



ADVENT
ILLUSTRATED
2016 REFLECTIONS

SEASONS ILLUSTRATED
BIBLE JOURNALING

ADVENT
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Waiting 'Round the Wreath

REFLECTION JOURNAL

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BY

SARA LAUGHED

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THE ADVENT ILLUSTRATED REFLECTION JOURNAL

Hello friend, and welcome to Advent Illustrated! My name is Sara and I am the leader of the Seasons Illustrated Bible Journaling Community, as well as the author of the 2016 Advent Illustrated program, *Waiting Round the Wreath*. This accompanying reflection journal was created for use alongside the *Advent Illustrated: Waiting Round the Wreath* study, and includes daily reflection questions that encourage you to dig into the verse and journal your response. Additional resources for the *Waiting Round the Wreath* study can be found at <http://seasonsillustrated.com/advent-library>, and accessed using the password: **joy**. All our other resources, including weekly videos, musical playlists, printables, and more can also be found at <http://seasonsillustrated.com>.

I am so happy to have you joining our community this Advent and journaling with us. I wish you and your loved ones a meaningful Advent, leading up to a very merry Christmas.

Warmly,
Sara Laughed

Seasons Illustrated Bible Journaling

REST DAY

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Today is the first day of the Advent season, in which we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of the Christ child. What is one hope you have for Advent this year?

SCRIPTURE - OLD TESTAMENT

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ISAIAH 9:2

*The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.*

Isaiah 9:2

Today's verse discusses a people dwelling in darkness, about to see the light. Do you ever feel like you are dwelling in darkness? What is a light to you?

SCRIPTURE - PSALM

PSALM 62:5

*For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence,
for my hope is from him.*

Psalm 62:5

In today's psalm, the psalmist waits in hopeful silence for the Lord. What gives you hope this season?

STORY

—

ISAIAH 9:6

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Isaiah 9:6

Isaiah is so sure that his prophecy will come to pass that he says it in the past tense. Do you carry the same “certain hope” that Isaiah has this Christmas season? Why or why not?

SONG

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PSALM 130:5-8 – DE PROFUNDIS

*I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.
O Israel, hope in the Lord!
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is plentiful redemption.
And he will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.*

Psalm 130:5-8

Today's verse begins with the words, "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits." Advent is a season of waiting - do you struggle to wait on the Lord?

SCRIPTURE - GOSPEL

—
JOHN 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 8:12

Earlier this week, we reflected in dwelling in darkness. In today's verse, Jesus reminds us that those who follow him will have the "light of life." What does the light of life mean to you?

SCRIPTURE - EPISTLE
—
ROMANS 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Romans 15:13

Today's readings are a celebration of the hope we find in God and in the Christmas story. What is one reason for you to be hopeful this Advent?

REST DAY
-
SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Today is the second Sunday of the Advent. This week, we focus on peace. Are there any places in your life that are yearning for peace today? What are they?

SCRIPTURE - OLD TESTAMENT

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ISAIAH 54:10

*“For the mountains may depart
and the hills be removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,”
says the Lord, who has compassion on you.*

Isaiah 54:10

Today’s verse from the Book of Isaiah reminds us that God’s love is stronger and steadier than mountains, and that God’s covenant of peace will stay with us despite any turmoil. When do you feel God’s peace within you?

SCRIPTURE - PSALM

—
PSALM 29:11

*May the Lord give strength to his people!
May the Lord bless his people with peace!*

Psalm 29:11

In today's verse and prompt, we read about how peace and strength can be linked to each other. What is one example of somebody showing both strength and peace?

STORY

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LUKE 1:30-33

“And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Luke 1:30-33

Mary was only a young girl when the angel Gabriel came to her to tell her that she would bear the Son of God. We don't hear her response to the angel, but we can guess at what she felt: fear? Excitement? Nervousness? What do you think Mary might have been feeling when the angel visited her?

SONG

—

LUKE 1:46-50 – MAGNIFICAT

*And Mary said,
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”*

Luke 1:46-50

When Mary and Elizabeth encounter each other, Elizabeth blesses Mary, and Mary sings this song, the *Magnificat*. Listening to one of the versions of the *Magnificat* on our website or YouTube channel today, try to picture the moment when Mary sang God’s praises. When does your soul magnify the Lord? When do you rejoice in God?

