

## Romans 6:12-23

### Lesson 16 Men Ministering to Men

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#### Romans 6:12-23 – TEXT by phrase.

A phrase breakdown of the scripture provides an **outline** of thoughts and ideas as presented by transitional words, logical subordinate ideas, and a method for understanding the text.

1. {12} *Therefore sin is not to reign in your mortal body*
  - a. *so that you obey its lusts,*
  - b. {13} *and do not go on presenting the parts of your body*
    - i. *to sin*
    - ii. *as instruments of unrighteousness;*
    - iii. *but present yourselves to God*
  - c. *as those who are alive from the dead,*
  - d. *and your body's parts as instruments of righteousness for God.*
  - e. {14} *For sin shall not be master over you,*
    - i. *for you are not under the Law*
    - ii. *but under grace.*

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2. {15} *What then?*
  - a. *Shall WE **sin** because*
    - i. *WE are not under law*
    - ii. *but under grace?*
  - b. *May it never be!*
  - c. {16} *Do YOU not know that*
    - i. *when YOU present YOURSELVES*
      1. *to someone as slaves*
      2. *for obedience,*
    - ii. *YOU are slaves of the one whom you obey,*
    - iii. *either of **sin** resulting in **death**,*
    - iv. *or of obedience resulting in righteousness?*

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3. {17} *But thanks be to God*
  - a. *that though YOU were slaves of **sin**,*
    - i. *YOU became obedient*
    - ii. *from the heart*
    - iii. *to that form of teaching*
    - iv. *to which YOU were committed,*
  - b. {18} *and having been freed from **sin**,*
  - c. *YOU became slaves of righteousness.*

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4. {19} *I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of YOUR flesh.*
  - a. *For just as YOU presented YOUR members*
    - i. *as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness,*
    - ii. *resulting in further lawlessness,*
  - b. *so now present YOUR members*

- i. *as slaves to righteousness,*
  - ii. *resulting in sanctification.*
- c. {20} *For when*
  - i. *YOU were slaves of **sin**,*
  - ii. *YOU were free in regard to righteousness.*
- d. {21} *Therefore what benefit*
  - i. *were YOU*
  - ii. *then deriving from the things*
  - iii. *of which YOU are now ashamed?*
- e. *For the outcome of those things is **death**.*
- f. {22} *But now having been*
  - i. *freed from **sin***
  - ii. *and enslaved to God,*
- g. *YOU derive your benefit,*
  - i. *resulting in sanctification,*
  - ii. *and the outcome, eternal life.*

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- 5. {23} *For the wages of **sin***
  - a. *is **death**,*
  - b. *but the free gift of God is*
    - i. *eternal life*
    - ii. *in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

## Main idea for this section of scripture

Romans 6:18 ***Having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.***

### Reflection

*Glad to be on the team*

August 12, 1965 Major League Baseball players went on strike. All the big stars of Baseball did not show up. All the fancy special bats were gone. All the super special athletes took their baseballs and went home. The minor leagues were continuing to play, but the majors did not. The minor leaguers were told if they crossed the picket line they would never play again. The owners simply said good enough we will have open tryouts. Anyone who knew how many bases on a diamond were invited to show up. Anyone who could stop a grounder or know what side of the plate was good came. Guys who were coaching little league one day were amazed to stand in the middle of a professional ball field.

They were fat, old, and inexperienced. The replacements would huff and puff around the bases with a resolve of death before dishonor. There were not many double plays and even fewer home runs. One manager of the Yankees said of one pitcher, "He throws so slow the radar gun wouldn't register. They came from every corner of America.

But did they have fun? The field was filled with men who simply loved the game. When the coach said run they would run until they dropped. They arrived before the park was open. They stayed late to help clean up the dugout. They were thankful to the laundry workers, and caterers, and even more to the fans. They did not see themselves as being a blessing to baseball but as baseball a blessing to them. They did not expect all the provided perks and were grateful for each. No arguing over poor pay. And they did not complain because their name was not sewn on their uniform. This was baseball.

They were happy just to be on the team. THAT IS GRACE. Just happy to be on the team!

