

Magi | Matthew 2:1-12 Sermon Discussion Leader's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: Discuss practical ways to resist the temptation to rule our lives, and instead cultivate joy and worship toward God.

Sermon Refresher: In this sermon, we saw two different ways to respond to the reign of Jesus: the way of fear and the way of worship.

Case Study: Read this story and discuss the questions below.

John began his career as an IT consultant for a mid-sized corporation. Over the years he worked hard and proved that he worked well with people. He was eventually promoted to a management level position, where he showed a high level of competency. The team he led oversaw several large-scale projects successfully and he eventually won the attention of the VP over his department.

When that VP retired, John thought he was next in line, so he prepared his resume and worked harder than ever to prove himself to the execs. He dreamed with his wife about the new house they could buy, the vacations they would go on, and the huge Christmas gifts they could give their kids with his bonuses.

After work one Friday afternoon, he received an email announcing that his company hired a new VP from *outside* the company. They never even called him in for an interview. John could not believe it. He spent the entire weekend speechless, but was fuming inside. He scrawled out four different resignation letters, each angrier than the last. If they didn't want him, he would take his skills and knowledge about their business to a competitor.

Discussion:

1. What different things did John *think* he had control over before he heard the news about the new VP?

THE **crossing** **small groups**

2. Why do you think John responded to the news about the VP position the way he did?
3. What do you think John's heart wanted deep down? (Go beyond "he wanted the job").
4. How do you see yourself in John?

Read: Matthew 2:1-12, 16

Discussion:

1. Why do you think Herod responded so violently to the news of Jesus' birth? What do you think he feared losing?
2. Herod's violence was a sign that he did not want Jesus to be his king. Herod wanted to be king himself. What are different signs in our lives today that we don't want Jesus to be our king—that we want to be rulers of our own lives?
3. What are some practical ways you have resisted the temptation to rule your life instead of Jesus?

Re-Read: Matthew 2:9-11.

Discussion:

1. The magi respond to Jesus with joy, worship, and extravagant generosity. Why do you think they responded this way?
2. Which of these three (joy, worship, generosity) do you find the most difficult?

Sharing and Prayer:

Pick one area (joy, worship, or generosity) that you want to grow in during this Christmas season. Share EITHER one practical way you are going to be joyful, worship, or give, OR one practical way you will cultivate joy, worship, or generosity in your heart.