

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

December 24th

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. What Christmas family traditions did you experience growing up?

Bible Study Questions

1. Pastor Michael said that self centeredness is the natural human state. Do you agree or disagree?
 - How are selfless acts like volunteering or serving often self centered actions?
2. Read Matthew 2:1-18
 - What do you notice about Herod?
 - Why is he so opposed to the birth of Jesus?
 - What does his self centeredness prompt him to do?
 - Why is the birth of Jesus a threat to our own self centeredness?
 - What do you notice about the magi?
 - How would you describe their posture toward Jesus?
3. Read John 3:26-30
 - What brings John joy? How is he combatting self centeredness?
4. Freedom comes when we allow Jesus to reign in our lives. How do we do that?
5. Is there currently an aspect of your life that you are refusing to release to God? If so, what do you need to do to release that?
 - Why is bitterness toward God rooted in a wrong perspective about the God/human relationship?
 - What would you say to someone who is bitter toward God?

December 24th: The Grinch Within: self centeredness

- I. **We struggle with Self centeredness because it is the default position of humanity:** One of the first words that a child learns is the word, “mine”. Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God, humans have naturally made themselves the center of worship. This can even be disguised at times. There are many who appear to be selflessly serving, when their motivation is to receive the attention and praise of others.
- II. **Herod’s self centered self worth dictated that he defend his kingship at all cost:** In Matthew 2:1-18, we have the story of Herod and the wisemen. Historically, Herod is known as a brilliant architect and his cruelty. When Herod learns that the Messiah is coming, he is disturbed. The reason is that his self worth is based on his kingship. To have a lord over him would make him a nobody. So he resorts to deception and then violence to protect his power.
- III. **The Magi found their self worth as worshippers loved by the one true king:** When the magi learn of the coming king, they journey to worship him. They find their value as recipients of God’s love and end up sharing the joy of the new born king.
- IV. **Self centeredness is defeated when we allow Jesus to sit on the throne of our lives:** The magi show an alternative by allowing God to rule their lives. If Christmas is all about God’s good rule coming into this world, then it could be said that self centeredness is defeated by having more of “Christmas” in our lives. This is echoed later by John the Baptist who stated about Jesus, “*He must become greater, I must become less.*”

Conclusion

If we want to experience the joy of Christmas, it happens by more and more Christmas in our life. More and more of God’s good rule. When that happens, he fills us with his light as he pushes back the darkness.