

Draw Near

BECAUSE HE CAME NEAR FIRST

OPENING THOUGHT

James 4:8 says, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” God promises that when we seek Him, He comes close. But if you stop and think about it, that’s a huge idea. How can imperfect people like us come near to a God who is completely holy, perfect, and beyond anything we can imagine?

That’s one reason Christmas is so meaningful. This season gives us a chance to slow down and remember how it’s even possible for us to approach God at all.

The answer is simple and powerful: Jesus.

Before we ever reached for God, He reached for us. Before we tried to draw near to Him, He drew near to us first. That’s the heart of Christmas.

To understand how God made this possible, we’re going to look at two key passages that show what it meant for Jesus to come near—and what that means for us today.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

1. Jesus Is Immanuel — “God With Us”

Matthew 1:22-23 — “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ (which means ‘God with us’).”

Long before Jesus was born, God promised that a Savior would come with a name full of meaning: Immanuel—‘God with us.’ This means God didn’t stay far away, waiting for us to clean up our lives or figure things out on our own. Instead, He stepped right into our world and into our brokenness, choosing to come as a fragile, helpless baby.

Jesus is God’s presence living among His own creation—showing us what God is like, showing His love, and making a way for anyone who believes in Him to be forgiven and brought close to God.

But Jesus didn’t only come near—He came with a mission in mind.

2. God’s Nearness Has a Purpose

Luke 19:10 — “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Jesus came near with a clear mission: to seek and to save. Every moment of His life—from His birth in a manger to His death on the cross—was part of God’s rescue plan.

We are separated from God because of sin, and we cannot fix that separation ourselves. But Jesus came near to deal with our sin once and for all. His birth points forward to His mission: a perfect life, a sacrificial death, and a victorious resurrection. Through Jesus, anyone—no matter their past, doubts, or struggles—can be forgiven and welcomed into a real relationship with God. Jesus drew near so that we could draw near. That is the miracle and hope of Christmas.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Christmas invites us to remember that God doesn't wait for us to come to Him on our own. He moved toward us first. And He still invites us today: Come close. Know Me. Trust Me.

For those who already follow Jesus, Christmas is a reminder to draw near again—through prayer, worship, and daily dependence on Him.

For those who aren't sure what they believe yet, Christmas is an invitation to discover the God who came close on purpose—because He loves you and wants to rescue you.

Jesus came so we could know God, walk with Him, and find forgiveness, hope, and life.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why is the name “Immanuel” (God with us) so remarkable?
2. How does Jesus coming as a baby help us see that God is approachable and near?
3. What does it mean to you personally that Jesus came to “seek and save the lost”?
4. Where do you feel like you need God to be “with you” right now?
5. What might it look like for you to draw near to God this Christmas—whether you're new to faith or have followed Him for years?

PRAY

Take a few moments to respond to God in prayer. You can pray out loud, rewrite the prompt in your own words, or simply write a personal prayer that reflects what God is stirring in your heart and mind right now.

“God, thank You for drawing near to me first. Thank You for sending Jesus so I can know You, trust You, and walk with You. Help me sense Your nearness and take even one step closer to You this Christmas. Amen.”