

Hi Friends,

It's Andrea. I am so elated you made it over to the new Library section of my website at TheOneThing1.org. Since we've been delving into the importance of the word of God throughout this month; I thought we would leave November on a high note with a special download of my **Ten Tips especially for Challenging Bible Passages**. The Post is in PDF format and available as a free download for you to keep. This is the first installment of many to come, where I will be sharing how I study the Bible. I hope in the future to add videos and photos with these posts. My hope is that they will be a helpful resource for you. Okay, let's get started!

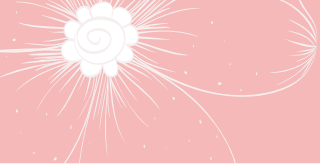
1. Begin with Prayer

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to us as we read the Scriptures. We also should remember that He took the time to have this beautiful love letter written for us. Friends, consider the saints, prophets, and apostles who wrote these words down so that we can, with the press of a button on our phone, pull up the word of God line upon line. Many died so that we could hold the word in our hands. When we come to it, let's remember we are coming to God who flung the stars in the sky, and called us before we were in our mother's womb. He is Almighty, and we should regard His word and the time we get to embrace it as holy and sacred. Pray, pray, and pray some more for the Spirit of Holiness to reveal Jesus because He is there. When we come hungry to the Master's table, we will leave full and never the same. Be refreshed, invigorated, and renewed.

2. Allow the Bible to Interpret the Bible

Hi Friends, before we look outside the Bible allow the Bible to interpret itself. You may ask how? I dig into the word making notes along the way. When I come across a text that is similar if not word for word I take note of it; then take time to go back and see where it has been used before in the Bible. For example, the Apostle Paul makes mention twice of a Scripture mentioned in the book of Deuteronomy:





"For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." 1 Timothy 5v18.

"For in the Law of Moses it is written, You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the corn. Is it [only] for oxen that God cares? [Deut. 25v4.] Or does He speak certainly and entirely for our sakes? [Assuredly] it is written for our sakes, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher ought to thresh in expectation of partaking of the harvest." 1 Corinthians 9v9-10.

When we see something reoccurring in Scripture, it behooves us to go back and see where this was first mentioned, which gives important insight into what is being said. Here is the verse:

"You shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out the grain. [I Cor. 9v9, 10; I Tim. 5v17, 18.]."
Deuteronomy 25v4.

What we learn:

(2a) All Scripture is important that we would receive the fullness of revelation. So let's set aside time and be diligent in our quiet time.

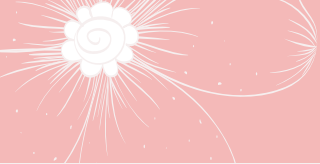
(2b) Those who are in full-time ministry should be cared for through the ministry and a double honor bestowed on them for their labor in the ministry.

(2c) Finally, since the Lord sees fit to mention something more than once, we probably should meditate on it thoughtfully.

3. Context is Key

God's word is for everyone and understanding the biblical and historical context brings clarity to every verse we read. In order to gain insight, consider the time, culture, location, and audience the passage is written to and why. Consider the author and their history woven in the Scriptures. Watch for slight differences between the verses when reading the original Scripture. Some changes often reveal the text, as seen in the example in section 4. Therefore and Cross-Reference.





4. What is, Therefore... Therefore?

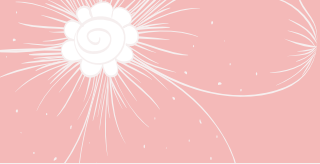
This is an important word in the Bible. It seems so simple, but we can miss the important context if we don't take care to remember: the use of therefore often, if not always, refers to the previous verses. I want to mention this for a couple of reasons.

Often, but not always, what comes next is for us to respond, and it generally gives an example of our response. Example: "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1v13. The question to consider is why and how we do this. So let's go back and read the previous verses:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls." 1 Peter 1v3-9.

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look." 1 Peter 1v10-12.





When we read the preceding verses, we see the reason we should prepare our minds for action and how we can hope confidently in the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I often make a quick outline of what was in the previous verses.

Here's my breakdown:

(4a) We are born again to a living hope because Christ has risen.

(4b) We have an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. (4c) God's power is guarding us.

(4d) Though there will be trials, these things test our faith, and the outcome increases our belief in Christ.

(4e) Salvation (Jesus) is our anchor, and His grace has been given and continues to be given to us.

