

CONNECTED

Women's Ministry

"Side by Side, Together for the Gospel"

"Christmas Joy Continues Because of Who Jesus Is"

By Beth Dunning

"Christmas matters because of who Jesus is." I love these words from a recent sermon from Pastor Tim. During the Christmas season, Jesus reminded me over and over of who He is. Here are a few things about Jesus that have touched my heart once again, and continue to fill me with Christmas joy.

Jesus is Savior. His name means "Jehovah is salvation." I can only imagine how Joseph must have felt when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and told him that Mary would have a son, and that he... Joseph... will call his name Jesus "*Because he will save his people from their sins.*" Matthew 1:21

I am filled with joy because Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. We were reminded of it so beautifully and powerfully during our recent evening of "Christmas Joy." As I continue to meditate on this, the writer of the book

of Hebrews reminds me that Jesus was a joyful Savior. "*For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" Hebrews 12:2. Christmas Joy is ours because of who Jesus is.

Jesus is Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14 says, "*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel*..." God with us! Whatever we're going through, whatever we are facing, we can know He is with us because He says that He will NEVER leave us or forsake us. Hebrews 13:5. This is who Jesus is.

During the month of December, I loved hearing over and over again from the prophet Isaiah that Jesus is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Nancy Demoss Wolgemuth says, "*Only one name - the*

name of Jesus - says everything." Consider Isaiah's words, "*Who among you walked in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord; let him lean on his God.*" Isaiah 50:10.

David's heart was often filled with joy. "*You satisfy me as with rich food; my mouth will praise you with JOYFUL LIPS. When I think of you, as I lay on my bed, I meditate on you during the night watches because you are my helper; I will REJOICE In the shadow of your wings. I will follow close to you; your right hand holds on to me.*" Psalm 63:5-8

As we go into this new year, may our lips and our lives be full of praise because of who Jesus is!

With love and joy,
Beth



Bible Study Tip

By Sue Shepard

A Blessed 2026 to You and Yours!

As a New Year begins, what are your current plans for your devotional time? Bible reading? Bible study? For 2026, I am going to do my best to keep up with a plan of Reading Through the Bible through Revive Our Hearts! (If you are interested, you can sign up @ reviveourhearts.com – “Read Through the Bible with Women Around the World in 2026.”) Let’s see how I do with this goal!

In preparing for this 2026 challenge, I have enjoyed reviewing some basics from a little book I recently found on one of my bookshelves: “How to Study the BIBLE” from Rose Publishing, 2014. Perhaps you are like me and enjoy being reminded of some “basics” from time to time. I look forward to sharing with you from time to time in these newsletters some of these reminders I discover!

Reading the Old Testament (pp. 69-74)

Some things to keep in mind when reading the Old Testament

1. The Old Testament is as much the Word of God as the New Testament.
2. The Old Testament helps us understand the New Testament.
3. God’s Grace for humanity is seen throughout the Old Testament.
4. Old Testament people and stories serve as examples for believers today.
5. The Old Testament helps us recognize God’s actions.



New Year's Reading Plan

By Paula Weber

Are you thinking about starting the New Year with a Bible reading plan? Maybe you’re wondering, Can I really read through the whole Bible this year?

The graphic below highlights approximately how long it takes the average reader to work through the entire Bible. It’s encouraging to see that it’s more doable than we often imagine!

It is important to note: nowhere in Scripture are we commanded to read the Bible cover to cover in one year. A one-year plan can be a wonderful goal—but an even better goal is simply to be in God’s Word each day.

Whether you read a chapter, a paragraph, or a single verse, the aim is to draw near to the Lord, listen to His voice, and let His Word shape your heart.

Consistency matters more than speed. Daily time with God is the real win.

This graphic is taken from a longer article at crossway.org, you may read the whole article [HERE](#)

READING THE TESTAMENTS OF THE BIBLE

How much time per day would the average person need to set aside to read through the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the whole Bible?

	Per Day					
<i>Old Testament</i> 56 hrs, 44 mins	8 hrs, 6 mins	1 hr, 53 mins	38 mins	19 mins	9 mins	5 mins
<i>New Testament</i> 17 hrs, 44 mins	2 hrs, 32 mins	35 mins	12 mins	6 mins	3 mins	1 mins
<i>Whole Bible</i> 74 hrs, 28 mins	10 hrs, 38 mins	2 hrs, 29 mins	50 mins	25 mins	12 mins	6 mins
	1 Week	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Years

Praying the Scriptures

by Erin Long

"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

This month let's pray through these Names of Jesus together! You could pray one Name a week, one a day, or pray all four at once. Keeping His character in our minds as we pray will help to form our prayers and align them to His will.

Wonderful Counselor: Praise Him for being our Wonderful Counselor. Ask Him for wisdom to live out your faith. Pray for someone in your life who needs His counsel.

Mighty God: Humble yourself before Him. Consider where you may need to repent and ask for His help. Pray for a loved one who needs salvation.

Everlasting Father: Thank Him for being your good Father. Spend some time meditating on His love and care. Give your needs to Him.

Prince of Peace: Rejoice that in Jesus you have peace with God. Pray over areas in your life where you need His peace. Lift up someone in your life who needs to know Him.

*Serving you in love,
the Connected Women's Ministry Team*

Paula Weber - Co-Coordinator, Erin Long - Co-Coordinator, Beth Dunning, Sue Shepard
Newsletter: Sherri Jansen

Valley Baptist's Connected Women's Ministry Team is devoted to helping women live out the Gospel through their God-given design and purpose. Our passion is to see women grow in knowing and living out the Word of God through biblical study, prayer, special events, mentoring, and serving others in the love of Christ.

Women's Bible Studies

**Wednesday Evening Bible Study -
January 7-February 25
6:15-7:30 p.m.**

Join us as we study the books of Colossians and Philemon for eight weeks using the Dwell Method. All you will need is a Bible and a notebook!

Facilitated by Erin Long and Kristin Evers

**Thursday Morning Bible Study -
January 8-April 23
9:00-11:00 a.m.**

Ladies join us for our winter Bible study! Beginning in January, we will study the book of Hebrews. In this book we will explore how the Old Testament sacrificial system was temporary and insufficient, especially when contrasted with the eternal supremacy of Jesus' ministry of grace. Materials needed for this Bible study will be handed out at the first class.

Facilitated by Paula Weber

**Sign up for Bible studies online or in the Welcome Center.
www.valleyconnex.org/signup**



On the Calendar

Women's One-Day Connected Event -
Saturday, April 18th