

Be Wise

Ready:

“Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him'...They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” -- Matthew 2:1-2, 11-12

Set

When the wise men arrived at Mary and Joseph's house, God had been silent for 400 years. In the years prior to that, God had spoken through the prophets and the kings. I am mystified that for 400 years the teaching of men who believed in God's promise of a Messiah would persist for generations in such a way that when these wise men saw the special star in the east, and they knew He was here.

The recipe for success these wise men followed is the same recipe we should follow in our own walk.

Ingredient #1: Learn Accurately

Matthew 2 is not the first time we encounter “wise men” in the Bible. In fact, I would argue this wise men story is a continuation of the wise men we find in the book of Daniel. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon put Daniel in charge of all the wise men in the region. I imagine that in Daniel's many years leading, he taught them the prophecies of the Jewish scriptures. Daniel's teaching undoubtedly included Numbers 24:17, “A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.” The wise men believed that God would send the sign of a sun when He sent His Son into the world.

Ingredient #2: Look Expectantly

The wise men in Matthew 2—who weren't of Israelite descent—were possibly among the few who during the 400 years of God's silence were looking for God to send His promised Messiah. Undoubtedly, the Jewish people under the Roman rule were desperate for the Messiah, but they were looking for relief from their current circumstances rather than the Kingship of God. Generations of wise men from afar learned to look expectantly for the sign that God's Messiah had come. That expectant looking didn't dissipate from one generation to the next; it persisted for 400 years!

Ingredient #3: Love Lavishly

When the Messiah arrived, the wise men brought gifts that were significant for who they were. They likely brought gifts that were personal and reflective of the region they came from and that they esteemed as valuable. They loved lavishly on their future King befitted them.

As coaches and athletes, this recipe is a good one to follow for our intertwined walks as Christian competitors. Just as we gather as a team to train our bodies and our minds for our sport, often memorizing schemes and strategies and the theories behind them, let us **learn accurately** God's game plan for the world and for our life.

Let us **look expectantly** for God to break into our life to reveal more of Himself to us. Every Christian should profess that Jesus is going to come again to Earth. We ought to look expectantly for His return!

Last, let us **love lavishly** in way we compete. Our competition is an act of worship. Who are you worshipping with your competition? Paul wrote as recorded in Colossians 3, "Whatever you do, work at it with all of your heart, as working for the Lord..." How we coach and how we play should be an act of worship to the Lord.

Go

- Which of the three ingredients do you do the best? Which needs work?
- Have you been looking for God to break into your life?
- Some recipes are kept hidden as family secrets, others are shared far and wide. Who are you going to share this recipe with?

Workout

Acts 17:11; Revelation 3:11; Romans 10:14

Overtime

"Lord God, You are amazing in all You are. Your promises are true, and Your timing is perfect. While we wait with hope, we look expectantly for Your return. We also look expectantly for You to break into our world until that day, revealing more of who You are to Your people. Help me to be a coach/athlete who sees my sport and my role as an opportunity to live out Your Gospel message. Amen"

Bible Reference:

Matthew 2:1-2

Matthew 2:11-12

Acts 17:11

Revelation 3:11

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