

Re-gifting to the King

By Mary Kane

One day, during the weeks before Christmas, when my oldest son Erik was about four years old, I found him in his room crying. I asked what the matter was and through his tears Erik explained that he was upset because he didn't have anything to give me for Christmas. I assured him that it was ok; that mothers didn't need presents. But my son continued to cry because he wanted to give me a gift. I sat Erik on my lap, dried his tears and we talked about his problem. After a few minutes we came up with a solution; we made plans for Aunt Carol to take Erik Christmas shopping.

About a week later Aunt Carol picked up Erik to take him shopping. Before he left, I gave Erik about thirty dollars to spend on Christmas presents. Aunt Carol and Erik went down town to shop and returned later with gifts for the family. How proud Erik was to have gifts of his own to give to his parents and brother.

Even though I gave Erik the money to buy my present, (a set of 3 sparkly necklaces) it was very special to me because he chose to use his resources to give me a gift. I still have two of those necklaces. They now hang on a jewelry rack that Erik, now a college senior, hand-made for my Christmas gift this year.

My youngest son, Scottie, did something very similar about a year later. Instead of using money to buy gifts for our family, Scottie gave of what he already had been given—his toys. My gift was Scott's whale piggy bank—half full of pennies, dimes and nickels. Erik received a toy car to add to his Match Box collection and my stereo-loving husband (it was the nineties) received Scott's Mr. Microphone. Just as I was delighted when Erik and Scott used their resources, that I supplied, to give me a gift, God is delighted when we use our resources, which He supplies, to bring Him glory.

Please read Matthew 2:1-12.

Please read verse 2 again.

How did the Wisemen know to seek Jesus?

God placed a special star in the sky to attract their attention. Why did this star attract the attention of the Wisemen? The original word for "wise men" is *magos*, which probably descends from a Babylonian word which means "teachers, priests, physicians, *astrologers*, seers, interpreters of dreams, augers, soothsayers, sorcerers, interpreters of dreams, false prophets." The Wisemen constantly studied the skies looking for messages from the "gods" concerning future events. This time, however, the God of the Universe had placed a message in the skies for the Magi concerning a future event. Have you ever wondered if anyone else saw this star and was compelled to follow it to Bethlehem? The Bible does not mention anyone else following the star or remarking upon its significance. It is my opinion that while others may have seen the star and marveled at its brilliance, it was placed in the skies to witness specifically to the Magi and draw them to the feet of their Savior. I believe that it is God's greatest desire that not one human should perish apart from faith in His Son Jesus Christ, therefore He very specifically calls each one of us in a personal way that cannot be overlooked.

Please list the order of events in verse 11:

1. The Wisemen followed God's leading to Jesus. God purposely placed a brilliant star in the sky knowing the Wisemen would quickly notice a sign in the heavenlies. This star led the Wisemen directly to Jesus. Using the signs that God supplied, the Wisemen got as close to Jesus as humanly possible.

How has God purposely been trying to get your attention in order to draw you close to Him?

The wise men put themselves in a position to find Jesus...so of course...

2. The Wisemen saw Jesus. At first glance, the word *saw* may appear to mean a simple visual recognition of the Baby Jesus, but in the original language *saw* is a much more complex concept than in English. The word translated as *saw* in verse 11 is derived from 2 different significant Hebrew words. The first word is *heurisko* which translates among other things as "to find a thing sought, to find by enquiry, thought, examination, scrutiny, observation, to find out by practice and experience, to see, learn, discover, understand; to get knowledge of, come to know, God; to find out for one's self, to acquire, get, obtain, procure."

The second word for *saw* is *eido* which means "to see with the eyes; to turn the eyes, the mind or the attention to something; to know or understand; to have regard for one, cherish, pay attention to; to know the force and meaning of something which has definite meaning."

What can you do to put yourself into a position to see, understand and discover more about Jesus?

And once their eyes were truly opened to the truth of the Messiah...

3. They fell down before Jesus. The Wisemen fell before Jesus because they recognized that they were in the presence of a great and mighty King. The original word for *fell* can indicate that one may fall before another because of conviction of sin. It is reasonable to assume then that when the Wisemen saw Jesus they realized the truth of their spiritual condition.

Is there any area of your life that you have been keeping from Jesus... something that is not under His authority yet?

If your answer was yes, please confess that area to God, accept His forgiveness and give that area over to God.

The Wisemen saw their sinfulness next to the backdrop of His holiness and...

4. They worshipped Jesus. The Wisemen went to their knees, possibly even fell on their faces out of profound reverence and respect for the King of Kings. The word used for *worshipped* in this passage also means to show homage to men and beings of superior rank. Notice, as Matthew Henry points out in his commentary, that the Wisemen did not fall down and worship Herod, though he was a king. I believe that the Wisemen recognized Jesus for who He truly is, The Great I AM.

How can you spend more time worshipping Jesus?

After the Wisemen worshiped Jesus, then finally...

5. They gave their gifts to Jesus for His use. The Wisemen not only gave gifts, they gave gifts of their "treasures."; common everyday trinkets would not be enough for the King of Kings. Things that we treasure are things that are most important to us. We would never dream of giving our most treasured possessions to someone whom we disliked or mistrusted or was undeserving.

What treasured gifts has God given you that you can give back to Him to be used for His glory (think beyond money and material possessions)?

Ultimately, Who provided the gifts that the Wisemen gave to Jesus?

Did Jesus need the gifts that the Wisemen gave to Him?

No, Jesus didn't need that gifts of the Wisemen any more than I needed the gifts that my children gave to me—but they are placed among my most treasured possessions. How touched God must have been when the Wisemen returned to Him the gifts that He had bestowed upon them. Similarly, God gives to us so we can give back to His Kingdom.

Who did benefit from the gifts of the Wisemen? Many commentators and scholars believe that the gifts of the Magi helped make possible the flight of Joseph, Mary and Jesus to Egypt during the massacre of the children of Bethlehem, ordered by King Herod. Jesus' family greatly benefitted from the gifts of the Magi. In turn, others will benefit from the gifts we give back to God. God who is completely sovereign and powerful, needs nothing from us but delights to take our gifts and use them to benefit His Kingdom, the Body of Christ and the lost of the world.

What can we learn from the Wisemen?

Before we can truly use our gifts to bring God glory we must:

- ***Believe who He really is.*** Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior of the world. You must accept Him as your personal Savior and be willing to follow Him wherever He leads you. Upon the moment of your salvation, the Holy Spirit will give you gifts to be used for the Kingdom of God. Everyone who accepts Christ as Savior is gifted by the Holy Spirit.
- ***We must be willing to fall before Him.*** We must place Him first in our lives; accept His will as our will. Then we will be prepared to use our gifts to bring glory to God.
- ***We must also worship Him as our God, Savior and King.*** We must not seek glory for ourselves through the gifts that He has given us. We are to make His Great Name famous—not our own.

- ***We must give to Him out of our treasures.*** God deserves our best effort, the first fruit of our hands and priority use of our time and resources. Give Him His due; all glory, honor and homage.

As we go into 2012, how can you give back to God what He has given to you?

Name an immediate step you can take to put this plan into action.

May God bless you as you use your gifts for Him during this New Year.

"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Therefore He says:

*'When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive
and gave gifts to men.'*

Ephesians 4:7-8

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