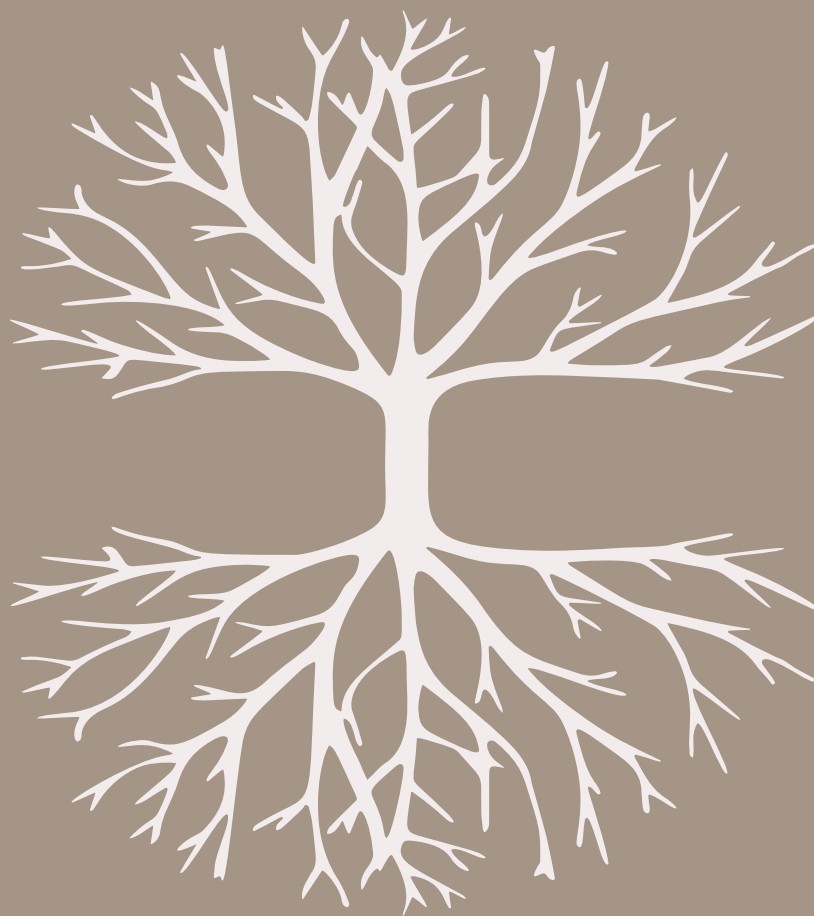


ELLEN CHAUVIN



# Deeply Rooted

Cultivating a Rhythm  
of Growing in God's Word

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# Introduction

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A childlike step of faith at the age of twelve. That's when I gave my heart to Jesus, and accepted His gracious gift of salvation.

You would think that being saved so young I would know the Bible front to back. Sadly, no.

A year or so after I was saved, my parents began camping on the weekends. Which meant no formal church. Oh, we did have beautiful services outdoors, but there was no discipleship. I loved the Lord as best I knew how, and felt His presence most when I was in nature. But I wasn't growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus.

For decades I wandered in the wilderness, not knowing or understanding all I had in Christ. There was no fruit in my life, and the garden of my heart was full of weeds. Could I dig out from under? No, not by myself.

Jesus is the Gardener that cleared my weeds and set me in a spacious place. The passion I have for His Word was planted in my heart by Him. With Holy Spirit power He is redeeming the years the locust has eaten. He plowed up the hard soil in my heart.

And yet, I found myself plodding through scriptures.

I was struggling. Again.

I **want** to read and understand God's Word. I start out with a reading plan. Then, I fall behind. No matter how hard I try, I can't catch up. So I throw my hands in the air and give up! Until I begin again. At that point, all I am doing is checking Bible reading off my to do list.

I **want** to grasp the truths of scripture. I take Bible study classes, but never seem to retain what was taught. I love the precept inductive studies, but can't seem to follow the process at home, on my own. Surely there is a way? God **wants** us to read His Word. It's His love letter to us!

There was no plan to my process. Goodness, there wasn't even a process! It was hit or miss (mostly miss). Like scattering vegetable and flower seeds on a big pile of hard clay, hoping there would eventually be a harvest.

# Introduction-con't

Hit or miss. That's not how I wanted to spend my time with the Lord. But, how should I structure this most holy time? What I needed was a flexible plan and process that would move with the rhythms of my life.

Oh, there were other questions too:

- Can I study God's Word on my own?
- Can study be combined with devotion and prayer time?
- What's the best way to study scripture? Is it before prayer time, or should it be after?
- Should it be devotional or in depth?

The answer? Yes, and both!

After reading books and blogs, going to inductive, topical and all manner of Bible studies, and struggling on my own, I've come up with a process that helps me dig into God's Word. I want to share this with you, so that you won't get tangled in the weeds. When you pick up your Bible to read and study, you will blossom and bloom.

