



### **The Mission of Steeped in Truth Bible Studies**

Thanks for picking up this book. I designed this series with the local church in mind. The Heart of Christ beats in His body. Jesus sent the church on a mission, “Go, make disciples.” As a pastor’s wife for over thirty years, I watched an unfortunate trend develop in the discipleship process in American churches. This *trend* results from an age-old problem, Christian fan clubs.

Paul exposes this issue in 1Corinthians 3:1-4, “And I, brothers and sisters, could not speak to you as Spirit-filled but as worldly—as infants in Messiah. <sup>2</sup>I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready. Indeed, even now you are not yet ready, <sup>3</sup>for you are still worldly. For since there are jealousy and strife among you, aren’t you worldly and walking in a human way? <sup>4</sup>For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere humans?” (TLV)

Today I hear Christian women say, “I am of Beth Moore,” or “Kay Arthur,” or “Jen Wilkens.” While God uses these sisters to teach His word, our mortal enemy disrupts their effort. Satan disables women from teaching by deceiving them with comparisons. Despite years of personal Bible study under celebrity teachers, many women feel inadequate or unqualified to teach the Bible to women in their church. “I don’t know the Bible like So and So.” I haven’t had

the training that So-and-So has.” “I’m not as eloquent as So-and-So.” On and on go the litany of excuses. The truth is you don’t have to be her; she has way too much influence in your church.

A video Bible teacher may have as much influence in your church as your pastor, but she’s never stepped into the building where you gather. She’s never seen your tears and heard your heartfelt prayer requests. She’s never offered personal counsel to your current dilemma. She’s not *there*—with you—in the trenches of spiritual battles.

God made us for *real relationships*, with Himself and *each other*. We need living, breathing, present Bible teachers, teachers who listen, answer our questions, and hold us when we hurt. This series equips women to disciple women in a local church setting—especially in small churches with financial challenges.

I love little congregations! I spent most of my years in ministry in two churches of under a hundred people. I know how to do Bible study on a meager budget. I used to look into DVD Bible studies to give our women a break from teaching (because in a small church, everyone does too much). I discovered the purchase price for these resources far too expensive for a tiny congregation to afford. We used our Bibles along with books as guides, and I’m so glad we did. It grew us as teachers and equipped us as disciple-makers. Precious, sacred times unfolded in those Bible studies—women connected. In the letter to Titus, we read the instructions for older women to teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-5). Mentoring matters!

One of my mentors, Judy (she lead me to Christ), used to remind me, “The New Old Testament conceals the New and the New Testament reveals the Old.” She loved the God of Abraham by loving His people Israel. Another destructive trend I see is our forgetfulness. The church fails to remember it is a grafted branch (Romans 11:17-24). Christianity and Judaism

originated from the same source. Jesus *is* a Jew! The *Messiah*. Jesus fulfilled the law.

Christianity completes the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As the spiritual seed of Abraham, we need a revival of the Jewishness of our salvation. Many Christians attempt to understand the Bible with a western mindset, but it's written from an eastern perspective. As you use this Steeped in Truth Study, I challenge you with the *Shema*, "Hear O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one." And pray this blessing upon your endeavor, "'ADONAI (the LORD) bless you and keep you! ADONAI make His face shine on you and be gracious to you! ADONAI turn His face toward you and grant you *shalom*!'" Deuteronomy 6:24-26 TLV.

### **What to Expect and What You'll Need**

Why do we study the Bible? This question may sound silly, but trust me, there can be more than one answer. How we answer this question determines what we gain from studying Scripture. If we seek information, that's what we will find. If we seek to know the Lord personally, we will discover Truth is a person. In the written word (the Bible), we'll find the personal presence of the Living Word—Jesus. This interaction transforms us. Then we'll be both informed and *transformed*. I designed this study to help you develop a meaningful relationship with the One Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

*"Let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD." Jeremiah 9:24 ESV*

We will start each day *with Him*: first in prayer, then reading *His* word. The best Bible studies put those two things first. My questions can be helpful, but the questions God wants you to wrestle with are more important. My reflections may be insightful, but the instruction God

gives you is more valuable. He wants you to depend on His Holy Spirit, not this study, to teach you.

