

Getting Started

Can you think of a time you became invested in something that you really had no business being interested in? A time when something outside your usual interest just transfixed you? Tell about it. How long did the interest last?

Have you ever seen an unbeliever doing things that a believer should do but doing them better, maybe acting with more integrity, showing greater kindness or generosity? How do you explain it? Was the unbeliever exceptional? Are believers worse? What do you think?

Into the Bible

Read about the visit of the Magi in Matthew 2:1-12. What evidence do you see in the story that the magi didn't really know what they were seeking?

Why do you suppose they came anyway?

Under what circumstances might you make a similar investment?

The Scriptures never even refer back to the magis' gifts, so their significance remains a matter of speculation. What everyone agrees on is that they were valuable. We are a very practical people and we often want to know, “What good use will my gift be put to?” What is your approach to generosity? Do you give when the gift will be useful? Do you give for the joy of giving? Would you give a gift simply to celebrate and honor something or someone?

Consider Ephesians 3, especially verses 6, 10-11. How is the inclusion of those who are outside our usual circles central to the church's purpose?

Flip back to Ephesians 2:11-22. Who were you ‘by birth,’ an insider or an outsider? Why is that important?

How does Ephesians 2:8-9 play into that answer?

Digging Deeper

So, we have magi—outsiders—who are super-invested in Jesus, and we have the inclusion of outsiders as central to the church's purpose. What does that tell us about 1) our investment in the work of the church and 2) what our congregation ought to emphasize in its ministry?