

Conversation Starters

- What is the worst Christmas gift you have ever received?
- What did you end up doing with it?

Discuss

Last Christmas, Americans spent around \$16 billion on things that people did not want. And we are always asked to give more during Christmas to a variety of causes, which can be good, but we don't always think about it strategically. Gift giving at Christmas started with Jesus, so it makes sense to give gifts to him.

- How does this figure impact you?
- Have you ever found yourself exhausted or blown away from how much you spent at Christmas?
- Do you ever give anything to Jesus?

The gifts of the Magi to Jesus at Christmas came in two forms – gifts of worship and monetary worth. It has been said that we arguably live in the richest time of the richest nation in history. Compared to the rest of the world, we are very well off. Most of our problems are really first-world or rich people problems. We even have more stuff than we know what to do with.

"...the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with their gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh" (Matthew 2: 9-11, NIV)

- How do the gifts of the Magi compare to the gifts (and to whom) you give at Christmas?
- Is there "stuff" in your life that you could do without?
- Do you have extra time in your week that you are not working and could use more wisely?

Jesus taught us that we can give to him by giving to the poor, those in immediate need, and the spiritually lost. At Meck, that is how we give to Jesus. And that is why our Giving to Christ at Christmas effort is such a special way to celebrate Jesus' birthday.

"Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'" (Matthew 25:37-40 NIV)

- How can you make your gift giving more meaningful?
- What are some ways you can serve the poor around you?
- What are some ways you can reach the spiritually lost around you?

Next Steps

Take some time to think about how and why you have celebrated Christmas. Think about what you give your time and resources to during this time. Since Christmas should be about Jesus, think of what it would be like for you to give more to him this year. Maybe it is exploring what a relationship with him looks like? Or, maybe you have a relationship with him and could give more to him?

Further Reflection

See Matthew 2:9-11; 25:31-46; 1 Timothy 6:18-19 LB; Proverbs 21:13; 28:27; James 1:27; Luke 14:13-14

Pray

God, thank you for Jesus and the opportunity to have a life that is completely transformed by him. Help us to take a deeper look at this season and to see how we can celebrate to reflect the gift that Jesus is to us, or how we can receive that gift.