Our maturity levels vary. So does the time we make available for Bible study. Therefore, this study provides flexibility to meet our various needs. If the Bible is new to you, your greatest need is to develop daily prayer and scripture reading habits. Those two exercises will benefit you far more than doing the homework or reading my synopsis at the end of each lesson. If you hunger for more, there's plenty between these pages. *Please, don't feel guilty* about not doing it all; *feel graced* by what you do accomplish. Think of this material as an all-you-can-eat buffet; dish-up with what looks tasty, eat until you're satisfied but not stuffed. Enjoy your meal as you sup with the Savior.

Since our goal is to know God better, our focus will be on Him—His presence and His word. Therefore, please, refrain from using the study notes in your Bible or other commentaries until you've finished this Bible study. You'll be surprised at what you discover *without* the assistance of notes and commentary. You may want to print a copy of the book of the Bible for this study without study references, especially if you don't like writing in your Bible because we will be marking the text up quite a bit.

### **What you will need**

1. A Bible
2. This workbook
3. Colored pencils
4. Extra paper (if you choose to write out the Bible book)

*The following tools are available online*

5. An English dictionary

*The following are optional for more in-depth study. Recommended link for the following*

[www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com)

6. An exhaustive concordance
7. A Hebrew lexicon (the one at the back of Strong's Concordance is sufficient)

## **How to Proceed**

### **1. Pray**

Each day of homework begins with a prayer suggestion designed to prepare your heart for that day's Bible reading and help you practice praying God's word.

- a. Acknowledge God: His presence, His authority, and His relationship to you (Creator, Father, Friend, Guide).
- b. Thank Him for providing His Word.
- c. Ask Him to reveal Himself as you study.
- d. Ask Him to transform you through your time in His word.
- e. *Most importantly*—continue to interact with Him throughout your study time. Ask Him questions when you're not sure you understand something. *Asking God good questions is paramount in understanding His Word.*

### **2. Read to Master the Text**

- a. Most days, you will read the entire book you are studying in one sitting before doing your homework (longer books will be divided into sections. Some days require Bible reading in other books of the Bible). Repetitive reading of the text opens our understanding of the purpose and structure of the book we're studying. It gives us the full context of each verse which prevents us from misusing Bible verses. It helps us to

“rightly divide the word of truth.” (1 Timothy 2:15). My personal goal when I study a book of the Bible is to read it through forty times. In Scripture, forty is the number of training, and I want complete training in the text. If you chose to pursue this goal, it requires a sixth day of reading.

- b. Cross-references in the homework help us see how the book we’re studying fits into the Bible and how Scripture tells one complete story. My cross-referencing is not exhaustive. I encourage you to make a list of your cross-references as you do this study; jot down the cross-reference in the margin next to the verse it relates to.

### **3. Do Five Days of Homework**

- a. It’s okay if you’re unsure of how to answer a question or if your study leads you to ask more questions. Questioning motivates us to learn.
- b. In providing five days of homework, I have left you a two-day margin to either catch up or pursue further study on your own.
- c. Sabbath (rest) on Sunday. Enjoy hearing the preaching of the word in your local church. Reflect on any connections between your weekly study and the pastor’s message. The Holy Spirit often speaks in stereo!

### **4. Join in the group discussion.**

I provide a different set of questions for group discussion designed to help you get to know the women you’re studying with better, as well as prepare you for a lecture or discussion of the week’s homework.

### **5. Listen to your leader’s lecture or group discussion of the homework and take notes**

Rather than providing a video of myself teaching, I want you to enjoy the teacher God raised in your local church. She knows you and prays for your special requests. The

Holy Spirit can use her in your life far more effectively because she's there—with you. You can ask her your questions. She can rejoice with you as she sees you grow. We need *real* relationships, not virtual ones. If you are the leader, an additional leader's guide is available.

#### **6. Hand Write the Book—optional sixth day of homework**

Writing helps us focus more intently on the text. If you chose to do this exercise, you would write ten to twelve verses a week.

#### **7. Memorize**

I confess, for me, this is the most challenging task. The study guide provides key verses in each chapter as memory verses. If you're up to the challenge, memorize the whole book. No, I have not memorized entire books of the Bible, but *you* might!