

## Bible Study

A major challenge to Bible study is the fact that the writers wrote thousands of years ago to an audience that used a different language and had a different culture. Therefore we must not start off reading the Bible in 21<sup>st</sup> century lenses. We must come to understand what the Bible meant to its original audience. Further, another challenge is the fact that we take so many scriptures out of context. The passage you are reading is surrounded by scripture that help us understand what the passage meant to the people, and thus means to us.

The following are some tips that can help us understand Bible passages in their context.

1. Again, sincerely seek God's guidance while reading the scriptures.
2. Read the passage like you've never read it before.
3. Read the verses in more than one version of the Bible. You don't have to rely on the King James Version only. Remember, there is no one perfect translation of the Bible. However, you can gain a pretty good consensus of what the passage is saying through a multitude of translations. This is especially important for those of us who do not know the original language.
4. Ask important questions about the passage. These questions include **who wrote**, **when**, **where**, to **whom**, and **why**. For example, it's important to know that the gospel of Matthew was written to Jews, and the gospel of Luke had gentiles in mind. It helps us understand why some aspects of His ministry are emphasized more in Matthew than in Luke. To find the answers to these questions, use Bible

dictionaries or encyclopedias. If you do not have access to those, modern study Bibles do a great job in answering the questions above.

5. Consult any chain references that exist in our Bibles today. These give us textual insights from other places in the Bible that will help us understand the passage.
6. After laboring with a passage and praying over it, read other resources such as the writings of Ellen White and commentaries.

**Practicum:**

Consider the following texts by reading the verses before and after to gain a complete understanding of the verse in question.

- Genesis 31:49
- Philippians 4:13
- Matthew 24:41

Read Luke 10:25-37, and explain how Numbers 19:11 helps us understand this passage.