



## THE INCARNATION & HOW IT REFLECTS EMPATHY

### A Counselor's Look at Christmas

In this study, we will explore a dynamic and experiential interpretation of the Incarnation. Because of sin, we are separated from our real self, from one another, and God-Himself. This separation increases our longing to be seen, known, and valued. What we most desperately need is empathy.

**"Empathy is the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide your actions."** — Roman Krznaric  
In the finite person of baby Jesus, the Infinite entered our broken world and put on flesh. He didn't just *imagine* our life; he *experienced* it, firsthand.

Christmas can become even more meaningful for each one of us as we are willing to receive the gift of empathy through the birth of Jesus.

Highland Colony Men's Roundtable

A Counselor's Look at Christmas – Session #2

[www.MensTable.com](http://www.MensTable.com)

December 19, 2024

**Scripture:** John 1:14; Hebrews 4:15; Isaiah 53:1-3; Matthew 1:20-23; Romans 5:6-8

**Music:** WOW! 13-Year-Old Girl Sings for Her Dad Battling Cancer – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HI5OLec97Dc>

**Video:** BILLY GRAHAM E MORDECAI HAM - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGuRc0Hk-7w>

**It's Not About The Nail** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHRog>

**Why I Believe | Dr. Henry Cloud** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yU2yAXnsQY0>

**Resources** - *Why I Believe* by Henry Cloud

#### INCARNATION & EMPATHY: What's the Connection?

1. \_\_\_\_\_: **A CORE CHRISTIAN ATTRIBUTE –EMPATHY EXPRESSED WITHIN THE TRINITY & INCARNATION OF CHRIST**
  - To live incarnationally is to display empathy to those around us –to live and love like Jesus.
2. \_\_\_\_\_: **TO SHARE IN ANOTHER'S EXPERIENCE, TO "WALK A MILE IN ANOTHER'S SHOES."**
  - *The very thing* Jesus did for us through the Incarnation.
  - God chose to identify with us, put himself "in our shoes" by becoming a human. (John 1:14; Hebrews 4:15).
3. \_\_\_\_\_ → The nature of Jesus in the Incarnation means "one who alleviates the suffering of another by entering into it with them." See Matthew 1:20-23.
  - "Where in the world is an all-powerful, loving God, when we are going through suffering?"
  - The story of Christmas reminds us that the answer is: *in the world with us*.
  - When we believe the Jesus has entered into our suffering ... it is easier to show ourselves the same kindness and understanding that we would extend to a loved one.
  - Self-compassion involves recognizing our own suffering and offering ourselves the same kindness, care, concern and understanding that we would offer to a good friend.

#### INCARNATION & EMPATHY: "That Ain't Empathy!"

1. **DON'T OFFER ADVICE.**
2. **DON'T RUSH IN TO FIX IT.**
3. **DON'T OFFER RELIGIOUS PLATITUDES.**

"I know just how you feel."	"You really have a lot to be thankful for."	"God has a plan."
"He lived a good long life."	"It could have been worse."	"Just have faith."
"God won't give you more than you can bear."	"Look on the bright side."	"Everything happens for a reason" (quoting Rom 8:28).
Maybe God needed to get your attention."	"You need to move on."	

#### INCARNATION & EMPATHY: What Empathy Looks Like.

##### 1. HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. "I'm so sorry this has happened to you."                     | 5. "That stinks."   |
| 2. "Wow, that sucks. How has this impacted you?"                | 6. "That must feel incredibly lonely. What has it been like for you?"         |
| 3. "That sounds really hard. Tell me more about..."             | 7. "You seem really upset about that. I'd like to know what you're thinking." |
| 4. "Tell me what you're feeling right now. I'm here to listen." | 8. "It sounds like you're really hurting. Tell me more."                      |

##### 2. LIKE JESUS, YOU CAN WEEP WITH THOSE WHO WEEP.

Responding like this acknowledges the hurt and invites the person to share. As they do, you can continue to convey compassion and do your best to resonate with their experience.



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**ACTION: Journal This!**

1. What hurt would you like to be free of?
2. What is your friend's biggest hurt that they need to be free of?
3. How has God, most recently, demonstrated His care for you? See Romans 5:6-8.

**SCRIPTURE – The Message**

**John 1:14 - 14** The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

**Hebrews 4:15 – 15** We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all - all but the sin.

**Isaiah 53:1-3 - 1** Who believes what we've heard and seen? Who would have thought God's saving power would look like this? **2** The servant grew up before God - a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look. **3** He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand. One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum.

**Matthew 1:20-23 - 20** While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: "Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. **21** She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus - 'God saves' - because he will save his people from their sins." **22** This would bring the prophet's embryonic sermon to full term: **23** Watch for this - a virgin will get pregnant and bear a son; They will name him Emmanuel (Hebrew for "God is with us").

**Romans 5:6-8 - 6** Christ arrives right on time to make this happen. He didn't, and doesn't, wait for us to get ready. He presented himself for this sacrificial death when we were far too weak and rebellious to do anything to get ourselves ready. And even if we hadn't been so weak, we wouldn't have known what to do anyway. **7** We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble could inspire us to selfless sacrifice. **8** But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him.

**"Arms" By Christina Perri**

I never thought that you would be the one to hold my heart  
But you came around and you knocked me off the ground from the start

You put your arms around me  
And I believe that it's easier for you to let me go  
You put your arms around me and I'm home

How many times will you let me change my mind and turn around?  
I can't decide if I'll let you save my life or if I'll drown

I hope that you see right through my walls  
I hope that you catch me 'cause I'm already falling  
I'll never let our love get so close  
You put your arms around me and I'm home

The world is coming down on me and I can't find a reason to be loved  
I never wanna leave you but I can't make you bleed if I'm alone

You put your arms around me  
And I believe that it's easier for you to let me go...

I hope that you see right through my walls  
I hope that you catch me, 'cause I'm already falling  
I'll never let our love get so close  
You put your arms around me and I'm home

I try my best to never let you in to see the truth  
And I've never opened up  
I've never truly loved till you put your arms around me  
And I believe that it's easier for you to let me go

I hope that you see right through my walls  
I hope that you catch me, 'cause I'm already falling  
I'll never let our love get so close  
You put your arms around me and I'm home

You put your arms around me and I'm home

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