



SESSION

6

THE WISE MEN'S WORSHIP

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WHAT'S
THE MOST
UNIQUE GIFT
YOU'VE EVER
RECEIVED?

THE POINT ➤

JESUS IS LORD AND HE DESERVES OUR WORSHIP.

▶ MATTHEW 2:1-11

¹ After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, ² saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him."

³ When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Christ would be born.

⁵ "In Bethlehem of Judea," they told him, "because this is what was written by the prophet:

⁶ And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah: Because out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

⁷ Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him."

⁹ After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was—the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

“WHITE ELEPHANT” GETS ITS NAME FROM THE SIAM (NOW THAILAND) KINGS’ GIVING ELEPHANTS TO MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL COURT THEY SAW AS OBNOXIOUS.² THE ANIMALS WEREN’T USEFUL FOR WORKING AND WERE VERY EXPENSIVE TO FEED—QUITE THE PRACTICAL JOKE!

We all know Christmas is ultimately about Jesus, and we give gifts to celebrate the fact that salvation is a free gift God has given us. Gift giving has become so popular and central to the holiday in America, businesses go to great lengths to capitalize on this opportunity. Retailers try every way possible to convince us to give extraordinary gifts for the special people in our lives—electronics and designer accessories, vacations and diamonds, even cars. You can probably picture some of the commercials in your mind right now.

In 1959, Neiman Marcus, a department store based in Texas, pulled a publicity stunt which turned into an annual event that continues today. They offered a live black Angus bull and a sterling silver barbecue cart for \$1925. Since then, sales have featured a fully functional submarine, mummy cases (mummies included), roles in Broadway plays, and a full-scale Star Wars X-Wing Fighter.¹ The craziest part—people actually paid big bucks for these things!

When Jesus was a child, He received gifts we might consider unusual. But the men who brought them to Jesus thought otherwise—their gifts were expressions of worship to the King of kings, as well as symbolic of Jesus’ ministry to God’s people. As we consider their worship, we will see Jesus certainly deserves our worship as well.

MATTHEW 2:1-6

1 How should the fact Jesus is King affect our lives?

2 What can we learn from the wise men about how we should worship Jesus?





MATTHEW 2:7-8

3 Why do some people only pretend to know and follow Jesus?

4 What are some obstacles preventing people from truly worshipping Jesus?

5 How can we tell the difference between genuine worship and going through the motions?

Many people today offer insincere lip service to Jesus, but we should follow the wise men's example of offering genuine worship.
#BSFLfullpicture



MATTHEW 2:9-11

6 What is it about Jesus that leads you to feel overwhelmed with joy?

7 What do these verses teach us about authentic worship?

8 What are some ways we can best express worship of Jesus?



LIVE IT OUT

► CHRIST

The wise men received a message from God in the form of a star, and they went to great lengths in pursuing Jesus. Matthew 7:7-8 teaches when we seek Jesus and His kingdom, we will find it.

**As you've sought
Jesus in the past,
what have you
come to know
about Him?**

**How did this
make a real
difference in
your life?**

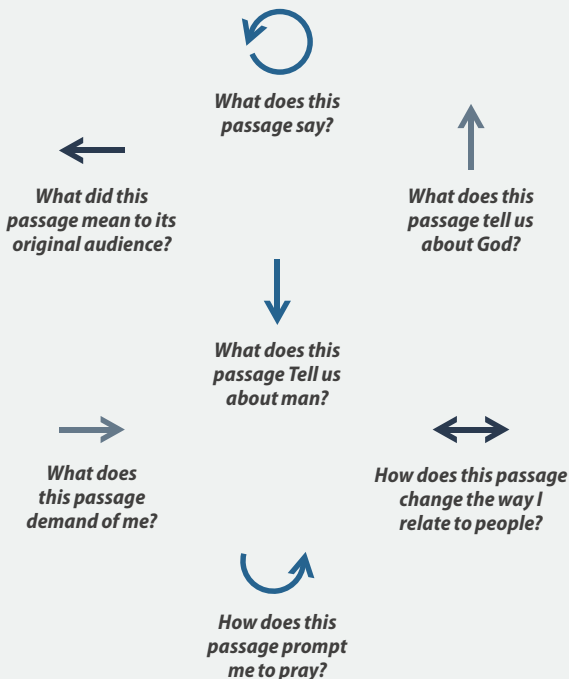
**What is God
calling you to
do in order
to pursue
Jesus more
wholeheartedly?**

Make it a point to pursue Jesus every day this week through Bible reading and prayer. Devote yourself in worship to Him as the wise men did.

