

## Community Group Discussion Questions

### CHRISTMAS GIFTS – NO. 3 “The Gift of Joy for Seekers” – Matthew 2:1-12

**Theme:** *Where do we find true joy? What is required of us in order to experience it?*

If we were to interview people and ask them, “*What is the source of joy? How do we get it?*” we’d no doubt get a number of different answers. Some people might say that joy comes from favorable circumstances: being with friends and family or getting the gift of your dreams. Others might talk about joy coming from traveling to exotic places or living a problem-free life. Most of these opinions are really describing *happiness*, not joy. Happiness is not the same as joy. Happiness does depend upon favorable circumstances, artificial stimulation, and living a problem-free life. But *joy* is deeper. Unlike happiness, joy can co-exist with other emotions, like sorrow (1 Pet.1:6). Joy may be defined as an inner attitude of contentment, satisfaction and delight that comes from the conviction that our greatest needs, desires and longings are only met by one Source.

When we find joy our lives are forever changed. There is an aspect of the Christmas story that can help us to better understand where to find such joy. It’s the story of the Magi, or wise men recorded in Matthew chapter 2.

### Gathering Together (Icebreaker)

What was your most *enjoyable* Christmas? What made it so special?

### Growing Together (Truth/Equipping)

Read Matthew 2:1-12:

1. Approximately 2 years have passed since Jesus was born. What in the narrative would support such a view? Are Joseph, Mary and Jesus still living in a stable or cave (vs.11)?
2. We’re told that when the Magi saw the star “they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (vs.10). How does such joy differ from happiness?
3. Is it possible for joy to co-exist with other emotions, such as sorrow (see 1 Peter 1:6)? If so, how is this possible?

4. Who were the Magi? These passages may help in forming your answer: Numbers 24:17; Daniel 2:48; and Daniel 5:11.
5. According to this passage, where did the Magi come from? How many were there?
6. What was the star that guided the Magi to Bethlehem?
7. Today, God's "star" isn't always a bright light in the sky. God sends different "stars" into our lives to guide us to Jesus. What "stars" did He use to initially bring you to Jesus? Having come to Him in faith, are there any *stars* that He has used in recent days to keep bringing you back to Jesus?
8. If the Bible experts of the day – the chief priests and scribes – knew exactly where the Christ was to be born, why do you suppose they didn't join the Magi and travel 6 miles to Bethlehem to see the newborn king? How may we be like these Bible scholars?
9. Who was Herod? Why was he "disturbed" at the news shared by the Magi? Was such a reaction unusual for Herod?

### Getting Real Together (Accessibility)

1. This passage emphasizes different reactions to Jesus: the *indifference* of the religious leaders, the *hostility* of Herod and the *worship* of the Magi. Which reaction best describes your approach to this Christmas season?
2. The immediate response of the Magi was to worship Jesus. How can you move to a greater response of worship right now?
3. The Magi recognized that Jesus was worthy of the best gifts they could give to Him. So they presented Him gold, incense and myrrh. What gifts could you present to Jesus this Christmas?

### Group Prayer Time (Supplication)

Pray that the Lord would use your actions during this Christmas season to encourage family and friends to respond like the Magi.