

STUDY NOTES

ADVENT 2018

A series at New City Church

www.newcityphx.com/sermons

The following content is based on the message "Advent: The Journey of Joy" on 12/16/18 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 3 (READ THROUGHOUT)

SALVATION IS GIVEN, NOT ACQUIRED

Read Luke 3:1-9.

When John the Baptist was preparing the way for Jesus, people came out into the wilderness to listen to him preach. He spoke about repenting and turning to this Messiah that was coming. Repenting was offensive to the hearers. They believed they had no need for salvation. They thought that they had already acquired God's good standing based on their heritage and their rituals. God's salvation is always freely given. It is never earned or acquired by people.

- *If someone is unwilling to repent, what does that say about how important that behavior is to that person?*
- *How does the concept of repentance sit with you?*

FREE FROM THE BURDEN OF MORE

Read Luke 3:10-14.

When people learn that God's gift of salvation is free, people have the tendency to live pursuing their own passions and possessions. But this isn't healthy. John tells his listeners to give away their excess things for the good of others. Pursuing the things

of this world will choke you out like the viper. That is what STUFF does. It chokes the life out of you and leaves you gasping wanting more. Stuff always needs more.

- *What is an example (past or present) from your life where you continually wanted more and more of something that you thought would fulfill you?*
- *Why do you think John's "cure" to greed is to actually give possessions away, not just to stop pursuing more?*
- *How can you give more generously in your life?*

BEING REFINED BY JESUS

Read Luke 3:15-17.

Jesus came to earth to set us free. He didn't have to come, but he did because he loves us. However, with that love, comes purification. Jesus wants to purify us from the impurities that are in our life. John uses the metaphor of fire to describe this. Fire is a purification source that heats a substance up so much that all the imperfections fall away. What's left is a refined and pure substance. Jesus ultimately lost his life by making the way for us to be refined.

- *Why do you think that John uses the imagery of fire purification to talk about refinement?*
- *Where is Jesus currently refining you in your life?*
- *Pray with each other to experience joy even through refinement.*