

LIFE GROUP APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Isaiah 9:1-7

These questions are for the **December 8, 2024** message, “**Waiting for Christmas, A Series for Advent: Eternal Joy.**” Please read the sermon passage together to set the context for our study.

Passage Outline

As we joyfully celebrate the Messiah this Christmas, remember...

1. ...the mess (gloom) and God’s grace (light). (1-3)
 - A. There will be no more gloom for those who were in distress
 - 1) The hard place in life (which falls short of His glory) is not the end of the story
 - 2) God is not going to leave you in a place of compromise—He has historically given honor to the “place of contempt,” transforming it into a place of victory
 - B. Where there was darkness, The Light has shown
 - 1) God is good, and He will deliver us in a time-based sequence
 - a) This Christmas, you may experience trouble
 - b) The answer to the trouble is to embrace joy in every circumstance—in Jesus, the Light has come
2. ...the reasons for the joy. (4-6)
 - A. God delights in limiting your resources to prove His resources
 - 1) He allows you to be in a place of utter weakness
 - 2) When we are not the source of strength, the world can see that He is
 - 3) Sometimes, “...we are in hard spots, not because we looked away from God, but because God is doing some great thing that we do not yet understand.”
 - B. All war and oppression will come to an end
 - 1) We stockpile memories and artifacts of war (hard times), for later trouble
 - 2) God’s promise is that, in Christ, the war has been won and the future secured
 - C. A child is born who is unlike every other son
 - 1) The government will be upon His shoulder
 - a) He holds all victory and authority
 - 2) His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
 - a) Nothing in your life stands outside of the purview of this Counselor.
 - b) Nothing can overwhelm the Messiah.
 - c) He lives and gives life eternal, and will outlast all other rulers.
 - d) He has brought peace!
3. ...the characteristics of His eternal reign. (7)
 - A. Endless increase
 - B. Eternal justice and righteousness
 - C. God the Father **will** zealously make it happen

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think God chooses to use the “messes” of life to shape our faith? How is experiencing joy in the midst of trials different from experiencing joy in the midst of ease?
2. What is it about the hard times in life that allow God’s power to be seen more clearly?

3. Of the three “reasons for the joy” we experience as we celebrate the Messiah (2, A-C above), which resonates most with you, and why?
4. As you consider the names and roles of Jesus found in Isaiah 9:6, which gives you the most comfort right now, in the season of life you are currently experiencing? Why?
5. Per Isaiah 9:7, God has promised to establish and uphold His kingdom in peace, justice and righteousness. “The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.” According to this text, what role do we (humanity) play in this work? How might answering this question free us?

BONUS QUESTIONS:

What are you waiting for this Christmas? Is it a job? Is it an answer to a health-related question? Is it a solution to a family concern? Is it love and/or companionship?

How can your Life Group encourage you as you wait patiently for Christ to bring His light into your world?