Are you ready? It's time to grow! Let's become Deeply Rooted in God's Word.



*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.*

*2 Peter 3:18 NIV*

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# 01

# Preparing the Soil

*‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ Mark 12:30 NIV*

It’s said in gardening that everything begins with a seed. Certainly you need a seed for something to grow. But there are other factors to consider. Like the soil. Down here in my neck of the woods, we have clay soil. If you till it up, it gets stuck on the blades of the tiller. When you walk through the clay, it sticks to your shoes and keeps growing and growing. It’s like a clay snow ball, I guess.

Before we do any type of planting, we have to prepare the soil. We want our plants to grow strong healthy roots. Deep roots provide real growth.

The same is true in Bible study. You have to prepare the soil of your heart to receive the seed of God’s Word.

## **Prepare your heart: Know your why**

Knowing your “why” will help prepare your heart for Bible study. What is the reason you want to study God’s Word? Here are several I’ve found. Maybe they will resonate with you:

*Scripture is God’s Word to us.* The Bible is God’s love letter to us, and His message for us. He speaks to us through His Word. Read and study scripture to hear from God, not from others. When you study God’s Word on your own, you will learn to hear His voice.

*Scripture teaches us who God is.* The more we read and study the Bible, the more we come to know Him and the love He has for us.

*“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 ESV*

The Bible is God’s heart. In it, He tells us over and over how much He loves us. It’s His gift to us. It’s the most precious thing we have. When we know God intimately, we’ll recognize His presence in our lives. We’ll know when we’ve experienced Him in our circumstances.

*Scripture transforms us.* We read the Bible for transformation, not information. When we know God through His Word, we see ourselves for who we are in relation to Him. We are sinners saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus. God wants us to become more like His Son, and as we read and study the scriptures, we will learn to apply the principles learned to our lives.





### **Prepare your strength: Know your plan and process**

Preparing my garden for planting is a practical thing. I make sure I have all the tools I need. I plan the day and hour I'll be gardening, by checking the weather (who wants to till soil in a thunderstorm?). I have soil additives to help make the garden healthy for planting. I've prepared everything I need so I don't have to waste extra strength getting all my gardening stuff together.

*Have a plan.* It's the same in Bible study. Be practical. Plan ahead. Determine in advance the time and place you will study. Will it be early in the morning? Sitting in a comfy chair? Or outside in nature?

You also need to determine where in Scripture you will study. New testament epistles? Old testament history? The Pentateuch? Decide in advance which book you will be studying. It will save you much angst before you begin planting the seeds of His Word.

My place and time is in the mornings, in our office. I have a sweet little drop leaf table that holds my Bible, journal, pens and other tools I will need. It's all there in one spot. I know in advance which book I will study. All I have to do each morning is show up with my cup of coffee and begin. I'm prepared and ready, with no mental or physical strength wasted.

*Have a process.* The process I'll be walking you through is not new. It comes from years of Bible Study and studying how others study! You can keep it light and easy (more devotional in nature) or you can dig deeper. You can even become a Master Gardner in the study of God's Word. It is a process that is flexible.

*What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1:9 NIV*

This is not a new fangled, bright and shiny method to catch your attention. Then, after the new wears off you're back to the same old, same old. It's a process, a rhythm to cultivate in your time with the Lord. I won't call it a habit. Habits tend to get rigid and legalistic. Rhythms flow with your season of life. Rhythms bend when you need flexibility



### **Prepare your mind: Know your opposition**

Zinnias are one of my favorite flowers. They are beautiful, colorful, look great in a vase, and for the most part are easy to grow. But often each spring, I can talk myself out of planting those seeds.

Why? I really don't have a green thumb. It takes time to get zinnias to grow and keep them growing, and, well, I'm old. It hurts my back when I have to weed around those beautiful flowers.

Likewise, in my study of God's Word, I can face all kinds of obstacles, get discouraged, and just not begin.

Let's look at a few of the obstacles that may keep us from digging into God's Word.

*Time.* We're all busy, and never seem to have enough hours in the day. But for our health and sustenance, we will make time. The Bible is our life blood. We need it to live and grow.

Don't have time to read scripture? Got earbuds? Listen while you walk or run in your neighborhood or while on the treadmill at the gym. Let the Bible app read the Word to you, and you just soak it in. I was amazingly surprised at how much I retained just from hearing the Word.

Got a commute? Bluetooth the Bible app into your car and listen on your way to work.

*Talent.* Have you heard or said this before: "What's the use in studying or reading the Bible? I'll never have the brain power to understand it on my own. I'll just listen in church on Sunday or at Bible study during the week."

Yes indeed, that used to be me. I've since come to understand that you only need two things to study God's Word: A Bible and the Holy Spirit. Yep that's it! Holy Spirit will teach you!