SCRIPTURE - GOSPEL

—
JOHN 16:33

“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33

Often, we struggle to feel at peace about the circumstances of the world around us because it is difficult to remember that God is in control. This verse reminds us that Jesus has already overcome the world. What does this verse mean to you?

SCRIPTURE - EPISTLE

—

2 THESSALONIANS 3:16

*“Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way.
The Lord be with you all.”*

2 Thessalonians 3:16

In this benediction at the end of the second letter to the Thessalonians, the author wishes us peace and God’s presence. When do you feel peace? Do you ever feel God’s presence around you? When?

REST DAY
—
THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

This week, our community is journaling through the theme of Love in the Bible and the Nativity story. Where do you see love in the Nativity story?

SCRIPTURE - OLD TESTAMENT

—

LEVITICUS 19:18

“You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”

Leviticus 19:18

What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? Do you think that showing love or charity to your neighbor is a way of showing God’s love to them? What are ways that you could show love to your “neighbors,” both next door and far away?

SCRIPTURE - PSALM

—
PSALM 59:16

*But I will sing of your strength;
I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.
For you have been to me a fortress
and a refuge in the day of my distress.*

Psalm 59:16

What has God done in your life lately that is worth celebrating or singing about? When has God been a fortress or a refuge for you?

STORY

—

MATTHEW 1:18-25

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel’

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.’

Matthew 1:20-24

This week’s verse focuses on Joseph, just as last week’s verse focused on Mary. In this week’s selection, Joseph is visited by the angel Gabriel, who tells Joseph that Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah. Joseph trusts the angel and does marry Mary. When is a time when you trusted God?

SONG

—

LUKE 1:68-79 – BENEDICTUS

*“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give knowledge of salvation to his people
in the forgiveness of their sins,
because of the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”*

Luke 1:76-79

In the last lines of his song, Zechariah sings that God gives light to those in darkness and guides our feet, imagery that we also encountered in the early days of this study. When was a time that you felt like God was guiding your feet?

SCRIPTURE - GOSPEL

—

JOHN 13:34-35

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13:34-35

How does today’s verse differ from the verse we read in Leviticus at the beginning of this week? What is the difference between loving your neighbor as yourself, and loving your neighbor as Jesus loves them?

SCRIPTURE - EPISTLE

I CORINTHIANS 13:4-8

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Are there examples of love in your own life that this verse reminds you of? What are they? Does your own love for others look like the love shown in this verse? Why or why not?

SCRIPTURE - OLD TESTAMENT

—

NEHEMIAH 8:10

Then he said to them, “Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Nehemiah 8:10

What does “the joy of the Lord” mean to you? When do you feel that joy?

SCRIPTURE - PSALM

—

PSALM 30:5

*For his anger is but for a moment,
and his favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may tarry for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.*

Psalm 30:5

What does it mean to you that joy comes in the morning? Are you in a time of joyless “night” right now? When do you think joy will come again? Are you in a joyful morning? What does that look like for you?

STORY

—

LUKE 2:1, 2:4-14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

Luke 2:13-14

In today’s verse, Jesus is finally born and laid in the manger. The angels sing “Glory to God in the highest!” As we near Christmas, are you experiencing the same joy of the angels? What helps you experience and amplify that joy?

SONG

—

LUKE 2:29-32— NUNC DIMITTIS

*“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”*

Luke 2:29-32

In this song, Simeon rejoices that he has finally seen the savior before the end of his life. When do your eyes “see [God’s] salvation?”

SCRIPTURE - GOSPEL

MATTHEW 2:9-11

After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:9-11

In today's reading, the three magi or wise men bring gifts to the baby Jesus. What are your "spiritual gifts" or talents that you could offer up to God?

SCRIPTURE - EPISTLE

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I PETER 1:8-9

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:8-9

Today is the final reading from our Advent study! In today's verse, we rejoice at the inexpressible joy and glory that we feel at the birth, life, and legacy of Jesus. Share below a few ways that you have felt joy this season!
