

# American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

December 2015

## The Dawning of Indestructible Joy

By: Chris Johnson



Every year around this time, Christians are presented with plenty of opportunities for outrage as our holiday contributions to the national culture are marginalized.

Storefronts around the nation greet shoppers with “Happy Holiday” banners as customers flood the aisles buying anonymous celebration gifts. The radio plays a lot more “Sleigh Ride” and a lot less “Silent Night.” Starbucks stops putting reindeer on their seasonal cups (I kid).

We call it, “the War on Christmas,” and it’s been one of the most ridiculous spectacles of political correctness run amok since political correctness ever began running amok.

This War on Christmas has inspired many a Facebook post encouraging our friends and family to remember the reason for the season, and even sprouting the faux freakout at Starbucks mentioned above (although there are plenty of other good reasons to freakout at Starbucks).

But, as with most outrages, for every external reaction, internal action would probably do just as much good, if not much more.

If you’ve had a similar religious background to my own, you have probably heard the word “Advent” thrown around this time of year, but never given much thought to it.

Well, last year, half-way through Advent, I read a piece from my favorite columnist, Mollie Hemingway, extolling the virtues of Advent, in which she explained it thusly, “Advent is for preparation. Christmas is for partying.”

That is an idea that I can get behind. Every year at Christmas I am struck by

two things: 1) the enormity of what we are supposedly celebrating at Christmas and 2) the utter failure to do it justice.

I believe the solution to that failure is to 1) put more effort into wrapping my brain around what the coming of Christ actually means leading up to Christmas and 2) partying harder ON Christmas.

There is no better reason to celebrate than the coming of the Snake-Crusher, the World-Healer, the Representative of God’s goodwill towards man.

So this year, my family is recognizing Advent by going through John Piper’s devotional, “The Dawning of Indestructible Joy.” It’s composed of readings from December 1 through Christmas.

We read the introduction recently, and I will share its conclusion with you, as it is my hope for all of us this season, whether or not you join me in recognizing

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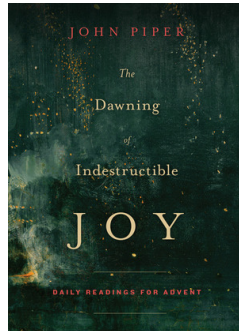
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this oft-forgotten season of anticipation.

“That is my prayer for you this Christmas—that you would experience the fullness of Christ; that you would know in your heart the outpouring of grace upon grace; that the glory of the only Son from the Father would shine into your heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ; that you would be amazed that Christ can be so real to you.”

My Christmas tree is up. My house smells like some essential oil that is supposedly Christmas Spirit. Presents are beginning to be wrapped. My mind turns towards Christmas cookies. In a few weeks we will be surrounded with the laughter of family we don’t always get to be with.

There is much corporeal joy at Christmas. May we all the more be overwhelmed with spiritual joy as we celebrate the dawn of indestructible joy.



**Below is a sample from the introduction to John Piper’s Advent Devotional, “The Dawning of Indestructible Joy,” available for order or for free download at [www.desiringgod.org/books/the-dawning-of-indestructible-joy](http://www.desiringgod.org/books/the-dawning-of-indestructible-joy)**

*I have called Christmas—and this little book—“the dawning of indestructible joy” because the joy Jesus was bringing into the world was like no other kind in history. Once we have it, it cannot be destroyed. Jesus said, “No one will take your joy from you” (John 16:22).*

*The joy that Jesus came to bring is from outside this world. It is the very joy that Jesus himself has in God the Father— which he has had from all eternity and will have forever.*

*There is no greater joy than the joy that God has in God, because God is the greatest object of joy, and God has the greatest powers to enjoy.*

*Jesus said, “I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11). His joy was the very joy of God. He promises to put that in us. That is what the Holy Spirit does. He pours out the love of God in our hearts (Rom. 5:5), and with it the joy of God in God. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy . . .” (Gal. 5:22). This is “great joy.” And it cannot be taken away. It is indestructible.*

*Ah, but it can go to sleep. That’s why Peter says, “I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder” (2 Pet. 1:13). Yes. It is very right. Because, oh, how wrong, how sad, when we stand before great wonders and feel nothing. It is right, therefore, that he write and I write to awaken and stir up our affections for the greatest wonder of all: the arrival and the work and the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in this world.*

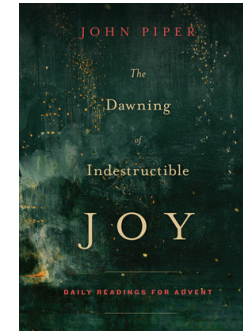
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