*But you have received the Holy Spirit, and He lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what He teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as He has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ. 1 John 2:27 NLT*

*Tricks.* They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks. Who are "they" anyway? And why do "they" get a say in how old or young we need to be to do things, especially studying God's Word. Let's see what God says:

*"Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh." Exodus 7:7*  
**ESV**

*[Growing in grace] they (the righteous) shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap [of spiritual vitality] and [rich in the] verdure [of trust, love, and contentment]. Psalm 92:14 AMP*

They say we're exempt from studying God's Word because we've aged out. We're too old.

Not true! Just like there are different seasons for different plants, you may be in a season of learning scripture that looks different than just a few years ago. We are never too old to study God's Word. And we'll never learn all there is to know this side of heaven. Don't give up because of your age.

Don't get discouraged (God says not to! Joshua 10:25). You are never too old to learn about God and His love for you. I saw first hand evidence of this recently, when I watched a ninety-five year old woman give her heart to Jesus and be baptized!

You are never too old to see how much Jesus loves you - so much that He willingly went to the cross to pay for your sins. Not sure about you, but I could hear that every day for the rest of my life and it wouldn't get old!

Keep growing your roots down deep into Him. We are never too old!





### **Prepare your soul: Pray**

Always begin with prayer. Pray that God's Holy Spirit will be your teacher. Pray that your heart and mind are open to learning and knowing God's Word

Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law. Ps 119:18 NASB

*Lord, open my eyes, help me see...*

Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures Luke 24:45

*Lord, open my mind, help me learn...*

They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" Luke 24:32 NASB

*Lord, let my heart burn for You...*

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." John 14:26

*Holy Spirit help me!*

We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. 1 Corinthians 2:13 CSB

*Holy Spirit teach me!*

### **Conclusion**

I can't wait for my zinnias to bloom, so that I can cut them, bring them inside and enjoy them. But it takes time from planting to harvest. The seed needs to be planted, watered, open, germinate and grow. I have to be patient.

Soaking and growing in God's Word can be a slow process. Good things take time and practice. Great things take a lot of time and practice. Don't give up.

Come on, Let's Grow!

“You must  
ruthlessly  
eliminate  
hurry from  
your life.

~Dallas Willard

# 02

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## Planting Seeds of God's Word

*"This is the meaning of the parable:  
The seed is the word of God."*

*Luke 8:11 CSB*

Now that our soil is prepared, it's time to plant the seeds of God's Word in our heart.

How? By reading it! It's as simple (as and complicated) as that. Reading your Bible is a practical first step in knowing God more, understanding His Word and being transformed by it. It's a great way to get those seeds sprouting into our hearts and minds. In fact, it's the only way. Remember, we don't want to read just to check it off our to do list. We want to read for comprehension and transformation.

### **Planting 101**

To read for comprehension, we need a plan. We need to slow down and pay attention to what we are reading. Let's get planting!

#### *Read repetitively.*

Choose the book of the Bible you want to study, and read the entire book, start to finish. This will give you a good overview of the book. Then, throughout your study, read the book in its entirety at least two or three more times. Depending on the length of the book, you may have to read half one week, and half the next.

"Is she crazy?? I don't have time to read all that!"

Trust me, I know your thoughts. I've struggled with the same thing. But if you have time to scroll through social media, you can make time to study the Bible. Remember your earbuds and bluetooth? Use them! You will be surprised at how much you retain just from listening repeatedly to the book you are studying.



## Planting 101 – con’t

*Smaller portions.* After you’ve read the book for an overview, break it down into smaller, more manageable portions. You can then begin to plow up the words of scripture and see what’s inside. You want to plant a garden, but you have to do it section by section. Smaller sections of scripture are easier to read repetitively.

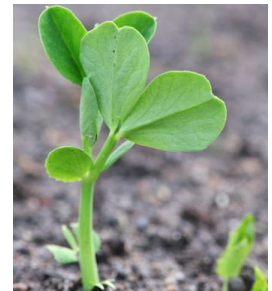
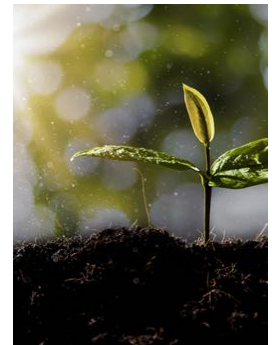
*Use a dictionary.* As you read, look up any unfamiliar words. I use the dictionary app on my phone almost every time I read a new passage. In addition to unfamiliar words, look up words that are familiar, but you can’t readily define. I know what some words mean, but I can’t articulate it. So, I look those words up, read the definition and check for synonyms that will help me remember the word.

*Different translations.* Finally, read other translations. Various translations can provide a different perspective of what the passage is saying. We’re planting God’s Word in our hearts. Why stop at just zinnias? Let’s throw in some gladiolas and cosmos, too!

When I study scripture, I use a more literal translation, like the New American Standard Bible or English Standard Bible. These are called word-for-word translations. They most closely follow the original Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic manuscripts.

