

Week Five: *To Dwell with Us*
Isaiah 7:14

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. What images come to mind when you hear the name Immanuel (or Emmanuel)?
2. Read Isaiah 7:14. What does this title of God's Promised One (Jesus) reveal about his nature?
3. God with us is not just a New Testament event. Read Exodus 19:16-18; 40:34-35; Isaiah 6:1-7. What about God's nearness brings fear and awe? What brings comfort?
4. What if God became visible at your side right now? What do you think you would do?
5. End your FIFTEEN with your eyes closed. Ask God for a sense of his real presence. Respond as the Spirit leads you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

6. Reread Isaiah 7:14. How many Christmas carols do you know that include the name or concept of Immanuel – God with us? Do a search and read some of the lyrics.
7. "Mary, Did You Know?" is one carol that explores this experience. When Mary kissed her little baby, she kissed the face of God. God came to live in Mary's house. What would be the challenges to that? What would be the blessings?
8. If God came to live with Mary, do you think everything was "sunshine and roses" for her? Why?
9. If God living with us doesn't take away all the hard and evil things in our lives, what does his presence do?
10. How could God living with you change your perception of life's hardships?
11. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Talk to God out loud. Picture Jesus sitting across from you. Talk to him about your life right now – hardships and everything else too.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

12. John 1:14 in The Message version reads like this: "The Word (Jesus) became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood." How does this expand your thoughts about God with us?

13. Why does God need to come to us?
14. When Adam and Eve rejected God's wisdom for their own, they were no longer at home in God's presence (see Genesis 3:8). They chose a kingdom of their own making over God's kingdom. When God comes to humans, he brings his kingdom with him. How did Jesus cause God's kingdom to come to us?
15. How is God's kingdom overcoming our broken kingdom a comfort to you?
16. God wants us to know he gets us. He knows us. He lives here. He knows you! He understands the details of your life and is working in them to bring his kingdom to you. Think about the ways you have experienced God with you in your life. End your FIFTEEN in praise and thanksgiving.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

17. When do you usually put away your Christmas decorations?
18. What is one thing about Christmas you would like to keep going?
19. Some of us are happy to leave behind the hectic schedules and expectations of the Christmas season. However, the focus on the coming of Jesus to our world is something some would like to keep in focus. How does Christmas make Jesus more personal to you?
20. One Christmas devotional was titled "God Has a Face." Read John 1:1, 14. How does God having a face make him more intimate? More dependable?
21. Have you ever felt like God was aloof or uncaring? End your FIFTEEN picturing him with a face and arms that are holding you. Try doing this every time you pray this week.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

22. What promise of God is especially meaningful to you right now? (Maybe one from this series?)
23. Think of as many promises of God as you can. How does the reality of Jesus as Immanuel fulfill all God's promises?
24. How does Immanuel give you assurance of your favorite promise?

25. Read Matthew 1:22-23 and 28:20. What assurance does Jesus Immanuel give?

26. As you look toward the new year, end your FIFTEEN in prayer. Savor the truth of Immanuel for this moment and for your future. Pray for God to deepen your confidence and joy in his presence in 2021.