

# CHRISTMAS

FROM **SCRATCH**

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Do you have any family gatherings? Which one is your favorite? Why?

## SEEK

### Enjoying Christmas Gatherings, from Scratch

Mother Teresa once urged that if you want to make an impact in the world, go and love your family. She was on to something. The family is the greatest place for growth and formation into functioning adulthood, and also the place for deep grievances. Do you agree with this? If not, ask around and see who is looking forward to the next holiday gathering. Some people are, some people are not, while others simply wish a few certain uncles or cousins would just stay home.

The first Christmas mentioned in Matthew's Gospel drew an interesting guest list, too. Jesus promised that His sacrifice would draw all sorts of people to himself. A foretaste of this is given in Matthew 2 when the Magi appear looking for "the one who has been born king of the Jews." The Magi are eastern astrologers. They are pagans; yet, here they are as the first worshipers of Jesus in the New Testament...even before the religious elite!

What does this mean for followers of Jesus? Well, the great surprise of Matthew's Gospel poses a challenge to Christians that should open us up to all people instead of closing us off to a certain, like-minded few. If Gentile pagans are making the first bow to worship Jesus, perhaps Christians have something to discover from them?

## SEE

MAYBE UNCLE BOB SHOULD BE INVITED AFTER ALL

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF MOTHER TERESA'S STATEMENT ABOUT LOVING YOUR FAMILY? DO YOU THINK SHE IS RIGHT? WOULD LOVING YOUR FAMILY REALLY MAKE AN IMPACT IN THE WORLD? HOW SO?

THE TABLE HAS OFTEN BEEN RECOGNIZED IN CHRISTIAN CIRCLES AS A SACRED SPACE FOR COMMUNITY, GENEROSITY, AND HOSPITALITY. FOR EXAMPLE, SAINT PATRICK BROUGHT GREAT CHANGE TO IRELAND BY SHARING HIS TABLE AND EATING MEALS WITH NONBELIEVERS IN THE COMMUNITY. DO YOU THINK THE TABLE IS STILL ONE OF THE GREATER OUTREACHES FOR CHRISTIANS TO EXTEND HOSPITALITY? WHY OR WHY NOT?

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE "FIRST CHRISTMAS" SEEN IN MATTHEW 2? IS IT SURPRISING THAT OUTSIDERS, PAGANS, GENTILES, ARE THE ONES TO WORSHIP JESUS BEFORE THE RELIGIOUS ELITE? WHAT IS MATTHEW SUGGESTING HERE?

MORE AND MORE STUDIES ARE REVEALING THAT CHRISTIANS ONLY WANT TO HANG AROUND THOSE WHO THINK LIKE THEY DO. WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS? WHAT IS RIGHT WITH THIS?

Please take a few moments to pray with and for one another