There are also meaning-to-meaning translations such as the Christian Standard Bible. Meaning-to-meaning translations focus on maintaining the overall message or thought behind a passage. These translations generally have a higher level of readability.

Finally, there are paraphrases of scripture, like Eugene Peterson’s The Message. The language is more modern and easier to understand. However, since to paraphrase something means to retell it in your own words, you could say a Bible paraphrase is what the author thinks the Bible says. A commentary, if you will.



*The basic difference between Bible reading and Bible study is simply a pencil and a piece of paper.*

*~Donald Whitney*

## Digging Deeper

Donald Whitney, in his book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, said this: “The basic difference between Bible reading and Bible study is simply a pencil and a piece of paper.” One way to dig deeper into the heart of God and His Word is annotation.

*Annotate.* Print a copy of the text you are studying. If it’s a shorter book, I print the full text. If a longer book, I print chapter by chapter. And for all you Millennials, who don’t own a printer or have any paper, just get a PDF of the text and annotate away on your computer. For the rest of us paper lovers, here’s a chance to use all those pretty colored pens we have laying around.

There are so many things you can look for when you annotate. Here are a few:

- Mark lists
- Mark key words and phrases
- Mark repeated words
- Note key themes
- Note transition words (therefore, but, because, if/then, likewise))
- Comparisons & contrasts
- Note terms of conclusion (in conclusion, altogether)

As you read your passage repeatedly, your eyes will begin to see all these different elements. Lists really stand out to me now! My brain grabs those repeated words, almost without me realizing it!

Your copy of the text is a great place to record any questions you have. As you continue digging, those answers may sprout right before your eyes.

*Ask the basic questions.* Asking questions of the passage helps you think more deeply about it. And you will learn as you ask! Here are the basic questions:

- Who
- What
- When
- Where

### Master Gardner

If you really want to get your hands dirty, here are some suggestions:

*Ask the Harder Questions.* Continually asking “**Why**” and “**How**” while you read, will train your brain to look for answers.

*Outline the passage.* Outlining helps bring clarity. I can see the natural progression of the passage, the main points, and many other things.

*Themes.* Try to discern chapter themes and book themes. Jot them down (in pencil). Don’t worry, the more you study, the more you know. You can always change the theme, once you’ve discovered more.

*Genre.* Determine the genre of the book you are studying. Genres include poetry, narrative, history, gospel, prophesy/apocalyptic, and epistles.



*Reading your Bible is a  
practical first step in  
knowing God more, and  
becoming more like Him.*

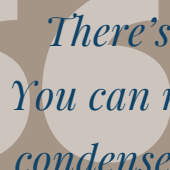
*Remember:  
We read for comprehension  
and transformation.*

## Conclusion

All of this sounds like a lot! I'm feeling your pain right now. I'm a checklist kinda gal, and want instant results. But just as seeds take time to germinate (some take as long as 45 days!!!), planting the seeds of God's Word in our hearts takes time. Find your rhythm. Some days you may only be able to read. Other days you'll have time for annotation or outlining. Be sensitive to the season you are in.

Holy Spirit will bring to mind God's Word when we need it. But first, we must plant it in our minds!

It all starts with a seed. Once the seed is in the ground, it's in God's hands to grow it. We rely on Him for the rain, but as gardeners we still have work to do. Work with the Lord as you sow the seeds of His word into your heart.



*There's so much you can do with a paragraph of Scripture.  
You can read it, dissect it, diagram it, outline it, paraphrase it,  
condense it, take it apart, put it back together, check its cross-  
references, study its words, and list its applications.*

*You can sing it, shout it, pray it.*

*~Robert J. Morgan, Reclaiming the Lost Art of Biblical Meditation*





# 03

## Growing Deep Roots

---

“

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

*2 Peter 3:18 ESV*

Our seeds are planted. We've watered them with repetitive reading and tended them by looking up words and reading different translations. We've seen them sprout by using annotation and other tools. By simply reading and observing the text, our eyes are being trained to see things in God's Word that we normally would have rushed right past.

However, it isn't enough to plant, water and tend. We need to make sure our roots are growing deep, so when those storm clouds come, we will stand firm and not be blown away.

## Growing 101

How can we continue to grow? How can our roots become established? By not only looking at what the Bible says, but asking what it means. Here are several tools to use:

*Look up cross references.* Maybe you've heard the phrase "Let scripture interpret scripture." This is what you are doing when you look up cross references. Using this tool will point you to related content and help you see the passage in more context. There can be parallel passages (in the Gospels or in the historical books, for instance) that will show you what's happening from a slightly different perspective. You'll also find similar words, phrases or themes as you look up cross references.

As you become more familiar with scripture, sometimes a verse will come to mind while you're reading a passage, and this verse isn't in the cross references. What do you do? Grab a pen, and write it in the margin of your Bible! Or, jot it down on your annotation pages. I find this helpful when I'm studying.

