



REFLECTION / DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Pick a few questions from below and reflect this week, or choose 4-5 to discuss in your home group.

- For those who are celebrating Advent, what nugget have you learned this week?
- What's the best Christmas gift you ever gave?
- What do you find remarkable in how God led "unbelievers" (Magi) to Jesus? In what ways do you see God able to use you similarly?
- How's your spiritual temperature for the Gospel these days? In what ways do you see yourself "getting accustomed" to God's grace so that you're getting a little too familiar with it? What advice would you give to someone to get the "joy of salvation," back?
- What is "competing" for your resources, time, energy - today? How can you cut out that competition, and refocus it on God and his Kingdom?
- Read 2 Corinthians 9:7. What can you learn from this one verse about giving?



THINK ABOUT IT & LEADER'S GUIDE

Christmas Traditions: Giving

OVERVIEW

Matthew records in his gospel (2:1-12) how the Magi came from the east to worship the “king of the Jews.” Most scholars agree that these extraordinary men used their knowledge of astrology to locate Jesus, as they journeyed from Persia to worship him. In keeping with their culture, they brought “their gifts of gold, incense & myrrh” to pay homage to this newborn king. How remarkable that even those still in darkness would recognize the world-changing event of Jesus’ birth, travel so far to seem him firsthand, and then bow in worship at their arrival!

INTERPRETIVE & THEOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS

“To tithe or not to tithe, that is the question!” Any message on giving begs the question, “is tithing (the giving of 10%) the standard of giving in the New Testament?” Or, is that just Old Testament law? Well, yes and no. It’s true, that for the Nation of Israel, a tenth was always representative of their resources. Devout Jews actually gave several tithes that added up to about 20-30% of their giving. It’s also true that the New Testament never instructs us to give a tithe, but instead encourages believers to give regularly (1 Corinthians 16:2) an amount that God has led, and to give that amount in a cheerful fashion. (2 Corinthians 9:7). So, if we can do so cheerfully, why limit ourselves? ☺

Go to this link for more on biblical giving:

<http://www.gty.org/resources/questions/QA144/does-god-require-me-to-give-a-tithe-of-all-i-earn?Term=Tithe>

SERMON OUTLINE & REFERENCES

1. **God is a giver.** Luke 1:30-32; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8
2. **Then, let's be givers -- not takers.** Matthew 10:8; John 13:1-17; 15:1-9; Acts 20:35;
3. **It's not what we give; it's how we give that matters.** 2 Corinthians 9:7
 - **Giving has competition.** Matthew 6: 19-21
 - **We need to move from feeling generous to actually being generous.** James 2:16