DAILY DEVOTIONS



THE 7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING



DAY ONE PSALM 95:1-2

After being set free from slavery in Egypt, God's people wandered the desert, and as you might imagine, they didn't have access to water and were thirsty. But God had a plan. He commanded Moses to strike a rock with his staff, and when Moses obeyed, water gushed from the rock (Num. 20:1-13). God provided salvation in the desert through the rock. Today, we are in a spiritual desert, and the Lord is Himself the rock of our salvation—when we're lost, thirsty, and desperate, He provides all we need in order to live. Just like the Israelites in the desert, this is worth celebrating—something that should make us shout for joy. And when God provides for us when there's no other way, it's only appropriate that we should come before Him with grateful hearts.

- **How have you seen God's provision in your life?**
- **What has been your response to God's goodness? How can you improve in expressing your gratitude?**

DAY TWO

PSALM 95:3-5



Whereas from our perspective, mountains are colossal, ocean trenches are unimaginably deep, and waves are powerful, in the grand scheme of things, even the greatest earthly features are pretty insubstantial. Sure, climbing Everest is a great accomplishment, but God created all these—mountains, oceans, and all the universe—by speaking them into existence. That’s incredible power. Pagan gods, on the other hand, are powerless and accomplish nothing. Yet for many reasons, people throughout history have devoted themselves to worthless idols. The Lord stands far above anything else we could devote ourselves to. He is the great and mighty King, and He alone is worthy of our reverence and worship.

- **What are you tempted to value more than you should?**
- **What attributes of God cause you to stand in awe of Him?**

DAY THREE

PSALM 95:6

Worship is an idea that's central to the Christian life. We often associate it with congregational singing—and this is right—but it's much more than that. *Worship* means literally to fall on our faces before God, to lay ourselves before Him in surrender and as a sacrifice. In the Old Testament, a primary way God's people worshiped Him was by offering a literal sacrifice on the altar. Under the new covenant, we are no longer required to kill an animal in order to worship. Instead, we are to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice. Worship, then, is an expression of the heart—it's the internal posture of bowing before God in surrender. As this Psalm points out so beautifully, we are invited continually into God's presence, so long as we come with a heart of surrender, willing to sacrifice our own desires that He would be honored above all.

- **What do you think of when you hear the word “worship”?**
- **What has God called you to sacrifice in order to honor Him?**

DAY FOUR

PSALM 95:7a

Sheep are interesting creatures. They don't have the same sort of offensive or defensive characteristics of other animals—no talons like an eagle, no shell like a turtle, no teeth or fast feet. Whereas sheep have a reputation for being completely dumb and helpless, this isn't necessarily the case, as they're social and have good memories. Nonetheless, the truth is they wouldn't fare very well without a shepherd. God calls us His sheep. Because we're created in God's image, we're pretty smart about certain things, and throughout the generations, we've done pretty well for ourselves in this world. However, when it comes to eternity, without a shepherd to guide us, we have no hope—we'd wander into destruction, for sure. But God, because He loves us deeply, has taken us into His care, led us into safe pastures, and for eternity will protect and provide for us.

➤ **How do you sometimes act like a sheep?**

➤ **How have you seen God's protection and provision in your life?**

DAY FIVE

PSALM 95:7b-11



The Israelites, after God set them free from Egyptian slavery, very quickly forgot God's goodness and fell into complaining. Because of their sin, they missed out on many of God's blessings and instead experienced His discipline. In fact, an entire generation would never experience the blessings of the promised land. But because of His faithfulness, when His people returned to Him, God ultimately restored them to an intimate relationship with Himself. Today, if we are a part of God's family, that's never going to change. However, there may be times when we choose sin instead of honoring God, and though we'll never ultimately lose our salvation, we can miss out on God's approval and blessing. Let's make sure to continually pursue a lifestyle of worship.

➤ **In what ways have you been hard-hearted, choosing sin instead of worship?**

➤ **How have you experienced God's forgiveness and restoration?**