



HOW DO I REFLECT THE LIGHT?

Discussion Guide

Date: 12/28/2025

Sermon Title: How do I reflect the light?

Scripture: Matthew 2:10-12, 5:14-16

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, You have sent your Light into the world in Jesus Christ, a light no darkness can overcome. As we gather, open our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit. Help us not only to see your light more clearly, but to live in it more fully. Shape us so that our lives may reflect Christ's love, mercy, and truth to a world still longing for hope. We pray this in the name of Jesus, the Light of the world. Amen.

Opening Question:

1. What's one time you had to take a detour or alternate route while traveling? How did that unexpected change affect your journey?

Wesleyan Theological Reflection:

John Wesley understood salvation not only as forgiveness of sin, but as transformation—a life continually shaped by God's grace.

- Prevenient Grace: God's light comes to us first, before we even know to seek it—just as the star guided the Magi.
- Justifying Grace: Encountering Christ leads to repentance, worship, and new life.
- Sanctifying Grace: Having encountered the light, we are changed and sent back into the world differently "by another road."

Wesley believed holiness was never private or hidden, but always social holiness—faith made visible in love of God and neighbor. *"There is no holiness but social holiness."* — John Wesley Our good works do not create the light; they reflect the light of Christ already at work within us.

Digging into the Word:

Read Matthew 2:10-12, (NRSV). Try a few different versions prior to digging into these questions.

1. What emotions do the Magi experience when they see the star stop over the place where Jesus is? Why might "joy" be such an important response to encountering Christ?
2. Notice the actions of the Magi: they rejoice, worship, and offer gifts. What do these actions reveal about how they understand who this child is?

3. Verse 12 says they returned to their country “by another road.” What might this suggest about how encountering Jesus changes a person’s direction or way of life?
4. The Magi were outsiders they were Gentiles, not part of Israel. What does their presence say about who the light of Christ is for? They were different faith tradition yet recognized Christ as worthy of worship. How does this challenge our understanding of who can encounter God's truth?

Read Matthew 5:14-16 (NRSV). Try a few different versions prior to digging into these questions.

5. Jesus does not say, “You *should become* the light,” but “You *are* the light of the world.” What difference does that make?
6. What images does Jesus use to describe how light functions (city on a hill, lamp on a stand)? What do these images suggest about visibility and responsibility?
7. According to verse 16, what is the purpose of letting our light shine? Who ultimately receives glory?
8. How do “good works” function not as self-promotion, but as reflection of pointing beyond ourselves to God?

Other scriptures to consider:

John 1:4–5, 9; Isaiah 60:1–3; Ephesians 5:8–9; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Philippians 2:14–15

Sermon Questions:

1. The sermon suggests that society offers us many cheap imitations of true fulfillment. What are some specific examples you've encountered, and how did you recognize them as inadequate?
2. Pastor Clayton talks about searching for a deeper meaning or value in life. What are you currently searching for in your life that might lead you on a journey like the Magi's quest for deeper meaning and purpose?
3. The magi give three gifts to Jesus. If you were to offer gifts to Christ like the Magi did, what would those gifts represent about your current life circumstances and priorities?
4. Pastor Clayton provokes us to think about the gifts that we can offer to Christ. Do you know the gift you can offer? Where or what are you be challenged to give?
5. In the sermon text, the magi went home by another route, both physically and spiritually changed. What would it look like for you to go home differently after encountering Christ this Christmas season?

Applying it:

1. Matthew's Gospel asks whether we will recognize the real thing when we see it. What helps you discern authentic spiritual truth from counterfeits in your daily life?
2. Wesley taught that faith is made real through practice. What daily practices help you stay attentive to Christ's light? Share a practice with one another.
3. How does Christmas change how we live daily. What specific practices or attitudes might you adopt to reflect this transformation in the coming year?
4. In what ways can reflecting Christ's light be both joyful and costly? Do you have an example from real life?
5. How do we balance humility with Jesus' call to let our light be seen?



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CLOSING PRAYER

Light of the world, we thank you for meeting us once again in your Word. As the Magi were changed by their encounter with Christ, change us also. Send us back into our homes, workplaces, schools, and communities by another road that is marked by love, mercy, justice, and hope. Help us to reflect your light, not for our glory, but so that others may see and praise you. We go trusting your promise that your light still shines in the darkness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND

Choose one or more of the following practices this week to grow in love.

1. Spend 15 minutes in quiet reflection each day this week asking: "What am I really searching for?" and "How has Christ already provided what I need?"
2. Identify one specific talent, resource, or ability you have and commit to using it to serve others in Jesus' name this month.
3. Choose one habit, attitude, or pattern in your life that needs to change because of your relationship with Christ. Share it with an accountability partner from your group.
4. Each day this week, find a moment to literally or figuratively "bow down" before Christ; whether through prayer, journaling, or a physical posture of surrender.