

THIS CHRISTMAS

WEEK 3

BIG IDEA

You need your family and your family needs you.

WHAT?

DISCUSSION: “What do you think about when you hear ‘Christmas’ and ‘family’?”

- Christmas is almost here, and that’s what we’ve been talking about for the last couple of weeks.
- In this series we’re talking about how to make this Christmas the best one yet. We’re doing that by looking at a few of the things that come to mind when we think of Christmas... like family.
- Christmas is a complicated time for most of our families. For most families, Christmas means some combination of love, laughter, fighting, and maybe even some mourning for those of us whose family members won’t be celebrating with us this Christmas.
- To get us started, let’s take a second to talk to the people next to us about what Christmas looks like for our families. So around tables answer this question: what do you think about when you hear the words “Christmas” and “family”?

STORY: Talk about one of your family’s Christmas fights.

- In my house, family Christmas parties weren’t always happy.
- *Talk about a time when Christmas turned into a fight in your home. Your story could be funny or poignant, depending on your*

experience and your audience.

VIDEO: Home Alone (The Cheese Pizza)

Home alone: Pizza Scene



- Maybe you can relate. In my house, little things sometimes turned into all-out fights.
- It reminds me of one of my favorite Christmas movies, actually. Check it out.
- *In this scene, the McCallister family is sitting down for dinner when a fight over cheese pizza turns into a disaster. We think this scene works well, but feel free to choose another Christmas movie (and relevant scene) that you love.*
- If you've never seen *Home Alone*, you're really missing out, but I'll fill you in on what's going on. Through a series of unfortunate events, this little pizza disagreement leads to Kevin being left behind on his family's Christmas vacation, which is kind of awesome at first, but eventually becomes a problem when a couple of burglars try to break into his house.
- That specific situation has never happened to me, but I definitely know what it's like for a small thing to be blown way out of proportion — especially during the holidays.

SO WHAT?

NO FAMILY IS PERFECT

- Families come in all shapes and sizes.
- No matter what your family looks like, one thing is sure: you love your family (usually) . . . but your family is definitely not perfect.

YOUR FAMILY WILL FIGHT

- Because your family isn't perfect, your family is going to fight.
- I don't know what it is about the holidays – maybe it's just because our families are usually all together for long periods of time – but during the holidays, families can sometimes fight more than usual.
- Maybe you fight because...
 - **YOU'RE DIFFERENT.** When you put so many different opinions, personalities, and perspectives together in one room, disagreements are bound to happen.
 - **YOU'VE HURT EACH OTHER BEFORE.** When it comes to our family members, we've got records of fights, and hurts, and insults that span our entire lifetimes. With all that history, it's hard to not let some resentment bubble to the surface occasionally.
 - **YOU'RE TIRED.** The holidays can be draining and stressful. Sometimes we fight with our families simply because we're exhausted, or burned out, or our Christmas sweater is too itchy. When we're tired, our families often get the worst of our bad attitudes.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4v1-3, 31-32

- I get it. I'm guilty of it, too. We sometimes treat our family members in ways we would never treat other people.
- But this month, we're talking about ways we can make this Christmas different from all the others. So today, I want to challenge us to imagine what this Christmas might be like if we treated our families a little bit differently.
- In the Bible, in the book of Ephesians, the apostle Paul wrote a letter to a group of Christians that was full of advice on how to better live out their faith in Jesus. He's not specifically talking

about family here, but listen to what he says about how we're to treat people and let's consider how this might apply to our families this Christmas. *Read Ephesians 4v1-3.*

- Paul then goes on to encourage followers of Jesus to live in unity with each other because, as part of the Body of Christ, they need each other. He goes on to say this: *read Ephesians 4v31-32.*
- That's a powerful, and difficult challenge, but it comes down to something I hope you'll remember this Christmas: **you need your family and your family needs you.**

NOW WHAT?

VIDEO: Home Alone (Kevin Misses His Family) ▲

Home Alone - Kevin just wants family for Christmas



- Let's check back in with Kevin from *Home Alone*. In this scene, Kevin has spent a couple of days living what he thought was his dream – a Christmas away from his family. After a couple of days, though, Kevin starts to have a change of heart. Watch this.
- *In this scene, Kevin meets a man dressed as Santa in the street and asks him to please bring his family home. We think this scene*

works well, but feel free to choose another Christmas movie (and relevant scene) that you love.

- Hopefully it won't take something as dramatic as this to help you realize what Kevin clearly learned: that **you need your family and your family needs you.**

MAKE THIS CHRISTMAS DIFFERENT

- What do you think would happen if you chose to see your family as a gift, rather than a burden, this Christmas?
- Even when they're getting on your last nerve, what if you decided to treat them with the kind of love the apostle Paul described in Ephesians 4? What if you...
 - Were **HUMBLE** instead of proud?
 - Were **PATIENT** instead of harsh?
 - Were **KIND** instead of malicious?
 - Were **COMPASSIONATE** instead of angry?
 - Were **FORGIVING** instead of bitter?
- What if you not only expected your family to have faults, to make mistakes, and to get on your last nerve this Christmas — what if you made room for those faults and chose to love them anyway?
- After all, isn't that how God, through Jesus, has treated you?
- You can make this Christmas different from the others.
- You can choose to act like your family is a gift. Because, even with all their messiness and brokenness and flaws, they are.
- This Christmas, remember: **you need your family and your family needs you.**