

Unwrapping Christmas

Worship the King

Christmas is about worship to the King (Matthew 2:1-12). Unlike Herod, who opposed Jesus, and unlike the Jewish leaders, who were indifferent about Jesus, the Magi – when they followed the star and found Jesus in Bethlehem – immediately fell down and worshipped Him. They offered Him extravagant gifts. For us today, worship is the proper response to all that Jesus has accomplished for us through His birth, His life, His death, and His resurrection. Worship is the summary word for what it means to love and follow Him. It is the willingness to be different in pursuit of Him, to obey Him even when it is risky, to give generously, and to offer our lives in totality to show that He is King.

GETTING STARTED

When have you had an exuberant amount of joy and celebration (e.g. birth of a child, wedding day, sporting victory, concert, movie premiere, graduation, job promotion, etc.)? How did you express that joy, and what made that situation so special?

GO DEEPER

1. From Matthew 2:1-12, how did Herod respond after hearing from the Magi about the star they had seen and the birth of the King of the Jews? What was the true intent of Herod's heart, based on this passage and historical accounts of his life?
2. From the same passage, how did the religious leaders respond? How was their heart towards the birth of Jesus different from Herod's?
3. How did the Magi respond after seeing the star again, and in finding Jesus? What kind of heart and perspective led them to their distinct response?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. Right now, which of the three primary characters in Matthew 2:1-12 do you identify with the most in your response to the birth of Jesus (i.e. Herod, the Jewish leaders, or the Magi), and why?
2. What does worship and exceedingly great joy in Jesus look like for you? If an outside, objective observer saw a week of your life, how would they describe the level of your extravagance in your worship? Would they say your worship is limited, or more like the Magi, and why? What does God possibly want to change in how you worship?

PRACTICE IT NOW

Together as a group, take time – in an attitude of prayer – to verbally worship Jesus. Take turns speaking short words or phrases of adoration, love, and praise for who He is in your life and for all that He has accomplished in and through you. Use Isaiah 9:1-7 as a guide for some of the key titles that were spoken by the prophet about Jesus.