

Hope. Peace. Joy. and Love.

A 4-WEEK ADVENT STUDY

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Bible Study Tools

Advent covers the four weeks leading up to Christmas Day. In this way, Advent is a preparation for the holiday of Christmas. The first advent of Christ occurred over two thousand years ago, which is what we celebrate on Christmas Day. During this first Advent, Jesus came into the world to save us from our sins. He was born in a humble stable to the virgin Mary, grew up, lived a sinless life, and died on the cross for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:15; John 3:16-17).

As we reflect upon the four weeks of Advent, we need to take time to reflect on the Lord's first coming as well as His second coming. Jesus will return a second time to bring salvation to those who have been waiting for Him (Hebrews 9:28).

The Lord's mercy, compassion, and love can help us work through each week of Advent. *After we finish each week ahead, we will have a new appreciation and understanding of Jesus' first advent into the world.* Take your time as you process each week, and allow God to teach you new wisdom.

Week One: Hope

"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

Guide:

The first week of Advent focuses on hope. Within the celebration of Advent, one candle is lit each month. For the week of hope, one of the purple candles is lit. This candle is often called the "prophecy candle" because of its connection with the prophecies about the Lord in the Book of Isaiah. While it specifically refers to the prophecies of Jesus' birth in Isaiah 7 and 9, it can also refer to His death, crucifixion, and resurrection.

Within the Bible passage above, we see Isaiah prophesying about the Lord. Isaiah foretold the future events of Jesus dying on the cross for our sins. This truth magnifies the brilliance of Jesus' love for us. We are not living hopeless lives; we are living lives of hope because of Jesus.

This life is not the end. Because of Jesus' advent into the world, death, and resurrection, we can have hope. This hope is not similar to "wishful thinking." Instead, it is a sure promise. Throughout the Advent season, we may be tempted to lose hope if we encounter troubling times, such as difficult family events, falling out with friends, or mental health struggles.



However, at the end of the week, we need to remember that our hope is found in Jesus. We are not consumed because of the Lord's love for us (Lamentations 3:22-23). The Advent of Christ gives us hope to know that He is with us in this life as well as in the life to come. No matter what may happen, our hope is entirely found in Him.

REFLECTION:

Prayer: *"Dear Jesus, I am prone to feel hopeless at times. This world can steal all of my hope and cause me to doubt You. Starting this first week of Advent, I'm finding my hope in You alone. You are good, mighty, and wonderful. I fully trust You. Amen."*

Challenge Questions:

- Have you ever felt hopeless at times? What caused you to feel this way?
- Finding hope in people or things besides God is not healthy. Why do you think we do this?
- How can you find hope in Jesus this year?

Week Two: Peace

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."
(Luke 2:14)*

Guide:

The theme of the second week of Advent is peace. Once again, a purple candle is lit to celebrate this second week of Advent, often referred to as the "Bethlehem candle." This week of Advent aims to bring our hearts back to Jesus and rest in the peace He has given us. During Jesus' earthly ministry, He promised peace, and He continues to bless us with peace every day (John 14:27).

During the hectic times of Christmas preparation, it can be hard to stop and pause. Rather than experiencing Christ's peace, we feel stressed, drained, and overwhelmed. Rather than spending another Christmas season standing in check-out lines, we need to come and sit at the feet of the Lord.

We must take time to appreciate the Christmas season for what it is: the celebration of the Lord's first coming. This alone can bring peace into our hearts. Even though we were not alive on this peaceful night, reading the Bible gives us peace. Jesus offers us peace every day, yet it is up to us to accept it. Luke 2:14 tells us that peace was coming upon the earth, along with Jesus. This is because Jesus is the King of Peace and our Lord of Glory.



Whenever we lack peace, we need to return to this passage and pray for His peace to wash over us. Jesus is faithful and will shower us with the blessings of His perfect peace.

