

Friday, Dec. 29: Read [Luke 2:41-52](#)

Luke closes out the account of Christ's birth in chapter 2 with a single story from his childhood, perhaps a dozen years later. It is the only glimpse scripture gives us of the young Jesus. Most of us can relate better to his parents' panic than we can to Jesus' divine mentality as a young boy. Even so, his example of obedience to his mortal parents serves as a prototype for our kids and grandkids today. Notice verse 52 describes Jesus' well-rounded development -- intellectually, physically, spiritually and socially. These four areas fairly well summarize the spheres of development for every person as God designed them to be. Which of these four do you sense God wanting to further develop in you?

Notes:



- *Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reading each day.*
- *Read the chapters and underline any meaningful verses and take note of specific advice or wisdom gleaned from your reading.*
- *Note any unclear passages or teaching and seek insight, answers or help.*
- *Think about what you're reading. Ask:*
 1. *How does this apply to me?*
 2. *Are there any temptations to avoid, sins to confess, commands to obey or promises to claim?*
 3. *What insight do I gain on God, myself, others, or life?*
- *Ask God to show you any specific action you need to take as you read.*

Spiritual Disciplines Weekly Readings

Monday, Dec. 25 Read [John 1:1-18](#)

In his gospel prologue, the Apostle John introduces the world to its savior, not by telling the story of his birth, although that is implied in verse 14, but by predating history and going back to the very beginning of everything as Genesis 1:1 does. The Eternality of Jesus is revealed in this passage. So is his divine personality as John chooses the Greek title -- The Word, which could be defined as the all encompassing principle of life (ie, God). The Apostle Paul points to this mystery of the incarnation in both [1 Timothy 3:16](#) and [Philippians 2:6-8](#). John also paves the way for two other descriptors of Jesus -- Light and Life. Both metaphors are prevalent throughout his gospel.

Notes:

Monday Pray for:

1. *My relationship with God.*
2. *My life roles*
3. *My personal needs/weak areas*
4. *Goals and objectives*

Pray for Our Missionaries

Juan & Adriana Palacios (Angola, Africa), **David & Miriam Trott** (Cochabamba, Bolivia), **Mario Bloise** (Argentina), **Dan & DeAnn Gerard** (San Antonio, TX), **Robert Newkirk** (Jesus Film), **Craig & Shelly Shafer** (Sentani, Indonesia), **Mike & Fran VanBruggen** (South Africa), **Sue Sanders** (Detroit, MI), **Matt Kooi** (Tijuana), **Daniel Jezonski** (Wycliffe), **Danielle Tucker** (France), **Andrew & Sara Williams** (New Tribes), **Brad Babjack** (InterVarsity), **Salomon Guzman** (Tijuana), **Alvaro and Rachel Garriga** (Interserve USA)

Tuesday, Dec. 26: Read [Matthew 1-2](#)

Genealogies in the Bible are generally sections we tend to skip over. Matthew strategically begins his gospel by verifying Jesus' lineage in connection to Abraham, thus qualifying him as the fulfillment of God's ancient promises to Abraham ([Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-6](#)) and to King David ([2 Samuel 7:16](#)). Matthew adds details about Joseph's struggles and doubts where the other Gospels are silent. He alone also gives the account of the wise men's journey and the first couple's escape to Egypt in chapter two.

Notes:

Pray for family and friends by name.

Wednesday Dec. 27: Read [Luke 1](#)

Luke's gospel is the wordiest of the four accounts of Jesus' life. He, by far, gives the most details regarding the birth of Christ. Take time today to read the events leading up to Jesus' nativity. Note the angelic activity at this time, perhaps like no other event in human history to date. Recall what angels do from [Hebrews 1:14](#). Also note the spontaneous Psalms of praise spoken by Mary (verses 46-55) and her cousin's husband, Zechariah (verses 67-79). Both recall God's promises to Abraham and look to the Messiah for ultimate deliverance from their mortal enemies. Have their words been fully fulfilled yet? When will Jesus finally conquer all enemies of God? Verse 77 really clinches what Christ's mission was in his first advent at Christmas. He has more yet to do when he comes again to finally judge the earth.

Notes:

Wednesday: Pray for Bethel Gilead Community Church (Consider fasting one, two, or all meals this day.)

- a. Pastors: Pray for God's grace and guidance in Pastor Jim and Pastor David's ministries and families. Pray for Linda Penn in her work at BGCC.
- b. Worship: Ask God to strengthen our devotion to Him, in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.
- c. Fellowship: Ask God to deepen our love and commitment to one another as a family of believers.
- d. Discipleship: ask God to develop the faith, dedication, and leadership of our people. Pray for the children and youth ministries here at BGCC.
- e. Outreach: Pray that God will use Bethel Gilead to make a positive impact on our community so that many would come to Christ.
- f. Future Faith Goals: Ask God to give our congregation a united vision for the future. Pray for God's clear leading in 2017 and beyond.

Thursday, Dec. 28: Read [Luke 2:1-40](#)

Luke's second chapter contains the best loved description of Jesus' nativity. Writing as a historian, Luke gives us exact details surrounding the timing and location of Jesus' coming. How is the ancient message of the Christmas angel relevant to your life and circumstances today? What are you tempted to fear? What "news" (truth of God) could dispel your fears? Does joy play into your normal routine or do you need God to rekindle his joy in your life? (Note [John 16:24, Philippians 4:4-7](#)) And, can you experience the peace of God even amidst the hustle of the season and hustles that come your way on a regular basis? Being at peace with God engenders the peace of God within. Ask him to fulfill the Angel's words in our life even today.

Notes:

Thursday Pray for "My World"

- Neighbors • People who live around me.
- People at Work • Others God brings into my life. Begin to take note of specific needs around you and ask God what he wants you to do to help. Who can I invite to church this Sunday?
- Ask God to bring revival and a spiritual awakening to Branch County. Pray for the area churches and a greater spirit of unity and cooperation.
- Continue to pray for the nation, our national leaders and a revival in America.