

Week 15
December 28, 2008

The King of the Hill
The Kingdom of God in the Christmas Story
Matthew 2:1-18

Group or Family Study Guide

1. READ Matthew 2:1-18.
2. Why is Herod so desperate for information about the baby?
3. If power and control are Herod's issues, is he alone in this? Some might say that this is the stain of Adam. How fundamental is the quest for power and control to the breadth of human ills?
4. When is independence and self-determination a good thing?
5. At what point does natural proneness toward self-protection and self-promotion *tip over* into destructive and self-destructive behavior?
6. Jesus obviously teaches other-mindedness and radical servanthood. How is it that we can be strengthened by these notions rather than weakened?
7. What are the differences between healthy self-love/self-care and unhealthy self-absorption?
8. Ambition is not a good word in scripture, at least when it's called "vain ambition." Is there such a thing as good ambition?
9. Are there ways in which you also fear Jesus? Is there an area where you have a power hold and wish that you could be left alone without the intrusion of this new baby-king?
10. Some would say that there is real power and strength in the Lord. Describe the source and sense of real power that comes to God's children.

For the hardcore group:

Some say we live in a Christian nation. Others say we don't and never did. Still others say that we used to be, but aren't. We know that many of the world's great civilizations have been founded by Christians. It appears that the Judeo-Christian ethic is a fire breeding ground for civilization. But things happen – lapses, excesses,

crises of every kind. Is it possible for kings or presidents or governments to actually build or sustain a Christian nation this side of heaven? If so, how so? If not, why not?