### *We are not meant for this!*

First world war is fading from the collective memory of our culture. Started by the assassination of the King of Austria, it pulled all the nations of Europe and ultimately the United States into a war that was said to be the “war that would end all wars”. It was so terrible no one wanted to go to war again.

In the telling of the terribleness of the First World War, John Vannorsdall a soldier in the trench that stretched from Holland all the way through France. He describes the horror. He tells of grown men crying like babies, of constant and unending bursts of shells overhead, of once young men now reduced to mangled beyond recognition heaps of flesh laying in the mud between the lines. Millions of wooden planks were placed in the mud to raise the men from the muck but this only made it worse as they two sank into the slimy quagmire.

But he also said something that struck me in the reading of his account. He said in the huddle of mud and blood, In the middle of the insanity of war he said to his fellow soldier “We aren’t meant for this.”

As we together live our lives of quiet desperation, I echo his words, “We are not meant for this!” There must be something more.

### Introduction to the Scripture

More than 25% of our New Testament is made up of letters whose return address is “PAUL”. As was presented Sunday, the first pillar of discipleship is **submission to the Word. The Bible is Boss of us.** But these words are much more than their official authority. The Word of God, here in Romans was giving to the Roman church something more than a new set of rules to live by. It was more than themselves. These words give us a vision of what it means to be a Christian.

Paul had never been to Rome. He had heard stories of those who were in the Church in Rome. He learned of the problems of the church, of the factions, of the lack of unity, and the lack of understanding of what Christianity was all about. Paul could not say to the Roman church, “Trust me” because they did not know him. So this letter is written to make a logical case of **how shall you then live.**

What is Christianity to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Christianity is more than a gut feeling. For many, religion was a matter of intuition or opinion. You could well call it a “heartbeat hunch.” In a recent survey of churchgoers, a majority said that the church was very important, but a majority of the majority said the church should never try and influence their thoughts or behavior. The majority of the majority would exclaim, “The church provides a great atmosphere, great songs, inspiring words, good air conditioning, semi-comfortable chairs, but when it is over, but when I go home my religion becomes nothing more than a gravitational pull of myself.”

### **The majority of Christians see religion as a benign confirmation of our own best instincts.**

The church in Rome to which Paul was writing most likely did not like what he had to say. Paul had a darker and more complicated view of God and human beings. He knew there4 is a hidden battle raging within each of us. For some it is a battle between despair and hope, for others between the desires of the self and the needs of others, For others in the church the struggle was between sexual impurity and faithfulness. Paul will tells us all about his personal struggle in the next chapter.

In the middle of the struggle, we need more than a hunch. When the battle is most fierce, and life is most difficult we need more than a still small voice of our own conscience. Paul sees more than the battle. Paul has

lived in times where prison or worse was the only alternative. For Paul, life was more than birth and death it was about eternity.

Paul in his writing to the church in Rome was not trying to convert anyone. He assumed, even if the people in the church were not all on the same page, each had found something more than religion and had found faith. This letter is about “How shall we then live.”

**True faith doesn't solve every personal problem. It tells us what we are meant for.**

## Commentary - Romans 6:12-23

We have in previous lessons grasped the idea of justification by faith. Justification is how believers can be put right with God. With it comes a label of righteousness. Here in Romans 6:12-23, he continues to address the SIN problem in Christians. There seems to be an act of God that goes beyond justification. Paul goes on to speak about sanctification by faith (how believers can live lives of practical holiness).

In some of the other New Testament writings, ‘sanctify’ means ‘declare holy’, in much the same way as ‘justify’ means ‘declare righteous’. Sanctification, like justification, denotes what God does for believers on the basis of Christ’s death (Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Peter 1:2). The main emphasis in Romans, however, is on the practical expression of sanctification. Since God has declared believers righteous and holy, they must be righteous and holy in practice (Romans 6:19, Romans 6:22).

The following outline will introduce some of the ideas and words that Paul uses in developing this subject.

