



STUDY GUIDE – December 8, 2019

Message Title: Acceptance
Teaching Pastor: Brian C. Hughes

This study guide has been designed for Small Groups in mind, and can be used by individuals as well.

Check-in: (10 mins) How can we celebrate your past week? How can we pray for you?

Pray: for our time together, that the Holy Spirit helps us to see and feel the Christmas season in a bright, refreshed way.

Get Started: (5 mins)

- Share the silliest gift you have been given and the silliest you have given.
- Read Matthew 2:1-12. God gave the Magi the star to lead them to Jesus. What is the star that God is giving you in your life to draw your attention to God?
- The gifts the Magi brought likely made it possible financially for Mary and Joseph to escape to Egypt. Share a time when unexpected money or other gifts made it possible for you to accomplish something.
- Talk about a time you passionately searched for something? What was it? Was there a lesson learned from the experience?
 - With passion and determination the Magi searched for Jesus.
 - How would you describe your personal level of passion for finding and worshipping God?
 - If you have chosen to follow Jesus it can seem like we have “found Him.” How can this be both a positive and negative aspect of our journey?

Watch and Discuss the Video

Dive in: (15 mins)

- What does searching for Jesus with determination look like in our lives? Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Matthew 13:44-48

What do these texts teach us about how we are to pursue God. Do you think you pursue God like that? Why or why not? What would it take for you to increase your ‘pursue God’ factor?

- Brian shared the following during his Sunday message,
“God is announcing the most important event in Human history not to the chief priests or even to the congregation but to the people of...*a rival religion*. God had clearly commanded that people were to worship only Him and have no idols or god-figure. Scripture made it clear that God was a jealous God.

So, why would God venture beyond the boundaries of people who claimed to follow and announce this event to the competition?

Brian answered it this way, “Because the focus of this journey, for God, was not the babe in the manger, but rather the people who were far from Him - and who could be farther than those who worshipped someone else.”

How can this claim change your perspective this Christmas?

Reflect: (15 mins) God is focused on people who are far from him, seeking them out, and he proved it by sending his son to become human, and tapping on the shoulders of the farthest outsiders to announce it. Whose shoulders will you tap on this Christmas?

Commit: (10 mins) Commit to pursue God with all that you have, like the Magi of old.

Pray: (5 mins) Pray that God would lead people into your life so that you can help them see Jesus this Christmas.