

*This is a discussion guide based upon CRBC sermons. The questions below are for Home Group Leaders to utilize in facilitating discussion within their group. Home Group Leaders are encouraged to take these questions, re-arrange them, omit them, add to them and change them as required to best facilitate discussion within their groups.*

*Additionally, if there are any questions, comments, critiques, inputs, etc... Please email Michael Griffin at [airforce\\_griffin@yahoo.com](mailto:airforce_griffin@yahoo.com).*

### **ICE BREAKER**

- How many wise men / magi came to see Jesus?
  - o Answer = Unknown. Tradition has three in the Nativity scene because three gifts were given: gold, frankincense and myrrh.
- Was Jesus a baby when the wise men / magi visited Jesus?
  - o Answer = Unknown. Jesus could have been a baby up through two years old. Based on the timing given by the magi to King Herod, King Herod had all two year old boys and younger born in Bethlehem killed. (Matthew 2:16) So this could mean that the magi visited a two year old Jesus in a home in Bethlehem versus the Christmas tradition of the magi visiting Jesus in the manger.

### **SCRIPTURE**

- Matthew 2:1-12
- Philippians 2:1-8
- Romans 12:1-2

### **QUESTIONS**

- ***{THIS IS A GEE-WHIZ KINDA QUESTION THAT YOU MAY OR MAY NOT WANT TO TALK ABOUT WITH YOUR GROUP}*** Who were the magi / wise men in Matthew 2? Not much is said in the Bible other than that they came from the east after seeing a “star” and have come to worship the king of the Jews based on this “star.”
  - o We know they were important enough to gain audience with Herod the king.
  - o We know they had wealth, for a variety of reasons:
    - They gave expensive gifts to Jesus
    - They traveled a great distance to worship Jesus
      - We can infer from this that they had to travel in a caravan for protection and supplies
        - o So we are talking the unknown number of magi, all their animals to include pack animals, food, supplies, all their servants that attended them, etc...
  - o There is a strong chance that these magi were astrologers or from some sort of non Judeo religious world view.
  - o Why is this important? Some of the first people to validate that Jesus was “king of the Jews” (basically a term for the Messiah) were non-Jews from a “pagan” part of the land. Their faith in this “Star” caused them to travel a great distance at

great cost and at their own peril. After seeing Jesus and worshipping them; they essentially ignored the command of a man who was later able to command the wholesale slaughter of all two year old boys and under in Bethlehem in order to protect Jesus. If Herod had caught the magi, there is a very high likelihood he would have killed them.

- If you were going to concoct a story about the story of Jesus (i.e. make it up); you would have used Jewish religious elites like the Sanhedrin, Pharisees and/or Sadducees to help give validation and weight to the story of Jesus
- What are some of your Christmas traditions? Do you put up lights? Do you put up a Christmas tree? Is it real or fake?
- Do you look forward to Christmas or does the mere idea of Christmas exhaust you?
- If you were invited to the White House to visit with a president who ideologically you could not stand at all, would you go? Would you go to honor the position of presidency or would you not go because you could not honor the man?
- Non Jewish “pagans” of substantial wealth and influence traveled a long distance, visited with a king and then humbled themselves before a baby boy (or toddler) in the presence of His poor family? What kind of impression do you think that made on His family? Were the magi worshipping Jesus because of His “position” or His “person?”
- How would you define worship?
- How did Pastor Rick differentiate between worshipping the “position” or worshipping the “person?”
- **Do you find security and comfort in religious ritual and worship, why or why not? Leaders, I ask that you be careful with this question. There is not a wrong or right answer to this question. Some people find the familiarity of ritual in worship to help them get their hearts and minds in the right place. Some may come from a religious tradition heavy in ritual whereas others may not. The ultimate goal is that we submit ourselves completely to Jesus Christ and we worship God because of His abundance love and grace for us. Some people may find that ritual helps in that just like some people may prefer traditional hymns vs. rock and roll music.**
- How do you worship Christ? What did Paul mean in Romans 12:1-2, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” (ESV)?
- What do you think of the word “submission?” Do you like it, why or why not? Why is it difficult for us to submit to Christ?
- Pastor Rick made this statement, “When there is true worship, there are no church problems.” What church problems have you observed in your years at church? Why would “true worship” alleviate these problems?
- Pastor Rick said, “Worship reveals our spiritual maturity.” Be honest, what does your spiritual worship look like? Does your spiritual worship look like a morning Bible study whose affects fade throughout the day as you get engrossed in the “world?” Is your spiritual worship listening to praise songs in the car on the way to work, while at work and on your way home to work but then turning it off so you can watch Game of Thrones? Or is your spiritual worship completely surrendering yourself to God, a thousand times each day, constantly “renewing your mind”, forgetting yourself and carrying His cross?

- Who is your Jesus? Is He a baby in a manger? Or is He sitting at the right hand of God, with wounds in His hands, feet and side for your safe making footstools out of His enemies? (Hebrews 1:1-4, 12:1-2)