



## INTRODUCTION

## Christmas Portraits—Part 2

The Christmas story is full of wonder—a virgin birth, angelic messengers, and mysterious visitors that travel hundreds of miles to worship a newborn baby. Amidst all of the unusual details of that night, some people simply didn't care. Some even became hostile. The news of Jesus' birth should've brought joy for everyone but, surprisingly, it didn't.

Together, we'll gain insight and learn lessons from the perplexing reactions by some key characters in the Bible's most well-known story. Join us as we explore Christmas Portraits.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think about something that you waited eagerly for - what was it? How did you respond when the waiting was over?
2. Read Matthew 2:1-6. Are you surprised that this is the only response we get from the religious leaders in regard to the coming Messiah? Why?
3. Read John 17:3 and 1 Peter 3:18. What do these verses tell us about the "big picture" of Christianity?
4. Think back to the Dresser - where do you see yourself in that analogy? Keep Galatians 2:20 in mind while discussing.
5. A.W. Tozer says in his book Pursuit of God, "The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts." What do you think of this? Is this how you see the Bible? Why?
6. How might you apply this lesson to your life?

## APPLICATION

Jesus' words in Matthew 7:21-23 should be unsettling. However, he doesn't say them lightly or without purpose. He wants to awaken us to the reality that we might be missing out on what Christianity is all about - placing our trust in Him so we can be brought back into relationship with God. It's not good news but if we don't know there is a problem - we will never look for the answer.

There are many things that we should do as Christians, read the bible, pray, connect with other believers, and more. However, we can often make these Spiritual Disciplines the end rather than a means to know God better and grow in our relationship with Him. These things can often seem tasking or burdensome but that is because we are viewing them as the end. Once we begin to see them as a means to know God better - they become life giving practices.

## KEY VERSES (HCSB)

Genesis 3:15  
Matthew 2:1-6  
Matthew 7:21-23  
John 17:3  
1 Peter 3:18  
Galatians 19b-20