*Seek the original meaning.* Ask yourself "What did this mean to the original audience?" It can't mean something to us that it didn't mean to them. Finding and understanding the original meaning helps us see the universal principles and truths in the passage. Read the book introduction or study notes for background on the passage.

*Look for spiritual lessons or principles.* Does this passage give me a spiritual principle or lesson? Is there a promise or command to obey? What are the people doing (or not doing) that I should also do? Is there a promise I should claim or a warning to heed or an example I should follow?

*Ask:* What does it tell me about God, Jesus or Holy Spirit?

## Digging Deeper

*Do a word study.* Look up a word in the original Greek or Hebrew. Dig deep to find the roots of words. This will give you a well rounded view of the verse where the word is used. There are online resources as well as apps you can use for this. (See Resource Lists at back of book)

*Verse map one of the scriptures.* I use verse mapping when there is a particular scripture that is hard for me to understand. Verse mapping is where you tear apart a verse. Look at the subject, check the verbs, record cross references and do word studies. It uses a diagram or chart - similar to a mind map - to study a verse or passage. It is a visual tool, and I am a visual learner!

*Look for connections.* Look at the paragraphs before and after the passage you are studying. Look for connections. How does the text you are studying follow logically from the previous text?





It takes a lot of  
slow to grow.

~Eve Merriam, A Lazy Thought

## Master Gardner

*Paraphrase the passage.* This is simply where you write the passage in your own words. I say "simply" but there are times when I try to paraphrase that I'm simply stuck! Paraphrasing makes us stop and check for understanding. It's a summary of what the passage is about. Don't get stuck here. Give it a try. You can always come back and re-write your paraphrase as you continue digging into the passage of scripture, and gain more understanding of it.

*Look for and identify how the text reflects the metanarrative of scripture.* What, you've never heard of the metanarrative of scripture? Me either, until recently. Metanarrative is the big picture or grand narrative. In Scripture, it is the story of creation, fall, redemption and restoration. Ask yourself how the smaller portion of scripture you are studying reflects the grand story of the whole Bible. Do you see elements of creation? How about the fall, or redemption? And oh, glory, when you see restoration! What a beautiful picture that is!

*Consult trustworthy commentaries.* Finally, the very last tool to help you grow deep roots, is to consult commentaries. Please don't use these until last. You will be amazed the more you study, at how much you glean on your own. Don't just take someone else's word for what a passage means. Study it yourself, tear it apart, and come to your own conclusions. Then check commentaries for further insight.

## Conclusion

Planting seeds and plowing up dry ground is hard work, isn't it? But remember, you don't have to do all the steps all the time. Pace yourself. For a garden to grow, you have to prepare soil, plant and water. Then you have to feed the plants so their roots will grow strong. Some days I feed, some days I weed, and some days I water my flowers. But I can't do everything in one day.

Remember to pray for the help and guidance of Holy Spirit. If you work by yourself, without the power of God, there will be shallow roots. Knowing that the fruit of God's Word is growing steadily in your heart will encourage you to hold on and keep looking for the harvest.

Practice these steps and use these tools regularly until they become a natural flow in your study time. You'll find that soon you will develop a rhythm of Bible study that moves and sways with the season you are in.

# 04

# Harvesting the Crop

*Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 2 Corinthians 9:10 NASB*

Gardening is hard work. The soil needs to be prepped and seeds planted. But it doesn't end there. In order for your garden to grow, you need to tend it, water it, and feed it. With the proper preparation, planting and tending, you will see fruit! Finally the flowers have bloomed and the fruit is ripe for harvest.

It's the same in our study of God's Word. It's hard work, but the harvest is worth it! We didn't work this hard for this long to see no fruit in our lives. We've read and studied the scriptures NOT to check them off our to-do list, but to be transformed by them! We want God to increase the harvest of our righteousness.

Righteousness is living by God's standards. The bad news is that we can't obtain true and perfect righteousness on our own. We need Jesus! True righteousness is possible only through the cleansing of our sin by Jesus. Although we are made right through our faith in Christ, we want to grow and become more like Jesus each and every day. We want to bear fruit in our lives that reflects Jesus.

But how?

Let's dig in and see ways to harvest His fruit in our lives.

## Harvesting 101

*Reflect.* Don't just read and leave. Take a moment to ponder what you've read and learned. Soak in it. Like seeds need to be soaked in water in order to sprout and grow, so also we need to soak in God's Word to sprout seeds of faith.

*Pray.* Respond in prayer. Pray God's Word back to Him. Look for scriptures to pray for others and for yourself. Write them down. Pray them!

*Ask this question:* What attributes of God's character are revealed?

One of the main reasons we are studying God's Word is to know Him more deeply and intimately. The story of Scripture is God's story. In it, He tells us who He is and what He's done for us. Look for Him as you read and study.

*Worship.* You've seen who God is through His Word. Take time to worship Him! He is faithful, loving and merciful. Praise Him that He has been and will continue to be all these things to you!

