

Sermon Based Small Group Guide  
For December 17, 2017 sermon:  
***Hope in a world of distractions***

**Warm up:** (15-20 minutes)

Question for discussion:

From Thanksgiving and "Black Friday" straight through to the New Year it seems like most people are running and frantic with everything that needs to be done. For you, what is the BEST part of the Christmas season and what is the WORST? What could (should) you do to keep life more manageable and focused on the right things?

**Digging deeper:** (20-30 minutes)

1. Pastor Michael talked about the distractions (often "good" things) that keep us from experiencing the very best things. What else does God's word have to say about being worried and overwhelmed?:

- Philippians 4:6-7
- Ecclesiastes 2:18-23
- Luke 10:38-42

2. Luke chapter 1 has two miraculous promises that are part of the Christmas story: That Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth will have a son (John the Baptist) in their old age, and that Mary (a virgin) will give birth to the Messiah. Though their reactions look very similar (compare v.18 to v.34) there is a significant difference. Zechariah doubted, "how is this possible?", and asked for further proof. Mary's question was more of a "how will this happen?". Read and discuss what God says about the importance of simple faith in His promises.

- Hebrews 11:1-3, 6
- Matthew 8:5-10
- James 2:14-19

**Application:** (5-10 minutes) Share any thoughts you have about Pastor Michael Bailey's message and his candidacy for Olivet's "Pastor of Discipleship and Family Ministries" position. Spend time in prayer together for him and his family and for us (the Olivet family) as we discern God's will regarding potentially calling him to this important position.