



Discussion Guide
Away In a Manger — Part 3
PARTICIPANT GUIDE

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"When we see the hand of God at work, let's ponder and treasure it all."

[Dawn Reed]

ENGAGE & CONNECT

What in nature or life captures your attention? What about that thing is beautiful or good?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

"I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds."

[Psalm 77:12]

BIG IDEA

Could we be missing God because we are not thinking deeply and correctly? The Christian life is meant for us to pay attention to what we ponder!

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION

1. In the sermon we heard, ***"You never know how small, unseen, insignificant moments may be playing a part in God's plans, and we often overlook these moments."*** How has that been true in your own life? What small moment have you overlooked because it didn't seem to be part of God's plan?
2. What do Luke 2:6-7 and 11-12 tell us about the humility of Jesus' birth? How does this contrast with the expectations for the Messiah?
3. How does Isaiah 55:8 relate to the story of Jesus' birth, specifically about God's ways and thoughts compared to ours?
4. Pondering and thinking more deeply is part of the Christian life. How can you cultivate a habit of reflection and meditation on God's Word more deeply?
5. The sermon contrasted "lesser stories" with God's Kingdom story. How can you identify and reject cultural narratives that compete with biblical truths? What is a "lesser story" you might be trusting in right now?
6. What "small or insignificant" moments in your life (today) might be part of God's greater plan? How can reflecting on Jesus' birth help you trust His purposes?
7. "Testing our thoughts" is an important part of our faith, if we want to grow and mature. What practical steps can you take to recognize and replace ungodly or non-Kingdom thoughts?
8. The sermon encouraged "pondering to the point of praise." How can you practice this in your daily life, especially during challenges and setbacks? How have you done this before that you can share to encourage us?

STEP OF OBEDIENCE

In Luke 11:28, Jesus tells us this: *“Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.”* Based on what we’ve read and discussed today, what is a step of obedience you can take this week to ponder, treasure, be captivated by, and praise our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

PRAYER FOCUS

Pondering and Praising Jesus at Christmas

- As we approach Christmas, let’s take time to ponder the wonder of Jesus—God’s gift of love wrapped in humanity. Like Mary, who treasured and pondered the miracle of Christ’s birth, let us also pause to reflect on His humility, His love, and the salvation He brought to the world.
- Let’s pray together, asking God to captivate our hearts anew with the beauty of Jesus. May we treasure Him above all else and overflow with praise for our Savior, who came to dwell with us and bring us eternal hope and joy.

VISIO DIVINA

AFTER your group meets, we invite you to try a practice called Visio Divina, which means "divine seeing". This simply *involves meditating on art or imagery to encounter God*. This engages your senses and imagination, and it can help you reflect more deeply on God's love and leading in your life.

First, take a moment to prayerfully reflect on the image and Scripture below, welcoming God’s presence with you.



Greg Olsen, The Nativity

“O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”
[Psalm 95:6]

Now, come to God in prayer and share what you hope for, knowing He is with you and hears you!