

## THE STAR! (WEEK 1)

Scripture used: Matthew 2:1-2 (NKJV)

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to the first week of our four-part series called "The Star". Pastor Hurmon wants us all to slow down and think more about Christmas. Rather than a secular event, we should see it as an opportunity to rediscover Jesus, to act more like Him, and to highlight the themes of love and generosity as a part of His legacy to the world.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) ***The holidays are a challenge for anyone trying to follow Jesus.*** We should be thinking about Jesus as we approach His birthday, but the opposite usually happens. Most of us speed up, cramming activities into December as we rush toward Christmas. All that hustle means we have no space left over for God. So this year, Pastor Hurmon is asking us to instead slow down. That will create space for God to come in and do something amazing and unexpected!
- 2) ***Even the secular version of Christmas can direct people to Jesus.*** Like the gravy made from delicious meat, all Christmas activities are tied to Jesus. That's why the dominant themes of the season are generosity and love. That's the spirit John describes in Chapter 3, Verse 16! As Jesus followers, we can highlight and call out these themes whenever possible. Our actions can help others recognize the Christ in Christmas!
- 3) ***God can use any event for His purposes.*** The star mentioned in the Gospel may have been a supernova, a comet, or some other cosmic event. In any case, it was a natural event. But God took it and magnified it, using the light to draw people to the newborn Jesus. And this still happens today!
- 4) ***The Wise Men responded to a God-Initiated moment, and were drawn to Jesus.*** These three men came from Persia, many miles away. Their journey to welcome Jesus into the world took six months or more. They left behind their families, friends, and work because they saw a very special star. But many other people saw the same star and did nothing. What made these Magi so special? Why did they make the journey, but no one else? Three things happened after God turned the star into a beacon. The three wise men:
  - a. Made the right connection between the star and God's purpose.
  - b. Grew excited about the amazing story, and their role in it.
  - c. Were moved by God to take radical action.
- 5) ***NBCC's Be Rich campaign was also a God-Initiated moment that pointed people toward Jesus.*** Over 700 people from the NBCC community volunteered for our Be Rich campaign, serving thousands of hours to revitalize under-resourced schools. On top of that, we raised more than \$60,000 - \$20,000 over our original goal - to give to our community partners! Our community answered many prayers this Christmas, helping attract others to Jesus with radical service, generosity, and love! Key challenge to ponder: how can each of us build on this seasonal event and cultivate an ongoing lifestyle marked by the generosity and sacrificial love of Jesus towards others?

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** – The birth of Jesus has been a key feature of life for over 2,000 years. This historical event contains themes of love, grace, and generosity. How can you help direct people toward Jesus by living these radical themes every day? Is there someone you can invite to consider Jesus (perhaps at NBCC's Christmas Gatherings) this Christmas?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** – Christmas is about the miraculous birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. No matter where you are - shopping, working, driving - this holiday season, remember to ask yourself "Where is Jesus in this?"
- 3) **DO** – We need to slow down to create space for God to work in our lives. Make a commitment to come early to church the next two weeks. Come and worship, paying special attention to the words of each song and what they could mean in your life.