



A Lesson from the Magi about the Best Gifts!

The Magi Journeying by James Tissot, circa 1890, Brooklyn Museum, NY

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

...And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:1,9-11

The Magi brought gifts to the baby Jesus that were both practical and prophetic. Each gift – gold, frankincense and myrrh - served a practical purpose for the journey to Egypt and back, and each pointed to the future of Christ's life, death and resurrection. God's perfection in supplying the needs of His Son on multiple levels, are just one example of how He supplies our needs and teaches us His ways!

Surely God's prompting and selection of the Magi, drove them to the task of providing for the Holy family and amazing all who learned of their journey. How was it that these men diligently prepared and gathered together for such a long journey, at great cost, sacrificing their well-being, their normal lives at home, and all that they knew? As diligent scholars, they had learned that the special Star would signal the birth of Christ, and they set out to follow it. Bible scholars have estimated their journey to be 600 - 800 miles taking over nine months, riding on camels in a caravan over difficult and treacherous terrain! It was an adventure of a lifetime recorded in the Holy Bible in a handful of verses, yet heard about, talked about, and read about by billions of people over time!

As our celebration of Christmas approaches, we think of gift giving. While most gifts are tangible, there are also intangible gifts that can be given all year. These are gifts of respect, integrity, kindness, truthfulness, tolerance, love, faithfulness, selflessness, protection, commitment, and connection. The Magi possessed all of these traits, and more, including persistence in seeking Christ, determination to worship Him, sacrificing their own comfort and time to pursue and find Jesus. These are the greatest gifts we can give to others and ourselves! These traits enabled the Magi to watch and wait for the appearance of the Star, to select the most perfect gifts for our Lord, to prepare and make the long journey, and according to tradition, to eventually give their lives for the cause of Christ.

The importance of developing and possessing good character, are topics in my counseling work, and do not necessarily come naturally or easily for everyone. The example of the Magi illustrates these characteristics that lead us and our families to Christ-likeness and into beautiful relationships with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and others!

Wishing everyone a Beautiful Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

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