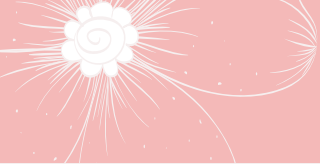
(4f) Finally, we discover that the same Gospel was preached to the saints of old, and it was for our benefit that we would receive the finished work of Jesus.

Note again, this is a brief outline. So many good nuggets will add to the revelation in verse 1 Peter 1v13. What I am providing is a means to help you dive deeper. If we go line by line breaking verses 1-12 down, there is even more revelation for our application of verse 13. For now, just looking at, therefore, in verse 13, we come to realize all of the reasons above are why we hope in Jesus and can stand firm in these last days. Grace has come and delivered us from the present age, and the revelation of His grace will keep our minds prepared and walking as wise. The unveiling of Christ and our hope of the revelation when we see Him face-to-face will keep our faith anchored in the One who loves us.

5. Utilize Cross-References

It's wonderful if you have a Bible that includes cross-references as you read, but in the event you don't, you can utilize several Bible Applications that will give you the ability to change the verse translation to find one that contains a reference within the text such as the Amplified Classic Version.





I utilize apps and have several different Bibles when I study, which I find useful. When you see a cross-reference, set aside time to go back to read the full passage for understanding and context. I find this immensely helpful. Below is one example that demonstrates why cross-referencing is important.

"The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon Me, because He has anointed Me [the Anointed One, the Messiah] to preach the good news (the Gospel) to the poor; He has sent Me to announce release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth as delivered those who are oppressed [who are downtrodden, bruised, crushed, and broken down by calamity]," Luke 4v18.

"To proclaim the accepted and acceptable year of the Lord [the day when salvation and the free favors of God profusely abound]. [Isa. 61v1, 2.]" Luke 4v19.

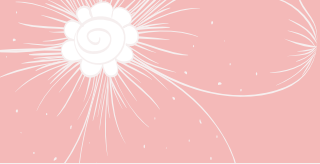
We see the verses from Luke 4v18-19 were first spoken by the prophet Isaiah which we see. "THE SPIRIT of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed and qualified me to preach the Gospel of good tidings to the meek, the poor, and afflicted; He has sent me to bind up and heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the [physical and spiritual] captives and the opening of the prison and of the eyes to those who are bound, [Rom. 10v15.]" Isaiah 61v1.

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord [the year of His favor] and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, [Matt. 11v2-6; Luke 4v18, 19; 7v22.]" Isaiah 61v2.

Did you see the difference? Notice the verse in Isaiah continues on to include, "and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn." And the passage in Luke does not.

Friends, take time to consider why Jesus closed the book and didn't continue to read the full verse from Isaiah. Again, in your quiet time, reflect and allow the Lord, Himself to speak to you. However, I want you to consider these additional verses:





"For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge (to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on) the world, but that the world might find salvation and be made safe and sound through Him." John 3v17.

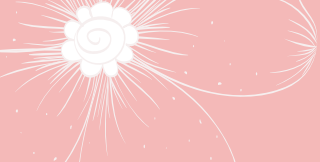
"He who believes in Him [who clings to, trusts in, relies on Him] is not judged [he who trusts in Him never comes up for judgment; for him there is no rejection, no condemnation—he incurs no damnation]; but he who does not believe (cleave to, rely on, trust in Him) is judged already [he has already been convicted and has already received his sentence] because he has not believed in and trusted in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [He is condemned for refusing to let his trust rest in Christ's name.]" John 3v18.

What was revealed to me and please allow the Holy Spirit, Himself to speak to you:

Jesus came into the world to bring Salvation for the first time: however, there is a time coming when Jesus will come as the Righteous Judge for those who refuse to receive His free gift of salvation. The beautiful gem we find in these verses is the difference between the First and Second coming of our Lord Jesus. This is so important because we've been commissioned to bring the Gospel of Peace to a world that is perishing.

The Good News wouldn't be Good News if it was laden with hellfire and brimstone. Some will say isn't there a place to discuss sin? And my answer is, of course. Sin is the very reason we need Salvation. However, we are to share the message of our hope in Him lovingly. He draws people as the Gospel is seen in our daily lives (living in the Spirit). The Spirit's wooing is truly irresistible to those who carry the message of peace with God and as we speak the truth of God in the Gospel. Never forget, beloved, we are His living love letter to the world. A beautiful fragrance is emitted everywhere we go and to all in our sphere of influence. The message we received wasn't one of hell and brimstone (though that time will come), but now is the time and today is the day of Salvation, where the free favors of God profusely abound toward humanity; and will hopefully be received in faith by those who are lost.





