


2020.12.10&13



A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- 1 What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- 2 Was it news to you that "Astrology assumes that stars are **active agents** which **cause** earthly events and **promotes** the worship of stars but the Bible teaches that stars **sometimes convey messages** about earthly events but **prohibits** worship of anything but the One True God" (see [Sermon Summary](#))?
- 3 Have you, or has someone you know, ever dabbled in astrology? What do you think about that now?
- 4 Pastor Doug noted that "While Herod actively opposed Jesus, the religious leaders of the day were too disinterested to make the five mile journey to observe the fulfillment of age-old Jewish messianic hopes! We see the same responses today: some seek Christ, some oppose him, and others simply ignore him."
- 5 Which of those responses have you had at different periods of your life? Tell us about it.
- 6 Worship involves sacrificial giving. What's the best thing you've ever given God?
- 7 What is a sacrifice that you **know** that God's asking you to make now?

Need help responding wisely to God?
Write to:
BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com

- 8 Creating "God Space": "God Space" is where cynics, skeptics, and spiritually curious people can safely raise their questions, reservations, & doubts because we have listened well and demonstrated love in practical, authentic ways.
 - Think of a friend or family member who needs wisdom and guidance at this time.
 - Review the **seven lessons** we learn from the wise men (see the [Sermon Summary](#)).
 - How confident are you that your friend believe that God wants to guide them? How can you find out?
 - How can you help them pursue items **[3]** and **[4]**? How about items **[2]** and **[5]**?
 - How can you tactfully model to them proper worship of the Creator-Redeemer **[6]**?



Application-Challenge

Apply the seven principles of wisdom illustrated by the magi (see Sermon Summary).

- 1 This is a standard, go-to opener question. It's "low-bar"—and yet you often find out interesting and helpful things about group members. Pay special attention to strong emotional reactions to content.
- 2 First of all, be aware that many people confuse astrology and astronomy. Astronomy is a science that studies planets, stars, asteroids, galaxies, etc. Astrology is the belief that the positioning of the stars and planets affect the way events occur on earth. OK, now onto the question...
Although this is phrased as a "yes or no" question (which generally ought to be avoided since they don't foster discussion, but instead elicit one-word responses), dig a little deeper into folks' answers. For example, "Which part of this statement added to your understanding of astrology vs. the Bible?" Also, this simple follow-up question is always useful: "Tell us a bit more about that."
- 3 Your goal on this question is to find out, now that they understand a bit of the biblical on astrology (Deuteronomy 18:9-14), if anyone is upset or scared by the fact that they've dabbled in it in the past. The key issue for them would be to stop, and to begin seeking God for guidance instead (James 1:5-8).
- 4 There's no question asked here, but this is a very puzzling fact: Jews—who had been longing for a Messiah for centuries—didn't seem interested enough in his birth to take the five-mile walk to see him! I honestly don't have any idea why they were so disinterested, but make sure folks appreciate the puzzling nature of this observation. You can ask them *why* they think these Jewish religious leaders were so disinterested in the Messiah, but your goal is to make sure that appreciate this odd turn of events.
- 5 **After** folks have appreciated the puzzling nature of this observation, **now** it's time for this question.
- 6 Make sure folks don't think only in terms of dollars and cents. Time is our most valuable possession. If someone has sacrificially dedicated time to knowing or serving God, this too is an act of worship. Some folks may be embarrassed to tell of their sacrifice, but if we realize that God is always more gracious than we, group members won't feel like it is boasting to discuss this topic. For example, the person who gave money to a ministry could focus on the joy they got from participating in this fruitful ministry. They also can say, "And, I've not missed that money one bit! I've wasted more than that on stupid stuff I now wish I'd never bought. So really, it wasn't much of a sacrifice..." The aim of this question is **not** to be like the scribes who blew a trumpet as they gave gifts, so that others would notice (see Matthew 6:1-4), but rather to "stimulate one another on to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24).
- 7 And now you're pivoting to the present. We often know that God has put something on our hearts—but we're afraid to make that sacrifice. It could be letting our teenager go on a foreign summer mission trip. It may be committing to a community group or ministry team. It could be anything. The goal of this question is to have the opportunity to encourage each other to not fear following God.
- 8 Make sure you take time to work through this "God Space" exercise. As for a volunteer who'd be willing to us their (unnamed!) friend as an example for the group, so that everyone can gain experience in learning how to think through these issues when relating to a friend who currently is outside the faith.