REFLECTION:

Prayer: *"Dear Jesus, despite this being the time to celebrate You, I have only been feeling overwhelmed with Christmas preparations. Please help me soak in your peace and take time to sit at Your feet. You are what this holiday season is all about—not gifts, cards, or fancy events. I'm following after Your peace today. Amen."*

Challenge Questions:

- Do you feel at peace today? Why or why not?
- The Christmas season can be hectic at times. How can you slow down and take notice of Jesus' peace this week?
- How can you fully experience Jesus' peace this Advent season?

Week Three: Joy

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

Guide:

The third week of Advent focuses on joy. During this week, a third candle is lit, called the "Shepherd's candle." It is pink and symbolic of the coming of the Lord. This week is also significant because the third Sunday of Advent is known as "Gaudete Sunday." The word "Gaudete" is a Latin word meaning "rejoice."

The time to rejoice has come as we are closer to celebrating the anniversary of the Lord's birth into the world. He is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Even if things are difficult in our personal lives, we can have joy because of Jesus. The joy that we have in Jesus is not determined by outside factors. Joy in Jesus is dependent on Him and cannot change. As believers, we can focus on joy this week by praising Jesus for all He has done for us and continues to do. There are many things Jesus does for us that we will never even know about on this side of Heaven. Therefore, we need to lift up our hearts in praise and trust Him with what is to come. Jesus has only ever given us joy in our hearts, and there is no reason to doubt Him with our future.



When He returns for His second coming, our hearts will be full of joy. As mentioned earlier, the first coming of Jesus can help us reflect on His second coming, which we will see with our own eyes. He will come and bring great joy into all believers' hearts. Lift up His Name with rejoicing today, and don't forget to focus on Him during this Advent season.

REFLECTION:

Prayer: *"Dear Lord, the joy of the holiday season is found in You. I've also realized that the joy of everyday life is only found in You. Help me to approach this week with a heart of joy. You have been so good to me and blessed me beyond means. I rejoice in Your love. Amen."*

Challenge Questions:

- Have you rejoiced in the Lord lately? If not, what is holding you back?
- Some people believe rejoicing is only done with a smile, but you can be sad and still rejoice in the Lord. If you are having a hard time this year, how might you rejoice in Him today?
- How can you help others rejoice in the Lord?

Week Four: Love

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."
(John 3:16-17)*

Guide:

The final week of Advent focuses on love. This love is the love God has for us, which is fully shown to us in the way He sent His only Son to die for our sins. Despite us living in sin against God, He still loved us and desired a relationship with us. The broken relationship we had with God could only be repaired by the blood of Jesus. Through Jesus' death on the cross, we have been given forgiveness, eternal life, and a fresh start.

The candle lit for the final week of Advent is called the "love candle" or the "angel's candle." According to your church's tradition, it can be purple, red, or pink. Since it is lit on the last Sunday before Christmas, it is often seen as the most memorable of the candles.

