



## New Beginnings, Obedience & Blessings

by Kara Derstine

A new year...2023. Resolutions? Nah, not for me. I do endeavor to work on different areas of my life that I feel are lacking, or are subpar to what I expect they should be or what The Lord desires them to be. I have felt it was needed to clean up my eating, after a holiday season of more than enough sugar, and January 1 was a good day to begin a reset. Oh yes, January 1 has also felt like the best day to begin to really work at being on time. I have self-diagnosed "one more thing syndrome" that keeps my household functioning—or so I choose to believe—(let me quickly throw that load of laundry into the dryer and get those dishes in the dishwasher before we leave for BFG), which leads to being late. I have also felt inspired to spend more time in scripture, and January 1 was a great day to begin a read-through-the-Bible plan. While there is nothing magical about January 1, it is a natural beginning. And with each new beginning, something must come to an end. Simple, yet profound.

A discipline that I have grown to value and love, is taking time during the busy month of December to just be still and listen for The Lord to remind me of who He says He is and what The Lord says He'll do in the year ahead. It is counterintuitive and challenging to be still, when there are so many tasks to accomplish and details to execute during the holiday season....all of which are self or society-imposed. I come away from this intentional time with The Lord feeling uplifted, emboldened, reassured, and ready for what is to come with Him as my guide. I see His word for me repeatedly over the course of the next 365 days...it allows me to have comfort and peace, as I navigate both challenges and blessings. It is amazing and such confirmation of His love for me and His work in my life! HE IS LORD OF IT ALL. (I realize it is January when you're reading this, but it is not too late to begin a practice like this. It could become your new January discipline.)

In Deuteronomy 11: 8-32, we read about the blessing of obedience. The Israelites had strong reasons to believe in God and obey His commands. They had witnessed many mighty miracles! It may be difficult for us to have such faith. But there are still miracles today, and it is important to share these with one another, to encourage one another to remain obedient and filled with faith. God knows my heart desires to be obedient, yet it can be the opposite. I imagine you can relate! For me, the practice of being still and listening to what God has for me in the year

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# January 2023





# Making Connections

My name is **Sydney Leaman** and I am 20 years old. I started attending Franconia after I graduated high school in 2020 from Dock Mennonite Academy. I absolutely love Franconia and especially the young adult group. Makes me feel right at home!

During my childhood years I played travel soccer for around seven years. My younger years of childhood were spent growing up on a farm, so I would immediately start playing outside with my brother and sister as soon as I would get home from school until it was too dark to play anymore.

I also enjoyed going to Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp for a week each summer since I was ages 7 to 13. My love for camp started as a camper, which led me to counseling there for four summers. It helped deepen my relationship with Christ and helped make my faith my own. I think working at camp is an incredible experience that everyone should have the opportunity to try at least once!

Right now I am a real estate agent for Keller Williams on the Daniel J. Smith team. I also nanny for a family that I've been with for over a year now. I enjoy both very much, but real estate is what I'd like to do full time. Nannying is a great way to be around kids because I love kids of all ages!

When I'm not working I enjoy spending time with my family – my parents (Jeff and Lori), my older brother Marshall and his now fiancé, Kaylee! When we aren't all laughing and chatting, I enjoy cooking and baking. I think food is such a good way to bring people together and show others how you care for them! I love the outdoors and especially the mountains! I love meeting new people and humbly serving others. I also enjoy spending time with my close friends. It's awesome to have friends at this age who will help guide you in your walk with the Lord and also keep you accountable.

Lately the Lord has been teaching me to be content with where I'm at in life and that the Lord is all I need to be fulfilled. I am trying to find His beauty in everyday and be thankful for the day that he has blessed me with! I am so thankful for my church family and the many, many blessings that have come from it!

*Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12*





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ahead prepares my heart for what is to come. It provides me with peace and direction, faith, and encouragement to be obedient. It propels me into the new year and the new beginning that God is Lord of. I know that the next 365 days will provide me with tangible examples of my time with Him in December 2022, deepening my own faith. My desire for you, women of FMC, is that YOU experience the blessings of the Lord in 2023, as you strive to be obedient to, love, and serve Him.



# Get Involved!

## MCC Material Resource Center Service Night

Women's Ministry is sponsoring an evening of service at the MRC on **Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm.**

We will be helping with tasks like: assembling and/or checking kits, knotting comforters, helping in the warehouse, etc.



MRC Address:  
737 Hagey Center Dr C  
Souderton, PA 18964

All participants must **Sign Up** ahead of time (spots are limited). You may sign up at the Women's Ministry Table in the foyer or by emailing [franconiawomen@gmail.com](mailto:franconiawomen@gmail.com)

## Ladies' Winter Bible Study

will be starting this Wednesday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm

Contact Julie Kratz with any questions.

## Sewing/Knotting Opportunities

### Sewing Circle

January 10  
8:00 am – 4:00 pm



### Knotting Comforters

January 11, 18, and 25  
8:00 am – 1:00 pm

Contact Janet Derstine for more information.

# January 2023 |

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4 "How to" Bible study 7pm	5	6	7
8	9	10 Sewing Circle 8am-4pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 7pm	11 Knitting Comforters "How to" Bible study 7pm	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Knitting Comforters "How to" Bible study 7pm	19	20	21
22	23	24 MRC Service Night 7pm	25 Knitting Comforters "How to" Bible study 7pm	26	27	28
29	30					

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