



Part 3: To Remove Our Excuses // Andy Stanley // December 17, 2023

As the Christmas story unfolds it becomes uncomfortably clear that, if God came to be with us, despite us, we lose our excuse to remain distant from people because it's awkward, uncomfortable, or complicated. The birth and life of Jesus should make us aware of how we all need, desire, and fear the same things. The more aware we are of God's grace and mercy, the more inclined we should be to share this grace and mercy with others. God became one of us even though he had nothing in common with any of us. Christmas is a reminder that problems, people, and expectations are not excuses to withdraw, even when it's complicated and uncomfortable. This is the perfect season to do something for someone, despite someone, just like what your Heavenly Father did and does for you.

Scripture: [Matthew 1:23 NLT](#); [John 1:14 NLT](#); [1 John 4:9,11,19 NLT](#)

Bottom Line: The reason for the season is to remove our excuses for moving away from people unlike us.

Discuss:

1. Does your family of origin get together for Christmas? Why or why not?
2. For some of us, Christmas is a reminder that there are:
 - Problems we can't solve.
 - People we can't control.
 - Expectations we can't meet.

Which one of these does Christmas bring to light for you and why?

3. Read [1 John 4:7-12](#). In one sentence, what would you say John is trying to communicate?
4. Who could you do a better job of loving despite it being "complicated"? What would loving them better look like?

Moving Forward:

This Christmas, when you encounter those people unlike you, remind yourself that you both are the reason for the season. You both are the reason that God came to be with us. For God so loved our messy broken world, that he came as one of us, and took away our excuses to do anything less for those around us. We need to challenge ourselves to follow Jesus into the uncomfortable, awkward, and complicated—just like he did for us.