

The black bear has some unique character traits. Their mating season takes place in June. The fetus has a delayed implantation into the uterus until late fall when the female bear needs to be fattened up for her winter sleep. Black bears do not actually hibernate. They do slow their metabolism down and go into what is called a “deep sleep.” If the mated female has not stored enough fat to meet her winter needs and that of the potential cubs she is carrying, her body will abort the fetuses for her own survival. Therefore, sows may only give birth 8 times in the wild. They have this natural population control and self-preservation system within themselves.

The female bear wakes up to deliver her cubs and then slinks back off into her deep sleep. She responds to their cries and moves for her cubs to nurse. They will nurse for nearly a year. Once they become old enough to venture out of the den, they will begin to sample the same foods that the sow eats. This begins their training. Female cubs will stay with their “mom” for about 18 months. While living in their family unit, she teaches her cubs where to find food, how to hunt and fish, and how to prepare for the winter.

The Black Bear has one of the longest nurturing periods of all the animals. Sows show care and affection to their young daughters until the next mating cycle begins. Then they persistently drive off their daughters to begin living on their own. The male cubs are driven off about 3 months earlier.

Scriptural Reference

Bears are mentioned 13 times in scripture. *I Samuel 17:34,36,37; II Samuel 7:8; II Kings 2:24; Proverbs 17:12; 28:15; Isaiah 11:7; 59:11; Lamentations 3:10; Daniel 7:5; Hosea 13:8; Revelation 13:2.*

Spiritual Application

As mentioned above, cubs spend a lot of time with their mothers compared to other animals. This is done to teach them all they need to know for their survival. This makes me think of the young man, Timothy, who had excellent training.

II Timothy 1:5 “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.”⁷