



## PART 3: SHATTERING OUR EXCUSES

For some of us, Christmas is a reminder that there are problems we can't solve, people we can't control, and expectations we can't meet.

But at Christmas, we celebrate an event that—if taken seriously—removes our excuses not to move in the direction of complicated or uncomfortable.

### CONNECT

Do you have a family situation that makes Christmas difficult? To the extent that you are comfortable, share it with the group. If not, what is your favorite part of the Christmas season?

### LEARN

You will watch a shortened version of a message from this series to set up your group discussion. Watch the full message sometime this week as a reminder of what was talked about today.

### APPLY

After sharing what stood out from the video, discuss the following questions as a group:

1. In the video, Andy said, “If Jesus didn’t keep his distance, who am I to keep my distance, even from people that make me uncomfortable.” When was the last time you leaned in toward a difficult person instead of keeping your distance? What happened to you as a result?
2. Read **John 14:1**. Do you tend to lean more toward grace or more toward truth? Why is it so important that Jesus never dumbed down the truth and never dialed back the grace?
3. In the full message, Andy said, “The more aware I am of God’s grace and mercy toward me, the more inclined I should be to extend grace and mercy to you.” Have you found this to be true in your own life? Why do you think this is the case?
4. Read **1 John 4:9–11**. The problems, people, and expectations that can show up at Christmastime are an opportunity for us to follow the example of Jesus by drawing near to the people God has placed in our life. What would it look like for you to follow Jesus in this area and take a step toward someone in your life that you might shy away from because it’s not easy or comfortable?





## **WRAP UP**

In this study we've discovered three reasons for the Christmas season—and more specifically—three reasons for why Jesus came:

- To bless the world
- To demonstrate what God is like
- To remove our excuses

Ultimately, *you* are the reason for the season. Because God loves you, he sent his Son into the world, which we celebrate during Christmas.

## **PRAY**

Take time to pray as a group and thank God for loving you first and for sending Jesus to draw near to us. Ask him to empower you through his Spirit to love others the way we've been loved through Jesus.

