

IMPLICATIONS OF THE INCARNATION

Humility and Hope

John 1:14-18 (NASB)

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only *Son* from the Father, full of grace and truth.
15 John testified about Him and called out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who is coming after me has proved to be my superior, because He existed before me.'"
16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.
17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.
18 No one has seen God at any time; God the only *Son*, who is in the arms of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

John 1:14-18 (The Message)

14 The Word became flesh and blood,
and moved into the neighborhood.
We saw the glory with our own eyes,
the one-of-a-kind glory,
like Father, like Son,
Generous inside and out,
true from start to finish.
15 John pointed him out and called, "This is the One! The One I told you was coming after me but in fact was ahead of me. He has always been ahead of me, has always had the first word."
16-18 We all live off his generous abundance,
gift after gift after gift.
We got the basics from Moses,
and then this exuberant giving and receiving,
This endless knowing and understanding—
all this came through Jesus, the Messiah.
No one has ever seen God,
not so much as a glimpse.
This one-of-a-kind God-Expression,
who exists at the very heart of the Father,
has made him plain as day.

Questions to Ponder and Discuss

1. Christmas challenges us to look at everything in a new light because it announces the most startling claim in history. How does the truth that "God came to earth as a man" change how we look at everything? Give some examples.
2. Christmas pictures a God who is not only over it all, but who has chosen to be in the middle of it all with us. How does the picture of a God who understands reframe the way we view and cope with the hardships of life? Share an example of how this has been true in your life.
3. We often picture God as fixed, immobile, and hard to reach. Here we have revealed a God who hits the road compelled by love. John reminds us that God "became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14, MSG). What is so significant about God's willingness to get so close? How have you experienced his closeness recently?
4. Christmas communicates and commemorates the greatest demotion in history. Read Philippians 2:6-8. What are some of the things Jesus gave up for us? What does that tell you about his character and how does that impact how we should live?