



Still Room For Wonder Series

Small Group Material

Leader Guide

Part 1 - "Making Room"

November 26th, 2017

Bottom Line: *The human heart is searching for something worthy of its attention, affection and worship.*

Study Verses: *Matthew 2:1-12, Psalm 10:3-4, Psalm 46:10, Psalm 139:1-6, Psalm 9:1*

Define The Win: *Participants would understand the importance of being still and how worship fuels wonder. They would recognize that a hurried lifestyle never leads one to spiritual formation. Group members would pinpoint ways they can develop a curious heart over the holiday season.*

Key Points

- *Gratitude rises from stillness.*
- *Our circumstances can make us desperate, but our hearts can make us curious.*
- *If productivity becomes the marker of success and success is the goal, then the quicker we produce, the more success we enjoy.*
- *Efficiency has become the highest value in our culture.*
- *The heart can't help but express itself. What is formed on the inside gets expressed on the outside.*
- *Gratitude awakens wonder while entitlement drives us to prove our worth.*
- *Your sense of wonder is influenced by what you allow yourself to see.*
- *You never awaken wonder by looking inward.*
- *God is never in a hurry. Hurry is the enemy of spiritual formation.*

- *There is a big difference between what catches your attention and what captures the affection of your heart.*
- *Worship is the strategy by which we interrupt our preoccupation with ourselves and attend to the presence of God.*

ENCOUNTER

"I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder." GK Chesterton

- How are productivity and efficiency viewed in our culture? How do these traits lead one to be "successful" in life?
- When was the last time you stopped and were in awe of something? How did this experience fill your heart?
- Read the quote by GK Chesterton. Why is wonder required in order to express gratitude?
- Why are many of us reluctant to be still and wonder? What makes hurry the enemy of our spiritual formation?

FORMATION

- Read Matthew 2:1-12. What led the wise men to start out on their search? Why was their reaction to bring gifts and worship when they encountered baby Jesus?
- Read Psalm 10:3-4. What causes us to leave no room for God inside of our schedule? How does this influence and impact our heart?
- Read Psalm 46:10, Psalm 139:1-6 and Psalm 9:1. How does our willingness to be still lead us towards gratitude? In what ways does worship awaken wonder?

EXPRESSION

- Where have you lost your sense of wonder? What have you replaced it with?
- What are some steps you can take to develop a curious heart? How can you be intentional about slowing down and being still during the holiday season?
- The heart can't help but express itself. If this is true, how is your heart currently being expressed and how do you feel about this expression?

LEADER INSIGHT: Efficiency and productivity have become the highest values in our culture. We are always on the go. We are engrained from very young to work faster and harder. Our schedules are jam-packed as we go from one activity to the next. If productivity becomes the marker of success and success is our ultimate goal, then the quicker we produce, the more success we enjoy.

But, the reality is that many of us "busy bees" are enjoying very little of our days. Not only is joy in short supply, wonder is nowhere to be found. Being still and standing in awe of something doesn't pay the bills, get things accomplished, or move our agenda forward. As we grow from a child into an adult, we outgrow our wonder without realizing how detrimental this is to experiencing a full life. We are so conditioned to find our flaws and fix them that we often forget to wonder.

As a result, our heart remains restless as it continues to search for something worthy of its attention, affection and worship. There is a big difference between that which catches the attention of our eyes and that which captures the affection of our hearts. The heart can't help but express itself. What is formed on the inside gets expressed on the outside.

Our circumstances can make us desperate, but our hearts can make us curious. Caring for our heart begins by being still. Gratitude rises from stillness. Our refusal to wonder opens the door for entitlement to creep into our hearts. Gratitude awakens wonder while entitlement drives us to prove our worth. Worship is the strategy by which we interrupt our preoccupation with ourselves and attend to the presence of God.

During the holiday season, the pressure to speed up only intensifies. This is why we have to be intentional about developing a curious heart. We have to remind ourselves that because God is never in a hurry, neither should we be. Hurry is the enemy of spiritual formation. Our sense of wonder is influenced by what we allow ourselves to see. Wonder is never awoken by looking inward. It involves marveling at something much bigger than ourselves. By slowing down, we are training our eyes to see God's power, creativity and influence in our lives as well as the world around us.