

Community Group Guide

ChristMYTH BUSTERS: The Wise Men

The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

December 4, 2011

Various Scriptures

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

In the first week of our December series, "ChristMYTH BUSTERS," Pastor Paul went through Matthew 2:1-12 and talked about 3 myths concerning the wise men and how the truth behind the myths can apply to our lives today.

1. **Myth: They were kings.** The truth is that they were seeking a king, and the application for today is that wise men always seek someone greater than themselves, even if that search causes a disturbance for others.
2. **Myth: They saw baby Jesus in a stable.** The truth is that they saw little Jesus in a house because it took up to 2 years for them to reach Jesus. The application for today is that wise men are committed to the search, even if it takes longer and is harder than we imagined. The end result (seeing Jesus for Who He is) is worth any sacrifice.
3. **Myth: There were 3 wise men.** We only assume there were 3 because 3 gifts are mentioned, but the truth is that there were 3 gifts given by 3 wise men. In actuality, the number of magi that saw Jesus could have been much higher. One of the harder teachings of this message was that we all have a tendency to only count those who appear to have a gift, when in reality we all have gifts to give Jesus. The application for today is that wise men still give gifts to the King.

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Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- If we're to be wise and seek Someone greater than ourselves, then we're going to have to kill pride. How can Philippians 2:1-3 help us do that?
- Can you relate to the search for Jesus taking longer than you'd expected? Why?
- Matthew 2:3 says that the wise men's search for Jesus disturbed Herod and the entire area. How can our passion for seeing Jesus be King in our lives affect those around us?
- Describe a person in your life who's search first disturbed you, but ultimately, inspired you to search for Jesus as well.
- Have you been guilty of only counting the "gifted?"
- What gifts are easy to see in others? Which ones are harder to see?
- The wise men humbled themselves before King Jesus before they worshiped and gave their gifts. How is humility foundational to how we worship and serve?

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.

Weekly Prayer Focus...

- **Lives and Church:** Pray for a continued strengthening of the unity at The Gathering. Pray, too, that the Lord would lead us to the perfect building for us.
- **Local:** Pray for the Stanly Community Christian Ministry. This week we are also praying for Boomerang Church and Senior Pastor, Bryan Wright.
- **Global:** Lift up our sister church in the Rag Picker slum of Delhi, India, and Pastor Abhishek as he leads them. Pray for the Lord to open the eyes of those blinded by Hinduism in that slum.