Meditation |

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, Your God reigns! [Acts 10v36; Rom. 10v15; Eph. 6v14-16.]" Isaiah 52v7.

We'll conclude here with final words from the Apostle Paul.

"Or are you [so blind as to] trifle with and presume upon and despise and underestimate the wealth of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering patience? Are you unmindful or actually ignorant [of the fact] that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repent (to change your mind and inner man to accept God's will)?" Romans 2v4.

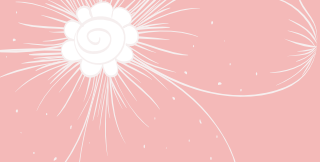
6. See Everything like God Through the Lens of the Finished Work of Jesus.

God sees the end from the beginning. Why shouldn't we, as His children, see from the same perspective? When we do, we learn the words written in the Bible are not punitive; rather, they provide wisdom, direction, and guidance and often require reflection and meditation to deepen our understanding of Him.

Often, a passage in one season can speak one thing into my life, and the same passage breathes life into me in a completely different season in a completely different way. God's word is in deep waters, and He gives rich revelation each time we come to Him. The Old Testament saints looked forward to our day. When we read King David's words, we find that though he lived in the time of the Old Covenant, he lived with a New Covenant mindset. He lived in hope of our reality.

"BLESSED (HAPPY, fortunate, to be envied) is he who has forgiveness of his transgression continually exercised upon him, whose sin is covered." Psalms 32v1.





7. Don't Allow an Obscure Passage to Rob You of the Truth Jesus has Solidified in Your Heart.

Here's an example: When you read the passage from John 5v24 where it says, "you will never perish or come into judgment." Don't give up the beautiful truth when you come to a passage like Hebrews 6v4, "For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit," Hebrews 6v4.

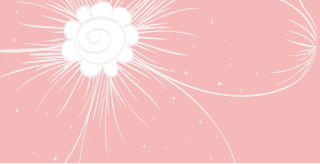
The hope is for you to read Hebrews 6v4 with the assurance you've come fully into Jesus and are a possessor of eternal life, not a professor.

The discourse in Hebrews 6v4 is not about losing one's salvation, although so many people like to use it as such. It is for those who profess to know Jesus but have not come all the way to salvation. They've tasted Christ yet failed to possess Christ and the gift of eternal life. Look at the words used: tasted, not consumed. Here we see why we should take time and chew on the word of God. Everything in God's word is significant! Friends, remember who it was written to and the historical context. This reveals the exact nature of the verse in Hebrews 6v4.

The true context is that these people are intimately acquainted with the death of Jesus and its meaning, yet consider going back to temple sacrifices as a means of atonement (right standing before God). Let that sink in deep, and then read the passage again.

Now, we see with greater clarity why such a stern warning is given⁷. This verse has nothing to do with the ability to lose your salvation and has everything to do with ensuring people make the decision fully for Christ. How do we know this? Look at the entire book of Hebrews; what is it about? It is that Jesus is superior to everything that has come before Him. So choose Him above all else. I hope this helps you!





I am often reminded as I read the Bible that standing firm in the character of God is so helpful. God doesn't instill fear. God is love, and His perfect love casts out fear. As believers, we should find comfort in the word of God, even when being convicted, for Jesus is both Just and the Justifier, and God disciplines those who are His.

8. Deep Dive Studying the Hebrew and Greek Meanings.

Take time to study the individual words in the verse or passage. The original Hebrew often has a richer meaning than our English vernacular. As for Greek, there is great depth in the language. For example, Love is an affectionate term in the English language. However, the Greek word for love has many seven different meanings; Agape, Eros, Storge, Philia, Ludus, Philautia, and Pragma. Once we discover their meanings, we begin to realize the importance of looking up the words to ensure we understand what is meant by the use of the terms.

9. Different Translations

Sometimes reading the same verse in a different translation can be helpful. Remember, the translation will vary in how close it is to the original canon of Scripture. Plan to provide a separate article in the future, giving an in-depth overview of the various translations. For now, know they are available and can be helpful as you study the word of God.

10. Commentary

I have found various commentaries helpful in understanding Scripture. Remember that we are reading through the lens of the theologian who has taken great pains to labor in the word. In saying this, it is to be utilized as a resource, not the Source of Biblical revelation.

You made it! I hope this propels you to study God's word. I pray you are eager to meet with Jesus and allow Him to pour the wonderful things of God into your heart. Until next time, keep devoting time to prayer, praise, and the word. And don't forget to download a copy for the future.