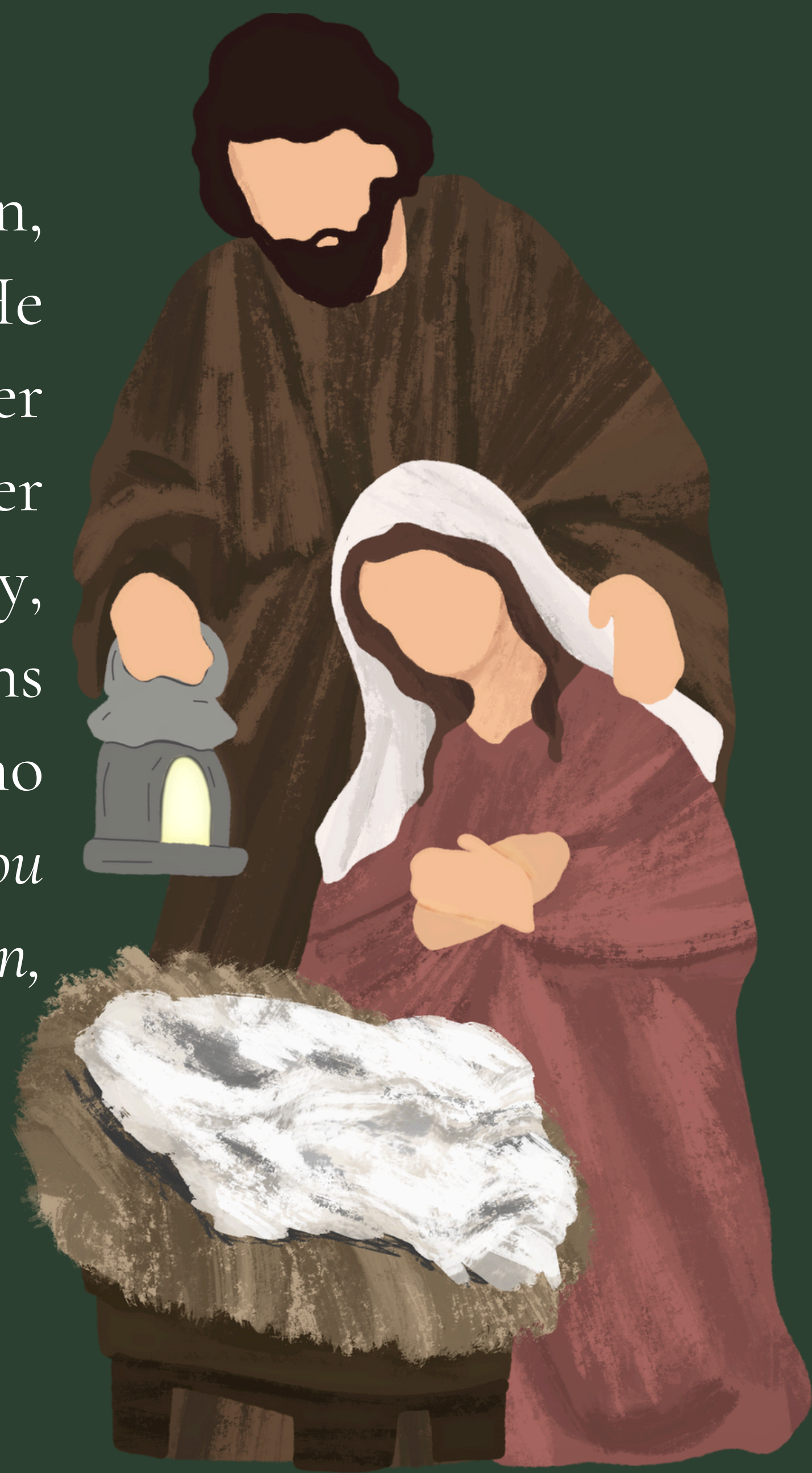
As the candle is lit, it gives us time to reflect on the past three weeks of Advent and look forward to the celebration of the Lord on Christmas Day.





God's love for us cannot be summed up in a candle or even in corporate worship. We will continue to experience God's love throughout all eternity. It is because of Him that we are found, loved, and redeemed. To be loved by God is unlike anything this world can offer us. Maybe the world can offer us temporary things, but God has already given us His eternal love, which will never fade or diminish.

As you look at this final candle burn, think about God's love for you. He loves you, and His love is far greater than any love you have ever experienced. It cannot be taken away, nor will it ever be shaken (Romans 8:37-39). He is our loving Father, who always welcomes us home. *If you feel you have been far from Him this Advent season, know His arms are always open for you.*



REFLECTION:

Prayer: *"Dear God, I praise You for Your love.*

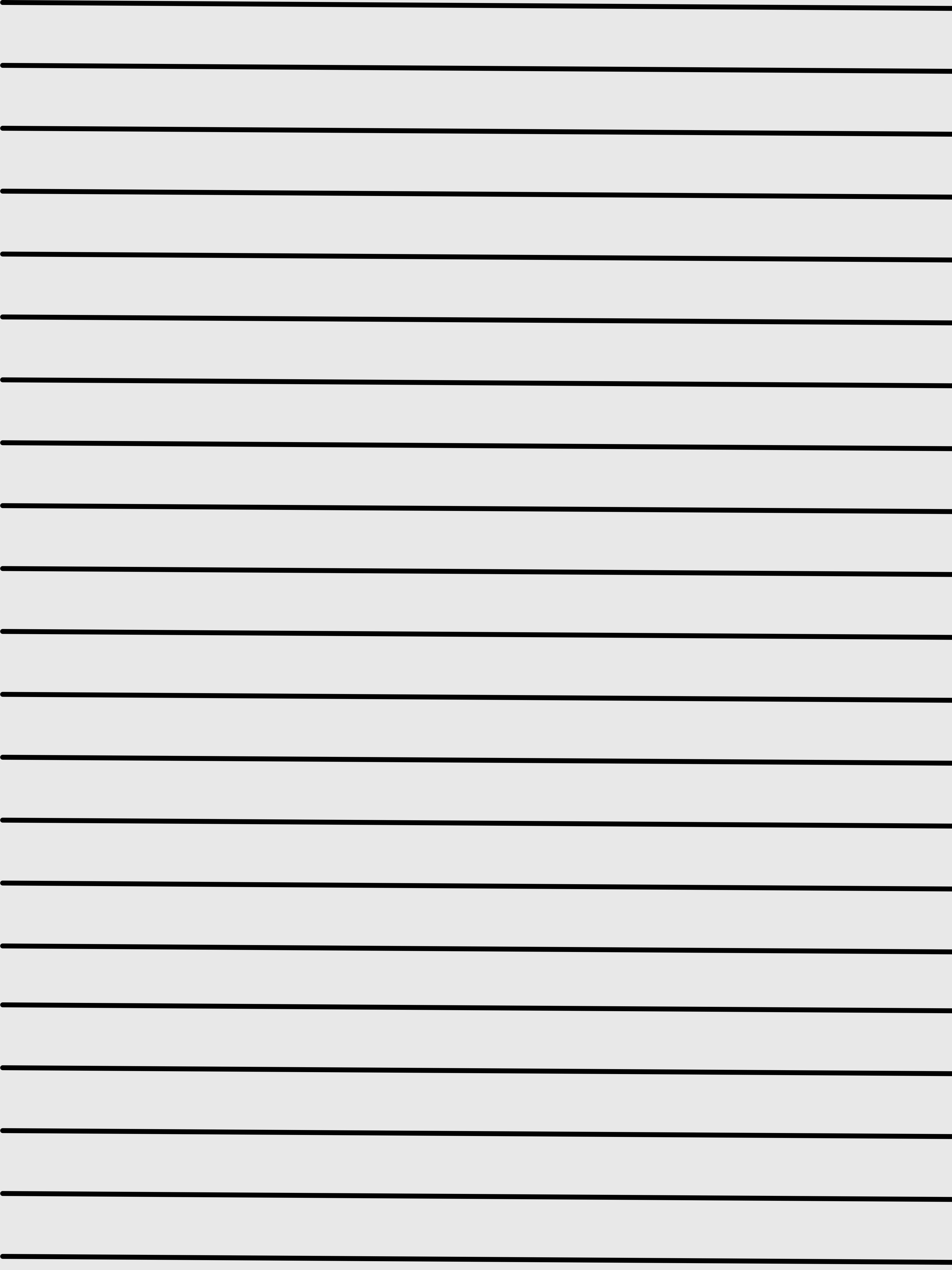
*Without Your love, I would be nothing. The death of
Your only Son brought life to my soul. Thank You for
Your love, mercy, and forgiveness. I will remember
Your love for all my life. Amen."*

Challenge Questions:

- Have you accepted God's love in your life? If not, what is holding you back?
- How have you seen God's love in your life? Have you seen it to be stronger at certain times?
- How can you extend God's love to others this holiday season?

Journaling

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Meet the Author:

Vivian Bricker loves Jesus, studying the Word of God, and helping others in their walk with Christ. She has earned a Bachelor of Arts and Master's degree in Christian Ministry with a deep academic emphasis in theology. Her favorite things to do are spending time with her family and friends, reading, and spending time outside. When she is not writing, she is embarking on other adventures.

