

# A BETTER GIFT



## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

EAST ABBOTSFORD CAMPUS

DECEMBER 15, 2019

### INFO AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Online giving is now available! Visit [northview.org](http://northview.org) and click "Give".
- Christmas Eve services will be held at the East Abbotsford Campus at 3:00pm, 4:30pm & 6:00pm.
- **Weekend CM Closures:**
  - January 5: All children's programs open.
  - January 22: Only nursery is open.
  - January 29: All children's programs are closed.
- Help us make room at ACS for newcomers by parking at Bateman school. The Shuttle leaves Bateman every 12 minutes. Parking passes are available for those with disabilities, seniors, and those with newborn children.
- Sign up for Northview's Newsletter at [northview.org](http://northview.org) to keep up to date on all events, courses, and ministries.
- Northview is running many different courses this winter. Those include:  
**DivorceCare / DivorceCare 4 Kids:** 13wk seminar starting January 14  
More information and to register see: [northview.org/courses](http://northview.org/courses)

### PRAYER REQUESTS

- Please pray for all pastors and staff as the new ministry year begins!
- Please pray for all the community group leaders and Bible study leaders, and also the Divorce care, Divorce Care for Kids, Grief share and Resolving Everyday conflict leaders as these courses begin.

### LEADER NOTES

**Suggested Timing for a 2 hour meeting:**

**Connection:** 30 Minutes (visiting / snacks / announcements / ice breakers)

**Content:** 30 Minutes (Observation and Interpretation questions):

**Commission:** 10-15 minutes (Application questions)

**Care:** 15-30 minutes (Sharing and Prayer) **Connection:** 15-30 minutes (visiting / snacks)

### LEADING SERMON-BASED DISCUSSIONS:

- Read the scripture passage(s) together as a group.
- Direct people back to the text if they are going on rabbit trails or talking about opinions and speculation, by asking, "Where do you see that in the text? What answer does the text provide for that question?"
- As you transition to prayer time, pray through the issues and ideas that the text brought up.

### A BETTER GIFT SERMON SERIES

In this series, we will be looking at the gifts God has given us through Jesus Christ: a better hope, a better peace, a better joy, and a better love.

#### Advent Resources:

*Hidden Christmas* by Tim Keller

*Heart of Christmas* by Hank Hanegraaff

*Indestructible Joy* by John Piper

(online PDF: [desiringgod.org/books/the-dawning-of-indestructible-joy](http://desiringgod.org/books/the-dawning-of-indestructible-joy))

*Advent 2019* by Radical

(online PDF: [radical.net/book/advent-2019](http://radical.net/book/advent-2019))

*Advent Devotions Book* by MB Seminary

(online PDF: [mbseminary.ca/advent2019](http://mbseminary.ca/advent2019))

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## Observation

*This section is aimed at helping people observe the details of the text: what is written, what words or ideas are repeated and emphasized, the text's structure and how this text fits into the wider context of the book of Romans.*

1. Read James 1:2-4.
2. How are we commanded to face our trials?
3. What is the work that perseverance produces?
4. Read James 1:2-18. What circumstances have provided this opportunity for testing?
5. Considering the context, what does one receive upon persevering through trials?

## Interpretation

*This section is aimed at linking the current text to other texts or to the bigger biblical narrative. If you are running out of time, feel free to skip this section.*

1. Read Matthew 5:11-12.  
What are the trials in this passage for which one is considered blessed? How is the reward given similar to that given in James 1? How does this challenge our understanding of joy and blessing?

2. Read Hebrews 10:32-35.  
What trials did the recipients of the letter of Hebrews endure? What was their attitude to the suffering? What enabled them to have that attitude?
3. Read 1 Peter 1:3-9.  
In this passage, what are the people rejoicing in? What are they rejoicing through?

## Application

*This section is aimed at helping people apply what we have read in the text to our lives. It is intended to foster more open-ended discussion as people connect the text to their everyday life, and reflect on how it changes the way they think and act.*

1. Based on these texts, what is perseverance? What are some ways you have seen perseverance (or a lack of perseverance) in your life?
2. What are some of the trials we, or people in our church and community, may be facing this Christmas? Why don't we tend to view our trials with pure joy? How can we encourage people to find hope in the midst of their trials?
3. As you think about Christmas, how does this "better gift" of joy in Christ look different than the happiness the world offers and clings to? How might this understanding affect your conversations with non-believers? What are some practical ways this joy might be introduced into your everyday conversation?