*Thanksgiving.* Give thanks to God for the things He has shown you as you study. Thank Him for all the ways He has shown Himself to you through your study of scripture.





## Digging Deeper

*Ask:* What do I learn about myself in light of who God is?

You've read scripture and seen that God is loving and trustworthy. Ask yourself: Am I? Am I loving and trustworthy?

You've seen in scripture that God is a righteous judge and vengeance is His. Ask yourself: Do I tend to judge others? Do I try and exact revenge?

*Journal.* Spend some time journaling what you've learned about God, and about the reality of who you are. When I journal my questions and answers, it slows my brain down to really see the truth of a situation. Through journaling, I can flesh out my feelings.

*Confess.* Pray about what God has shown you. Is there something you need to confess to Him? Do it now.

## Master Gardner

*Ask:* How should this truth change me?

You've seen the stark contrast between who God is, and who you are. You know this truth should change you. Like the metamorphosis of the ugly caterpillar into the beautiful butterfly, we are to be transformed by reading and heeding God's Word.

*Plan your obedience.* Live it out! In light of who God is, and who you need to be, how should it change the way you live? How should it change your heart and attitude toward your circumstances or others? Don't just take note of changes you need to make, and then continue just the way you are. Plan to be obedient. If your obedience is something that can be put on the calendar, do it!

*Pray.* Pray to God, asking Him for the daily strength you need to be transformed into His likeness. This is a prayer He is happy to answer!

## Conclusion

Celebrate!

*Those who sow in tears shall harvest with joyful shouting. Psalm 126:5 NASB*

You've done it! You've taken steps to cultivate a rhythm of growing in God's Word. You've planted a few tears along the way, as you have unlearned old habits and learned new ways of digging into scripture. With these new tools you've learned and used, you will not be shaken. The joy felt in the harvest far outweighs the pain felt in the sowing, amen?

Continue to nourish and nurture this process of planting and growing the seeds of God's Word in your life. Continue to read His Word for comprehension and transformation. Let the Holy Spirit teach and guide you as you grow. Your roots have grown deeper into Christ. Celebrate with joyful shouting!

“God  
orchestrates  
growth  
over time and  
seasons.  
Winter, spring,  
and summer  
are all necessary  
for  
fall's harvest.

~Sara Hagerly  
Adore



# 05

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## Getting our Hands Dirty

*The things you have learned and received and heard and seen  
in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with  
you.*

*Philippians 4:9 NASB*



We've learned a lot, haven't we? Now, it's time to get practical with these tools from Deeply Rooted. How about we practice with the book of Revelation? HA! I gotcha! I'm just kidding about Revelation, though I do love to study that book!

What about if we go for a smaller book? Let's get our hands dirty in the book of Philemon. It's only twenty-five verses. So very doable!! Below, you will find a copy of Philemon, New American Standard Bible. Use it for your annotation.

Remember, you can take this process and make it your own. When I first started learning how to study the Bible on my own, I used to follow all the different steps IN ORDER. Read, read a different translations, cross-references, word study, etc. Now I find it depends on how my morning is going. Sometimes I only read. Some mornings I'll just dig into a word study, then maybe look up cross-references. Make this work for you. The point is going a little deeper to plant the seeds of God's Words in your heart. Let His roots grow deep down into your very soul.

All right, then, let's get started!

### **WEEK ONE**

#### **Day 1:**

- Read Philemon in its entirety.
- What genre is this book?
- Do you notice any natural breaks in the letter? (i)
- Read verses 1-3.

Who wrote the letter? (ii)

Who was the recipient? (iii)

- Make lists of all you learn about the author and recipient. Note the reference verse after each item. (iv)

## **WEEK ONE - con't**

### **Day 2:**

-Read Philemon in its entirety. Use a different translation from yesterday's reading. Make notes of any insights.

-Read verses 4-7.

Continue adding information to your list about the author and recipient. (v)

What does Paul seem to be doing here? (vi)

-Look up cross references for verse six. What additional insights do they give to the meaning of verse six? (vii) (NOTE: I struggled to comprehend the meaning of verse six. Looking up the cross references helped me greatly!)

### **Day 3:**

-Read verses 4-7.

-Do word studies on

Fellowship (viii)

Effective (ix)

Knowledge (x)

-What do you think Paul meant by "every good thing in you"? (xi)

-As a follower and believer in Jesus Christ as Savior, what good things are now in you? (xii)

### **Day 4:**

-Read verses 4-7.

-Paraphrase what Paul is saying

-What scriptural principles do you see here? (xiii)

-How does this apply to you personally? (xiv)

### **Day 5:**

-Read Philemon in its entirety.

## **WEEK TWO**

### **Day 1:**

-Read Philemon in its entirety.

-Read verses 8-16 in a different translation, if you so desire.

-Record additional facts you learn about Paul (xv), Onesimus and Philemon

### **Day 2:**

-Read verses 8-16.

