifestyle, not just an experiment.

Questions for further study and reflection:

1. Share about a time when you felt out of place, homesick, or disconnected.
2. Was someone there for you? If so, who was it? How did their presence make you feel?
3. If you were a Jew in Babylon during the time of the Exile, how do you think you would have felt? What would you have expected God to do?
4. Pastor Kory said we were created to be in relationship. Do you agree? Why or why not?
5. What are the three "disconnectors" Kory mentioned? Which, if any of these are characteristics of your life?

Note: some of these disconnectors might be more prevalent in younger generations. What might disconnect those from older generations?

6. What are some other things that disconnect us from others?