

# Unwrapping Christmas

## Strange Gifts

**Christmas is about death that leads to life (Matthew 2:11; John 19:38-39).** As one of the key gifts the wise men gave to Jesus at His birth, myrrh is perhaps one of the strangest gifts that could have been given. At the time, myrrh was primarily used to anoint dead bodies for burial. But in this context, the gift carried a powerful prophetic message: Jesus was born to die. But more than that, He was born as a warrior to attack death and be victorious over it. Death came as a result of humanity's sin and separates us from God. But through Jesus – through His death, burial, and resurrection – we can have life and receive access to our Heavenly Father. One of the most important things we can do as a follower of Jesus is to cultivate and nurture an ongoing awe of this truth.

### GETTING STARTED

What is the funniest gift you have ever been given? What's the strangest gift? What did you do with it? Do you still have it or did you pass it along to the next unknowing person?

### GO DEEPER

1. For most followers of Jesus, John 3:16 is a very familiar verse, and often familiarity breeds complacency, apathy, and/or boredom. What are the dangers of becoming bored with this verse? How do we stir and cultivate awe and wonder for the truth that it holds, and for all that Jesus accomplished for us through His death and resurrection?
2. In Matthew 16:18-23, Jesus tells his disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, where He will suffer, die, and be raised to life. How did Peter (and likely the other disciples) respond? Why do you think the notion that Jesus had to die was so difficult for them?
3. Luke 9:23 teaches that followers of Jesus must deny themselves and daily take up their cross. They must daily die, like Jesus. What does this mean, and what are we to daily die to? How does death to these things actually produce life (John 12:24)?

### MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. How much have you lost your awe and wonder of Christmas and the significance of Jesus' birth because it has become too familiar? What steps do you need to take to regain that awe?
2. What things do you need to daily die to, in order to experience more of the abundant life God has for you? Why is it so challenging for you to lay those things down?

### PRACTICE IT NOW

Take some time as a group to pray through things that you know in your life you need to daily lay down. Thank Jesus that he so willingly went to the cross to redeem us and give us life through His death. Ask God to help rekindle your awe and wonder for what He has done and the depths of His love.