-Ask:

Who is Onesimus to Paul? (xvi)

Why would Onesimus be useful? (xvii) Record any scripture to back up your answer. (xviii)

How did Paul appeal to Philemon? (xix)

What spiritual principle do you see here? (xx)

## **WEEK TWO - con't**

### **Day 3:**

- Read verses 8-16
- Look up cross references. Write them down.  
What additional insight do they provide?
- What attribute of God do you see in these verses? (xxi)
- How was Onesimus' life changed because of Paul? (xxii)

### **Day 4:**

- Read verses 8-16.
- Is there a sin to avoid in this passage? (xxiii)
- Is there an example to follow? (xxiv)

### **Day 5:**

- Read Philemon in its entirety.

## **WEEK THREE:**

### **Day 1:**

- Read Philemon in its entirety
- Read verses 17-21
- Look up any unfamiliar words, or words you want to know more about

### **Day 2:**

- How does verse 17 relate to the verses prior (vv15-16) (xxv)
- Look up cross-references
- What is the meaning of the word "partner"? (xxvi)

### **Day 3:**

- In verse 19, what do you think Philemon owes Paul? (xxvii)
- Look up any cross references

### **Day 4:**

- Do you see Christ in these scriptures? How so? (xxviii)

### **Day 5:**

- Read Philemon in its entirety
- What have you learned about yourself in light of who Christ is and what He's done?
- Do you see any themes emerging as you've repeatedly read the book of Philemon? (xxix)
- Do you see an over arching theme for this book? (xxx)

## The Letter of Paul to PHILEMON

Phm 1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker,

2 and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers,

5 because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints;

6 and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

7 For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

8 Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you to do what is proper,

9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you--since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus--

10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment,

11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.

12 I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart,

13 whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel;

14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will.

15 For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever,

16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

17 If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me.

18 But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account;

19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well).

20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

The Letter of Paul to PHILEMON - con't

- 21 Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.
- 22 At the same time also prepare me a lodging, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given to you.
- 23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,
- 24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.
- 25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.



## NOTES:

i. Example: Verses 1-3 are the greeting, verses 23-25 are the conclusion.

ii. Paul

iii. Philemon

iv. Paul: prisoner, Christian, with Timothy

Philemon: Christian, fellow worker with Paul, has a house church

v. Philemon: has great love and faith toward Jesus and all the saints v5, refreshes others v7

vi. Paul is commending Philemon's love and faith, and seems to be preparing his heart for what comes next.

vii. Colossians 1:9 and Philippians 1:9 helped in my understanding of this verse. My thoughts on the meaning: The more you actively participate in your faith, the more discerning you become regarding God's will. You come to know and understand all you have in Christ. Which in Philemon's case could be freedom, love, family, fellowship and forgiveness. The more we understand what we have in Christ Jesus, the more we want to share these blessings with others.

viii. 2842. κοινωνία koinōnía; gen. koinōnías, fem. noun from koinōnéō (2841), to share in. Fellowship with, participation.

(I) Participation, communion, fellowship

Spiros Zodhiates, The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

ix. 1756. ἐνεργής energḗs; gen. energoús, masc.-fem., neut. energés, adj. from en (1722), in, and érgon (2041), work.

Referring to energy, i.e., engaged in work, capable of doing, active, powerful, effective

Spiros Zodhiates, The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

x. 1922. ἐπίγνωσις epignōsis; gen. epignōseōs, fem. noun from epiginōskō (1921), to recognize. Expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner. In Col. 2:2, meaning the discernment which comes in connection with possessing salvation which helps in determining the moral conduct (see Phil. 1:9 which refers to the knowledge which enables one to avoid error [cf. Rom. 10:2; 11:33; 2 Pet. 1:5]).

Spiros Zodhiates, The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

xi. Awareness of the blessings Philemon has in Christ.

xii. Holy Spirit, fruits of the Spirit: joy, love, patience, etc. Forgiveness.

xiii. Example: In verses 5 and 7, we see that Philemon refreshed the other believers. He loved them.

xiv. Example: Philemon's love provided joy and comfort to Paul (v. 7). Do I have that kind of love toward other believers?

xv. Paul: aging v9, led Onesimus to Christ v10

## NOTES:

xvi. His child in the faith. Paul was Onesimus' spiritual father.