1. 12-14 *For sin shall not be master over you*
2. 15-16 *YOU are slaves of the one whom you obey,*
3. 17-18 *Freed from sin,*
4. 19-22 *YOU became slaves of righteousness.*
5. 23 *The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

Remember from last week we tried to answer the question “Do Christians Sin.” This question was the direct answer to Romans 6:1. That verse was asking the question “Grace covers all sin so let’s sin a lot. God will need to heap His grace upon us and that will make Him look good.”

**Tonight, we will try to discover what we were meant for!**

### 1. Sin is not your master - Romans 6:12-14

*{12} Therefore sin is not to reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, {13} and do not go on presenting the parts of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and your body's parts as instruments of righteousness for God. {14} For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under the Law but under grace.*

The first section of our lesson is about the absolute answer to who is in control. Paul often said “Therefore” to conclude one argument and begin another and here is another example of this technique. When we see the word, therefore, we need to ask ourselves, what is the therefore there for? Paul is saying look carefully at what I have just written. **It is because of the previous that the current is possible.** Grace shed in our lives in justification and baptism changed our relationship with God. You are different. You must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God 6:11. **It is only in this consideration; this positional certainty does verse 12 make**

sense. The more we consider our newness of life, the more we consider before we act, the more we are not overcome by sin, the easier it becomes.

**Do not let sin overpower you.** If you are dead to sin it cannot overpower you. Sin is not a popular topic in today's churches. We don't like to hear about the ways we fall and fail. We do not want anyone reminding us that **our self-centered pursuit of what pleases us is not always pleasing to God.** And when we do talk about sin it is always about someone else! That other person's sin is always worse than our own. Pointing at someone else is much easier than looking at our own lives. Romans 3:23 says we are all guilty and fall short of the expectations of God. We all need grace. And for that matter, as stated in 6:11, we continually need even more grace.

But here Paul assures us with this command, it is possible to live without sin overpowering you. Paul states that we need to keep choosing grace as we seek to become more and more like Jesus. Consider your choice. And that choice is to let sin overpower you or not. **Whatever we obey, rules.** If we obey sin, it leads to death, but if we obey God, it leads to life. And this life is not just a struggle to get through the day one day at a time, or even keep calm and carry one, or a just-barely-getting-by life. Obedience to God brings us freedom for all eternity and forever and it begins now.

## 2. Slaves of the one whom you obey, Romans 6:15-16

*{15} What then? Shall WE sin because WE are not under law but under grace? May it never be! {16} Do YOU not know that when YOU present YOURSELVES to someone as slaves for obedience, YOU are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?*

*a. The second question is not like the first- Romans 6:15*

Because Christians are not under the law as the means for salvation, and because grace covers all sin, Paul again asked a previous question. "Is sin okay for the Christian?" These Christians thought release from the law made sin irrelevant and, therefore, acceptable to God.

**"What then? Shall WE sin because WE are not under law but under grace?** This is again dealing with Christian sin, the argument was that people thought sin didn't matter, so they could sin from time to time. In Paul's original writing in Greek, the word sin in this text is *'hamartesomen'* (aorist, active) which seems to stress 'sin' as viewed as individual acts of rebellion, rather than a 'way of life' sinning. It appears the question in Romans 6:1 is different than the one in Romans 6:15. Therefore the question was that if a 'life of sin' is not acceptable, what about planned or occasional sinning? **Since the demand for flawlessness has been removed as the way to acquittal before God does this mean occasional sinning is quite acceptable?"**

Roy Lanier offers a good observation. He said, "Since we are not under law, may we 'take a night off occasionally?' Does grace allow occasional sin?" These two questions are still significant for the present time for some believe that it is okay to take a flight to fancy and dance with sin. Grace is sometimes viewed as a license to commit sin. Paul responded to this type of thinking by saying, God forbid.

