

I Believe

Scripture Memory: Colossians 1:15

Pray: Father, God, give us eyes to see You afresh. Guard our hearts and minds from the familiarity which can rob us of experiencing true wonder and awe as we enter this Christmas season. Help us marvel at the mystery of the incarnation. Show us how to love, worship, and live for Jesus, our King.

Step 1

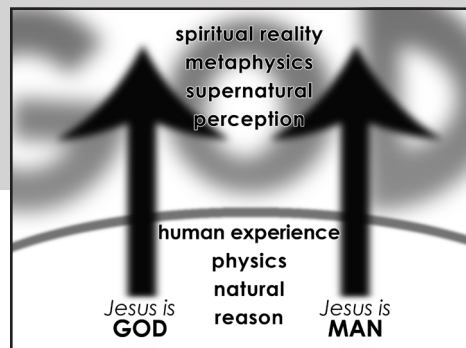
READ Genesis 1:1-2, Isaiah 6:1-4, Isaiah 55:8-9, and Revelation 1:8.

Infinite: immeasurable, unbounded, unlimited, inexhaustible, eternal, perpetual, incalculable.

This is the Creator who's authored the creation of the entire universe. We're totally incapable of grasping the enormity and complexity of such a creation, let alone the One who brought it about. As we uncover each layer of understanding about our universe, we're reminded that God is MORE. Even with every metaphor and analogy to help us grasp His glory and majesty, we fall miserably short. We're limited in vocabulary and capacity to understand, but God is not. Therein lies the beauty of our inadequacy... He loves us anyway and wants to share His eternal home with us.

REFER to the diagram below and discuss the following as a group:

Have you experienced a situation in which you struggled to say something and be understood? For instance... explaining an abstract concept to someone with limited references from which to draw upon for understanding - like a toddler? Or explaining flying in an airplane to a child in Africa? What frustrations might you have as the one trying to understand? Is it vital to fully understand in order to believe in or trust the concept being described? Why? Why not?



Do you think it's important to acknowledge our own limited understanding? Why? Why not? Do you struggle with accepting mystery and paradox? Why? Why not?

Step 2

IMAGINE the incarnation from the supernatural side of reality. The angelic beings witness the collision of the natural (physical)

and the supernatural (metaphysical). The boundless became bound, the One without limits poured into the restrictions of a human body. Surely He would be born into a place of honor. He'd be wrapped in kingly robes. Certainly all creation would worship and serve Him.

READ the following excerpt from *Reflections for Ragamuffins* by Brennan Manning.

Is there anyone in our midst who pretends to understand the awesome love in the heart of the ABBA of Jesus that inspired, motivated, and brought about Christmas?

...God entered into our world not with the crushing impact of unbearable glory, but in the way of weakness, vulnerability, and need.

On a wintry night in an obscure cave, the infant Jesus was a humble, naked, helpless God who allowed us to get close to him.

This is truly the essence of Holy nonsense.

READ Luke 2:4-7, John 1:1-5, 14, 18 and Colossians 1:15-19.

DISCUSS what each of these verses tells us about the incarnation.

READ a portion of the Nicene Creed below:

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

DISCUSS as a group:

What in the creed is meaningful to you? Which descriptions of Jesus stand out? What do they mean to you? If we're really seeing God in Jesus, should we expect to understand? Why? Why not? How might embracing the paradox that Jesus is both GOD AND MAN bring us to a new place of worship and awe?

Step 3

Jesus Christ is of NO importance unless He is of SUPREME importance. Over 2000 years ago the infinite became finite and became a man, born of a virgin. The long-awaited Messiah was born in Bethlehem. Some shepherds, a few stargazing magi, Joseph and Mary were there, but the vast majority of humanity didn't even look up to notice. The cataclysmic event of the incarnation was ignored.

TAKE a few minutes to read the scriptures from Steps 1 and 2.

CONSIDER the following:

Is this MY Jesus? The Jesus who is God? The One who clothed Himself in humanity and taught us a better way? Is this the Rabbi I follow? Do my thoughts, words, and actions reflect someone who worships the King of Kings? Am I obeying His commands? Have I allowed His words, His purpose, His desires to realign my own? Have I given Jesus supreme importance in my life? This Christmas season am I too busy with my own existence to participate in the wonder and awe?

DISCUSS as a group the gifts below: Which gift will you give?

If the words of the Nicene Creed are true, how should I respond?

Reflection

Slow down to discover, wonder and be in awe of the mystery of incarnation

Worship

Adore King Jesus

Growth

Reinvent your life to correspond with Jesus' commands, teachings, & example

Salvation

Confess and repent for the forgiveness of sins

Declaration

Acknowledge your alliance and faith through baptism

Anticipation

Prepare for His return as King ~ Judge and your citizenship in His kingdom

Discovery

Begin your journey to expand your understanding of the Gospel