

Ugly Christmas Sweaters – Week 1 Small Group Questions

Read:

Ephesians 4:28, If you are a thief (greedy), quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.

Ask:

1. Are you a Black Friday shopper? Share with the group your experiences of the craziness you have witnessed.
2. Pastor Jeff said that everyone struggles with greed. Share some examples of how you have been greedy in your life.
3. How do you see greed played out in everyday life? Is greed something that bothers us or have we simply come to expect it in society, so we more often shrug it off?
4. Why does it seem like society is greedy most of the year but suddenly becomes collectively generous during the holiday season?

Read:

Matthew 2:1-12 Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men¹ from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ² "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose,¹ and we have come to worship him." ³ King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. ⁴ He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?" ⁵ "In Bethlehem in Judea," they said, "for this is what the prophet wrote: ⁶ 'And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities¹ of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.'¹" ⁷ Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. ⁸ Then he told them, "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!"

⁹ After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! ¹¹ 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.

¹² When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

Ask:

1. What stands out to you about the magi and Herod?
2. Pastor Jeff said that the opposite of greed is contentment and the cure for greed is generosity. Do you agree? Where do you do well at being content and where do you struggle?
3. Are there areas of our lives that we should never be content?
4. Where in this passage do you see both greed and generosity?

Leaders Note: Herod was worried he would lose his power while the magi were willing to give up their power to worship Jesus.

5. Pastor Jeff said, "Generosity is not an amount; it's an attitude. I can give a lot and still be greedy." Do you agree with this statement? Why? Have you seen this lived out?

Leaders Note: Look again at verse 8. Herod says he wants to worship the child, but the reality is he wants to kill the child. He doesn't want to surrender his power, but remove any obstacle that might risk him losing his power. In the same way, we might say the right things when it comes to contentment and generosity, but our attitude and actions will always tell the truth.

Apply:

1. What is one thing from this message that stood out to you the most?
2. What is an area of your life that you want to grow in contentment and/or generosity? What steps can you take to start growing in this area? How can your group pray for you or help you?