*b. Obey as Slaves - Romans 6:16*

In our Western society the very mention of the word **SLAVE** recalls terribleness. The very idea that one person can own the other is abhorrent to our minds. Millions of terrible things have been done and justified by the idea that it was beneficial to the growth of American economies at the beginning of our country. But without a doubt in my mind that all slavery, the enslavement of one man to another is terrible. Nevertheless, I would submit to you there is one kind of slavery that is the heart of Romans 6:12-23

It may be a harsh word, but it is the one that Paul chose. Some would water it down for Western culture to the word servant. But to the Roman church, it would have a great impact. Over half of the population of the city were slaves. These conquered peoples had no choice but to serve. It was death or service. And stretching the

metaphor, the idea Paul was making was that we are all slaves. Slaves to sin, or slaves to God. It all depended upon a choice.

This reminds us of the fact that each person who is accountable makes a choice. Either we present our bodies to sin and engage in unrighteous acts, or we present our bodies as a weapon for God to use in the spiritual war that is being fought. We willingly or unwillingly become a slave to God or the devil. Because someone owns us (God or the devil), humanity has nothing about which to boast. **Our slavery depends upon who we choose to serve.**

### 3. *Freed from sin* Romans 6:17-18

*{17} But thanks be to God that though YOU were slaves of sin, YOU became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which YOU were committed, {18} and having been freed from sin, YOU became slaves of righteousness.*

#### A. *From the heart*

No one can become a Christian without being obedient, and after doing God's will Christians must continually obey God.

This verse should be read like this: But thanks be to God that, although you were the servants of sin, nevertheless you have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine that was delivered unto you. The apostle does not thank God that they were sinners, but they had considered and chosen to obey the Gospel. The Hebrew phrase, Isaiah 12:1, is the same as that of the apostle here: In that day thou shalt say, I will praise thee, for thou were angry with me: that is, although thou were angry with me, thou hast turned away thy wrath.

The teaching of the Roman church was primarily from the telling of the story of Jesus and the Jewish scriptures. It is remarkable the response was so heartfelt that it delivered them. God's grace was sufficient for the need of the Roman Church and for us.

#### B. *Romans 6:18 -Manumission*

Emancipation, liberation, enfranchisement, freeing, freedom, salvation, independence, deliverance, independence, autonomy, and sovereignty. John 8:32,33 ***To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."*** Romans 6:18 is translated in the NASB as freed. And Thayer points out its meaning as 1) to make free or 2) set at liberty from the dominion of sin. The ancient ceremony of manumission was one in which the slave's chains were cut by a blacksmith, an anvil and chisel were used to cut the chains. The slave's legal status was thereby changed. It was a ceremony of movement from one condition to another.

#### C. *Two ways that theologians have looked at this scripture.*

There is a divergence of theology between the ideas that this verse is a look back to the freedom of sin in justification or a look forward to something else.

The past-looking group see this as an independence from sin is the haunting of the past and not of the current. This group holds to the idea that man can never be totally free from the curse of Adam. That Christians are subject to and will constantly be subject to current or future sin.

The second theological stand is that this scripture is about freedom from the curse of Adam, or from the proclivity to sin. That it is possible to live a life defined by God.

#### 4. 19-22 YOU became slaves of righteousness.

*{19} I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of YOUR flesh. For just as YOU presented OUR members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present YOUR members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. {20} For when YOU were slaves of sin, YOU were free in regard to righteousness. {21} Therefore what benefit were YOU then deriving from the things of which YOU are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. {22} But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, YOU derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.*

##### A. V19 Sanctification

Here we have a **new** word. It is not heard very often in the line to get coffee at Starbucks. It is certainly a word we should be hearing from the pulpit, but not so much anymore. It is one of those churchy words we use very seldom if at all: **SANCTIFICATION**.

