



# The Greatest Gift: Seekers & Finders

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Jesus said, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." (Matthew 7:7-8 NIV)

The one who seeks finds! We are invited to be **seekers and finders!**

Take a minute to consider how people in the Christmas story found Jesus. Mary and Joseph said "Yes" to the angel. Zechariah was skeptical so the angel took his voice, but after John the Baptist was born Zechariah prophesied about Jesus being the Messiah (see Luke 1:67-80). The Shepherds followed the angels' invitation and found Jesus in the manger. Finally, Simeon and Anna were waiting on the Messiah and met him at the temple (see 2:25-38). They all responded and found Jesus.

Notice that Jesus was hidden in plain sight. Some were ready and found him. Others were not looking, and many missed him. We want to be those who seek and find Jesus. Let's look at the account of the wise men. READ Matthew 2:2-12.

- 1. Based on this passage, what are some things we are told about the wise men?**
- 2. What are things you WISH it told us about them?**

There are a lot of wrong impressions we might have about the wise men. They remain mostly a mystery to this day!

- 3. Why do you think the wise men are an important part of the story?**

We know the wise men came from the East. Many scholars suggest that they may have come from Persia or the region of Babylon, which includes modern day Iran. This area had many who followed a religion called Zoroastrianism, which included astrology and careful study of the stars. If this is the case, the wise men had likely traveled for months to get to where Jesus was. They were foreigners who possibly heard of the biblical prophecies when some from Israel were taken into exile in Babylon. They may have been familiar with Numbers 24:17 that says, "A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel."

One thing the Bible does say is that these men brought gifts for Jesus of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These are not everyday gifts, but ones that are fit for a king. Gold often represents riches, frankincense was used in worship and represented deity, and myrrh was an anointing oil that represented a king's anointing. It was also used to prepare bodies for burial, which could be a foreshadowing of Jesus crucifixion.

The amazing thing about these wise men is that they found Jesus! *They were finders!* They had left the comforts of home, followed a star to a distant country and found the baby king that they were seeking! This story is even more incredible when you consider how the wise men of Jerusalem missed Jesus! In Matthew 2:5-6 we read that they knew exactly where the Messiah was to be born- but they weren't seeking him! They sent the wise men and missed him themselves!

- 4. What are some legends that you've heard about the wise men that might not be accurate?**
- 5. Why do you think the scholars of Jerusalem missed Jesus?**

The wise men were focused on a star to lead them. They had to keep that focus. There were surely many things that could have distracted them on their journey, but they persevered through the unexpected twists and turns. As we seek Jesus we also have to keep our focus. There are many things that can distract us and take us off course.

A book I read the other day said that for some, Christmas can become an "artificial spiritual stimulant." It feels like we're doing something spiritual, but are we? It's important to reflect and check our focus so we can make sure we are seeking to find Jesus.

- 6. What are things that distract your focus from Jesus and what has helped you overcome them?**
- 7. In what ways can Christmas become something artificial rather than authentic? How do we guard against that?**

We see that the wise men kept their focus, but they also expected to be successful. They kept going until they found Jesus. We search differently when we expect to find what we are looking for. It's not a half-hearted effort, but we are alert and watchful. As we seek Jesus, we also want to be expectant and fully alert, watchful to see how we might discover him. READ Psalm 5:3.

- 8. What does it mean to seek Jesus expectantly?**

As we've seen, the wise men brought expensive gifts to Jesus. They had carried these gifts a long way. They were not only prepared to find Jesus, but they were prepared to worship him extravagantly! As we consider seeking Jesus, what are you willing to spend? What will you bring as you worship him?

I can't help but to compare the wise men to shopping this time of year. Many of us are on the hunt for gifts—we are searching and we are willing to go the distance to get our shopping done! We search high and low for the best deals and coupon codes! We attempt to have a budget and failure is not an option!

We sound like the wise men looking for Jesus! But do we search for Jesus as intently?

- 9. What is a gift that you might bring to Jesus?**
- 10. How do we seek the Lord more like the wise men?**

*GOING DEEPER: Thankfully, we don't have to travel for months to worship Jesus! Take some time and just be still. Recognize his presence with you. Worship him and give him the gift of your time and praise. Don't rush. Seek and find him right now!*