



CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

8TH
DEC 2017

READ | Matthew 1 and 2

Christmas season is a wonderful time of preparation and anticipation! In this season we prepare to remember and reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ and His incarnation, and yet how wonderful is it that we can also live in the moment, experiencing His very real presence with us in our lives today AND the truth that one day He will come again in power! We kick off our season by looking at Christmas according to Matthew. There is much in Matthew 1 and 2 that you will be blessed by and I encourage your Connect Group as a whole to come and soak yourselves in His Word!

Character Studies in Matthew's Christmas Story

HEROD and THE CHIEF PRIESTS & SCRIBES

Herod demonstrated a carnal or a fleshly response to the Messianic birth. He was so close to the truth and yet he missed it because of he was so focused on himself. Like Herod, sometimes we allow things of the flesh to stand between us and the opportunity to encounter God.

The Chief Priests and Scribes were just 5 miles away from Bethlehem and yet they didn't even make an effort to seek the Messiah out. They were the most learned and informed and yet they allowed their hearts to remain cold to something they had in fact been waiting for all their lives! Sometimes the most knowledgeable people are not the most passionate and can be the most blinded.

WISE MEN

But it was the Wise Men who traveled a long and challenging journey to get to Bethlehem. They had come to seek Jesus out and worship Him – it didn't matter how far they had to travel and it didn't matter that Jesus was just a 1 or 2 year old at the time! The Wise Men demonstrate 4 postures we can adopt so that we do not merely respond carnally or apathetically to what Christmas is all about.

1. Wise Men Still Seek Him

a. Why is it important to continually seek God? What is it of God that you are seeking more of this Christmas?

2. Wise Men Rejoice

a. Joy is much more than just a happy feeling we experience. As God's people we can truly rejoice because of Jesus Christ's atoning work on the cross. What about the Cross is most meaningful to you this season?

3. Wise Men Worship

a. One of the definitions of “worship” in the Webster's Dictionary 1828 is “to honour with extravagant love and extreme submission”. When was the last time you worshipped with “extravagant love and extreme submission”? Are they hindrances to you being able to worship in such a way? This Christmas let's make true worship a non-negotiable in our lives once again because Jesus is worthy of it all!

4. Wise Men Bear Gifts

a. The Wise Men traveled far bearing gifts that spoke of the honour and status they accorded Jesus. This Christmas, are we bringing that which is valuable to us and presenting it before God as an expression of our worship? Or are we focusing on giving gifts to others before giving them to God?

b. Just like the Wise Men whose gifts were a miracle for Mary and Joseph and Jesus, your gift could be somebody else's miracle. Our Christmas play, **Crazy Little Thing Called Love** is one such gift. Share and believe with each other for the people you are inviting to watch the show – this could well be the best gift they ever receive this Christmas!