The biblical definition of sanctification is: ***to be set apart for God's glory. To become separated from the slavery of sin and become separated for God's purpose.***

Freedom from sin in his verse is a work of God, much like justification it is an additional label which burns the inner nature by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our slavery to righteousness is stated in Romans 6:19 ***I am speaking of human terms because of the weakness of the flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.***

The spiritual logic here infers this progression:

- 1) *There are those who need simple logic or in human terms. This is because of a current state of grace which is a hindrance.*
- 2) *The hindrance is called "weakness of the flesh"*
- 3) *You have presented your member with impurity and to lawlessness. (members: melos; of bodies given up to criminal intercourse, because they are members belonging to the harlot's body)*
- 4) *This state of impurity and lawlessness causes additional lawlessness.*
- 5) *There is a call to a new affinity, a new presentation of our members.*
- 6) *The new affinity is to slavery to righteousness.*
- 7) *The result is sanctification or becoming holy.*

These words plead for personal righteousness on the part of every person who had been justified. Paul makes a command to do something. Something which in Hebrews 12:14 says, ***Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which NO ONE will see the Lord.***

##### *Freedom or manumission*

Paul was using an illustration of manumission or freedom of a slave, but he justified it on the basis that the weakness of people required such a dramatic and familiar comparison. Just as it was unthinkable that a **manumitted** slave would keep on working for his old master, so it is unthinkable that a Christian would go on serving Satan after being delivered from the bondage of sin through his faith and obedience of the gospel.

To paraphrase this verse, without illustration, Paul was simply telling the disciples that just as they once used all their time and resources in committing impure and lawless deeds, now they should use all their energies in doing the things that honor God and bless humanity.

Wesley states: **In all reason, therefore, you ought now to be free from unrighteousness; to be as uniform and zealous in serving God as you were in serving the devil.** And further, he wrote: **Going on to perfection was a life-long process of Christian discipleship.**

We do what is dictated by our master. Every master has specific expectations. We do what is proper and correct, to the effect that the servant of one master is not expected to obey the commands of another. The Christians whom Paul addressed were formerly slaves of sin and were at that time regarded as free of performing any righteous duty according to the law, but now the disciple is a slave of a new master, Christ. To continue to do the will of the former master would be an incongruous thing, wholly abhorrent and repugnant to a sense of what is right and proper.

*B. Romans 6:21 What benefit*

We have to look at sin through an objective lens. What good is it? What does sin produce? Sin's product is fruit that we are ashamed of and all lead to death. There are two fold result of sin:

- 1) Fruit that brings shame, humiliation, and disgrace. God can and does forgive, God can does forget your sins but they still have a result that is not wiped out by justification. All the things you did before are gone in God's heart but the effects of them still haunt us. We know in our hearts that we are forgiven of all the dastardly deeds of our previous life but others seldom forgive as easily.
- 2) The ultimate result of our sin is death. Death is the ultimate sentence to sin. We all will die. It is the direct result of sin in our lives. And all have sinned and fall short of the will of God

Paul is reminding the Roman church that "obedience" is essential to slavery, and that righteousness is basically a continual and constant adherence to the obedience to God.

We have been freed from the dominion of sin. We are now servants of a new master. We are labeled as righteous. Now we are to produce fruit, fruit of holiness. The text does not specifically say this fruit is the result of holiness or leads to holiness.

Whether the fruit is the result of holiness or leads to holiness, the end, the final result, the ultimate consequence is eternal life. As Justification ends the sentence of eternal death, the fruit of holiness provides an eternal reward.

The problem arises as to the immediacy of the penalty and the reward. When we sin, prior to justification, do we deserve death? Why does not God just throw and bolt of lightning and kill us the first time we sin? The sentence is made at a point of accountability with the conscious realization of what sin is and disobeying. God delays the penalty, giving each of us the opportunity to avail ourselves of the remedy of Jesus. Nevertheless, we are aware of the worldly effects of our willful disobedience. People are hurt and with that pain comes lasting effects. Are Christians exempt from the effects of sin? I think not, they are the fruit of unrighteousness.

This rendering of 6:22 raises the question of what then is the reward and effect of sanctification? Is being labeled as righteous, the same type of thing to be labeled sanctified? Is the act of God in Justification identical to the act of God to sanctify us?

