

# NOEL: MISSION OF LOVE

*In French, joyeux noel means "Merry Christmas."*

# JOYOUS NOEL

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**NOEL!**— In French, joyeux noel means “Merry Christmas.” Webster’s defines it as “a song of joy or Christmas song.” The word now carries the dual meaning of a Christmas song and the Christmas celebration itself.

# **FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF ANGELS**

When we wish someone a joyous noel, we are following the example of the angels, announcing the good news that Jesus Christ was born, not just for Israel, but for all mankind, so we could receive forgiveness of sins through Him.

# NOEL IN AMERICA

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- A 2010 Study by Lifeway Research found:
- 91% of Americans celebrate Christmas including atheists...
- 47% of households attend a church service as part of their celebration...
- 67% say an invitation from a church-going Family Member would persuade them to attend church and 63% say an invitation from a church-going Friend or Neighbor would persuade them to attend.

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"Americans celebrate Christmas, but are often disconnected from the birth of a personal Savior," Stetzer said. "There's a gap between practice and belief - and Christians need to step into that gap and share why Jesus was born."

<http://www.lifeway.com/Article/LifeWay-Research-finds-Christmas-is-prime-time-for-church-invitations>

# STEP INTO THE GAP

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How can we step into the gap of '*why Jesus was born*' and share the Good News with not-yet-believers in the most effective ways? That is what we will answer today, because:

# OUR MISSION OF LOVE

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- God still so loves the world and people matter so much to Him that He gave us the greatest gift: His only Son. This is the hope for every man, woman and child alive today.
- George reads an excerpt from God Space, by Doug Pollock. It is about a young couple who failed in sharing Jesus one Christmas.

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Our goal for this Christmas season 2017— to increase **the quantity and the quality of our spiritual conversations** with those who are not-yet-believers in order to step into the gap of why Jesus matters.

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- This week we will start with how to notice our way into better spiritual conversations.
  - Next we will focus on how to serve and listen our way into better spiritual conversations.
  - As Christmas gets closer we will seek to wonder our way into better spiritual conversations.
  - All of this aims at closing the gaps for not-yet-believing people as to why Jesus matters for us all so very much.

# NOTICING

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1. We need better spiritual vision if we are to notice our way into better spiritual conversations about why Jesus matters.

Jesus taught us this, “Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in our own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.” Matt. 7:5

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It is very easy for us to miss what we are not really looking for. Too often we are looking to *control* a conversation with our agenda or *combat* a person's view of the world, rather than looking for ways to show *compassion* through the kindness of Jesus.

- Noticing ways people need the compassion of Jesus will awaken our hearts to the work of the Holy Spirit in us to show it to them.
- George will read the account of Noticing Miss Dottie from God Space, by Doug Pollock.

# OUR CHRISTMAS MISSION OF LOVE

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1. This week try this faith experiment: begin noticing the people around you as Jesus would, with compassion. Let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart about the next step.
2. Commit daily to this prayer: “Dear Father in Heaven, in Jesus name help me to see others around me as you see them.” Let the Lord open our eyes this week.
3. Go to [www.sermonspice.com](http://www.sermonspice.com) and search for: “Get Service” and watch the clip.