

## Tips for Understanding Scripture

- ✓ **Begin with prayer**  
Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you read and interpret Scripture.
- ✓ **Read carefully & take notes**  
Often times it is helpful to find a Bible translation that is easy for you to understand as well.
- ✓ **Ask good questions**
  - What do I learn about God?
  - What do I learn about people?
  - What is God asking me to do?

### What to do with difficult passages...

- ✓ **Use Scripture to interpret Scripture**  
Interpret difficult passages with clear passages. When in doubt, lean on what you know about the character of Jesus and give priority to New Testament passages.
- ✓ **Always seek the author's intended meaning**
- ✓ **Avoid basing a belief or conviction on one obscure passage**  
Try not to accept someone's teaching based on one or two verses without knowing the context.
- ✓ **Seek to understand the context of the passage**  
Context is what **surrounds the passage**. Avoid taking a Scripture out of its context to make it say what you want it to say.
  - **Seek answers from within the passage.**
  - **Seek answers from the immediate context.**  
These are passages proceeding and following the passage you are studying.
  - **Seek answers from the larger context.**  
The book in which the passage occurs.
  - **Seek answers from the historical context**  
What was happening at the time of writing: socially, politically, religiously, etc.
  - **Seek answers from the cultural context.**  
The cultural values and customs at the time which could have influenced what the author said, why he said it, and how he said it.
  - **Seek answers by comparing similar passages within the Bible.**  
Passages outside of the book can provide useful information, especially passages with the **same event** or **same topic** as the one you are studying.
  - **Seek answers by consulting secondary sources.**  
Sources outside of the Bible such as a Bible commentary, a dictionary can be helpful, but try these other things first.