It is "Just Larry's" opinion: **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Triune Godhead, that He is ever present and efficiently active in and with the Church of Christ, convincing the world of sin, regenerating those who repent and believe, sanctifying believers, and guiding into all truth as it is in Jesus.**

**Further I believe that original sin, or depravity, is that corruption of the nature of all the offspring of Adam by reason of which everyone is very far gone from original righteousness or the pure state of our first parents at the time of their creation, is averse to God, is without spiritual life, and inclined to evil, and that continually.**

**And I also believe that original sin continues to exist with the new life of the regenerate until the heart is fully cleansed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit.**

**And lastly, I believe that sanctification is the work of God that transforms believers into the likeness of Christ. It is wrought by God's grace through the Holy Spirit in initial sanctification, or regeneration (simultaneous with justification), entire sanctification, and the continued perfecting work of the Holy Spirit culminating in glorification. In glorification, we are fully conformed to the image of the Son. Entire sanctification is that act of God, subsequent to regeneration, by which believers are made free from original sin, or depravity, and brought into a state of entire devotement to God, and the holy obedience of love made perfect. It is wrought by the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit, and comprehends in one experience the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding, indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, empowering the believer for life and service. Sanctification is provided by the blood of Jesus, is wrought instantaneously by grace through faith, preceded by entire consecration; and to this work and state of grace the Holy Spirit bears witness.**

This experience is also known by various terms representing its different phases, such as "Christian perfection," "perfect love," "heart unity," "the baptism with or infilling of the Holy Spirit," "the fullness of the blessing," "Initial Sanctification", "Crisis Sanctification", "Progressive Sanctification", "Entire Sanctification", "heart holiness", "entire consecration", "Living Sacrafice", and "Christian holiness".

#### 5. *Romans 6:23 The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*

{23} For the wages of **sin** is **death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Satan pays his servants. You get your wages. Serve him well, give him your best, you will be rewarded. The wages of sin is death. You can't escape them if you continue in sin. But in contrast to the wages is the gift of God. Not the wages of God, because we can't earn eternal life.

So we have the extreme contrast. The wages of sin, the life after the flesh, it ends in death. The gift of God, the life after the Spirit, ends in eternal life. Every man is in one of two categories: either a servant of sin, or a servant of God. Using my body as an instrument of sin or yielding my body as an instrument for God to use for His glory.

### Main thought to take out of study tonight

Romans 6:15-23 is about how believers must choose to obey God rather than sin. They are slaves to whom they obey, either sin leading to death or obedience leading to righteousness. They have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

### Conclusion

As we move next week into chapters 7 and 8, they are chapters of extreme contrast. Chapter 7 will take us into the depths of despair. It is Paul seeing the ideal in this section and how he struggles with keeping the ideal. He acknowledges the ideal, and he tries to keep the ideal in his own strength and will, he struggles with the pain and defeat as he fails again and again. But then chapter 8 will take you out of the despair as we see God's plan for victory for His believer and the provisions that God has made for me to achieve and attain the ideal. Just like us, try first yourself.

It has been said many times; "If it doesn't work, look at the instructions." And so with the things of the Spirit, it seems we have to try it our way first. And when we experience that failure and that frustration of our way we

must learn to find God's way, living that glorious life of victory that He has provided for us through His Holy Spirit.

## HOMEWORK

- Try to memorize Romans 6:23: **FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, BUT THE FREE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS AS OUR LORD.**
- At least once this week read Chapters 7 and 8 together.

### Method for the development of study

1. Read the entire section looking for hinge point words: therefore, for, now, even so, ect.. This gives me an understanding of the flow of the area studied.
2. I re-read the portion to discover if there are any repeated words and if any of these words need definition.
3. I create a complete phrase study. A phrase study is to examine the selected scripture and determine the hierarchy of the thoughts as written by the author. This study reveals itself as an outline.
4. I use the following questions to help me to understand.
  - a. "What is the writer trying to say to me?"
  - b. "Are there parallels to the time it was written and now?"
  - c. "What is the context or larger picture?"
  - d. "If I had to explain this portion in a single sentence, what would I say?"
5. Reflection is next. I put all aside and move away from distractions and "I just sit and think." I bring to mind past experiences that have changed my life over the years and try to understand the why of them. I remember the scripture to be studied and how they could have helped in my past wanderings.
6. After all the previous steps I consult with as many resources as I can to determine what others have written. I usually look for the oldest references first and move to the more recent.

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