Onesimus was from Colossae (Col. 4:9).

xvii. The church was brand new. More workers were needed to help spread the gospel. As a free man, Onesimus could help Paul in his ministry.

xviii. Matthew 9:37

xix. in love

xx. Do everything in Love 1 Cor. 16:14

xxi. His sovereignty. Onesimus "just happened" to run into Paul in Rome? No, God placed him there, and because of that Onesimus became a believer in Jesus.

xxii. He became a believer in Jesus. Whether or not he remains a slave, he is now free in Christ and forgiven of all his sins.

xxiii. Unforgiveness, not reconciling with others

xxiv. Paul sent Onesimus back to his rightful owner, Philemon. He is doing what is right. He is also being an example to Philemon to do the right thing. Ask yourself: Am I a Christian example for people to follow? Can others imitate me?

xxv. If Onesimus is no longer a slave, but a brother, and Philemon regards Paul as a partner in the work of the Gospel, then Philemon should accept Onesimus as an equal.

xxvi. 2844. κοινωνός koinōnós; gen. koinōnoú, masc.–fem., neut. koinōnón, adj. A partaker, partner, companion, associate

Spiros Zodhiates, The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

xxvii. His spiritual life. It appears Paul also led Philemon to believe in Christ.

xxviii. Paul offers to pay Onesimus' debt. Jesus paid our sin debt. We are forgiven in Christ Jesus, so should we forgive others.

xxix. Forgiveness, love, reconciliation, freedom, transformation.

xxx. Forgiving and accepting one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.



# 06

## The Process – In a Nutshell

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“*Keep your roots deep in Him,  
build your lives on Him,  
and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught.  
And be filled with thanksgiving.  
~Colossians 2:7 GNT*

## **Plant the Seeds (Observation/Read: What does it say?)**

### **Planting 101**

- Read repetitively
- Read smaller portions
- Use a dictionary
- Read different translations

### **Digging Deeper**

- Print a copy of the text and annotate
  - Mark lists
  - Mark key words and phrases
  - Mark repeated words
  - Note key themes
  - Note transition words (therefore, but, because, if/then, likewise)
  - Comparisons & contrasts
  - Note terms of conclusion (in conclusion, altogether)
- Ask the basic questions:
  - Who
  - What
  - When
  - Where

### **Master Gardner**

- Ask the Harder questions:
  - Why
  - How
- Outline the passage
- Themes - what are chapter and book themes?
- Determine the genre of the book

## **Grow Deep Roots (Interpretation/Reflect: What does it mean?)**

### **Growing 101**

- Look up cross references
- Seek original meaning
- Look for spiritual lessons or principles
- Ask: What does it tell me about God, Jesus or Holy Spirit?

### **Digging Deeper**

- Do a word study
- Verse map one of the scriptures (especially if it is particularly hard to understand)
- Look for connections to paragraphs before and after the passage you are studying

### **Master Gardner**

- Paraphrase the passage
- Identify how the text reflects the meta narrative of scripture (creation, fall, redemption, restoration)
- Consult trustworthy commentaries

## **Harvest the fruit (Application/Respond: What does it mean to me?)**

### **Harvesting 101**

Reflect

Pray

Ask: What character of God's attributes are revealed?

Worship

Thanksgiving

### **Digging Deeper**

Ask: What do I learn about myself in light of who God is? Journal about what you've learned

Confess anything Holy Spirit brings to mind

### **Master Gardner**

Ask: How should this truth change me?

Plan your obedience

Pray, asking God for strength to persevere

Remember to give yourself grace as you learn to study the Bible on your own. You don't have to do all the steps all the time. Perhaps you only have time to read the scriptures you are studying. If so, read the passage two times. Or, read it in two translations!

I'm a Word nerd. I love digging into the original languages and doing word studies. But if I don't have time for a deep dive, I tend to just use my dictionary.

Take your time. This plan is flexible. Except for ONE THING: Transformation! Read and heed God's Word, and He will transform you!



# Additional Resources



## Online Resources:

<https://www.biblegateway.com>

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/study.cfm>

<https://biblehub.com/>

<https://e-sword.net/>

## Books:

[Women of the Word by Jen Wilkin](#)

[How to Study Your Bible by Kay Arthur](#)

[Help! My Bible is Alive! By Nicole Unice](#)

## Websites for Bible Study:

[Kelli Garms](#)

[The Daily Grace Co.](#)

# About Ellen

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Ellen pens her stories from the Bayou Country of South Louisiana, where gumbo and crawfish reign and majestic oaks provide shade for weary sojourners. When not writing and mining the depths of God's Word, you can find Ellen digging in her flower beds, relaxing on the back porch, or traveling with her husband John. She and John have three awesome grandkids.

Ellen has loved writing since high school, but this passion lay dormant for many decades. When her mom passed away in 2011, Ellen felt the Lord urging her to write her stories. She shares these deep truths from God's Word in teachable, relatable and often funny tales that help women see God's faithfulness in their own lives.

Ellen is passionate about scripture and her desire is to see women dig into God's Word and thirst after Him with all their hearts. A teacher at heart, she also writes at [Ellen Chauvin \(dot\) com](http://EllenChauvin(dot)com), where she encourages her readers to soak in God's Word and sprout seeds of faith.

She has contributed to Deeper Waters, Word Nerd Wednesday, The Laundry Moms, Sweet to the Soul, The Consilium and The Message, a study magazine published annually by the women's department of WEGOM, a non denominational evangelistic organization in Nigeria.

Follow Ellen on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

The Lord GOD has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning He awakens—  
wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught. Isaiah 50:4 NRSV