

Growing Deeper

The Good Book: Unlocking the Good News of Scripture

Week Two: *Context is King*

Romans 11:25-27

Spend FIFTEEN–Day One

1. To really understand what context entails, read the definition [here](#).
2. Take a moment and read [Romans 11:25-27](#). What do you believe Paul is trying to say? What do you specifically think he's saying about the Jewish people? Write this down as we will use this answer later.
3. Now reread the same text and keep in mind that Paul is writing to the Christian church in Rome. Does this change how you interpret Paul's message in these verses? Does it seem strange he would talk to the Christian church about how the Jewish people are saved?
4. To add another layer of context, read [Romans 3:21-29](#) (or all of [Chapter 3](#) if time allows). According to Paul, who is righteous?
5. Paul makes it pretty clear that all have fallen short and need Jesus. [Read Romans 11:11-24](#). What else do we have in common other than our sin?
6. Take the final minutes of your FIFTEEN and write in your journal about what you believe Paul is saying in these verses, keeping in mind everything we have discussed today. Compare it with what you initially thought was the message before you gained more context. Pray that God will show you new layers of his wisdom this week as we unpack the nuances of context.

Spend FIFTEEN–Day Two

7. Begin your FIFTEEN by reading Jeremiah 29:11. If you're familiar with this verse, where have you heard it before?
8. What are three emotions this verse evokes for you?
9. Graduations are a common time when this verse is used, signifying hope for the future. Take a moment and read through [Jeremiah 29:1-11](#). Where were the Israelites when they received this message from God?
10. Now read Jeremiah 24:4-7. Who specifically was exiled and why?

11. The Israelites were essentially refugees living in a foreign land, forced to assimilate into their captors' culture. Keeping this in mind, does this change the emotions that are evoked for you?
12. Now take a moment and read the remainder of Jeremiah 29. What is God's sentiment in the remainder of this chapter?
13. This verse is a moment of comfort provided in the midst of a hard chapter in Israel's history. While we typically use this verse at the beginning of a journey, God sent these words to his people as a hopeful reminder that he has not forgotten them in the midst of their struggle. He also pairs this sentiment with prepping them for the long road ahead. Finish your FIFTEEN by spending some time praising God for his Word always having perfect timing.

Spend FIFTEEN—Day Three

14. Begin your FIFTEEN by reading Matthew 27:45-51 and take note of each event that happens in these verses.
15. For our purposes, we will be discussing the significance of the veil being torn in the temple, a detail that can be easily missed among all of the emotional events in these verses. To gather context to understand the deep importance of the torn veil, turn to the Old Testament and read Exodus 25:8-9. What was the purpose of the tabernacle?
16. What happened in the tabernacle (also referred to as the Tent of Meeting)? Read Exodus 29:42-45.
17. Now take a moment and read the following verses: Exodus 26:31-33 and Hebrews 9:3-4. What was the purpose of the veil?
18. What was required of the Israelites once they were in the tabernacle, and who was allowed in?
19. When was the last time you took a moment to meet with God? How is it different than the way in which the Israelites met him?
20. When Jesus died on the cross, the literal barrier between us and God was torn. He forever changed the way we can approach God because we are covered in the blood of his sacrifice. Thanks to Jesus, we can meet with God any way, anytime, anywhere. Spend the remainder of your FIFTEEN relishing the moment with God and thank him for meeting you where you are today.

Spend FIFTEEN—Day Four

21. Spend the beginning of your FIFTEEN reading Matthew 15:10-20. What was the initial response of the disciples to this parable?

22. What makes you unclean in the parable?
23. What Jesus is saying is actually very radical for the time—the disciples and Pharisees were a strong indicator of this. To gain more context and understanding of why the disciples and Pharisees reacted the way they did and why the message was so striking, take a moment and glance through the extensive dietary laws in Leviticus 11. What jumps out at you about this list?
24. Some of the animals on this list are (from our 2021 perspective) obviously wise to abstain from for health reasons (i.e. birds and rodents). However, other animals on this list are part of a typical modern diet, such as shellfish and pork. Other than practical reasons, why may God give these dietary laws to his people in Leviticus 11?
25. Is it easier to control your outward actions (such as what you eat) or the thoughts from your heart?
26. Because of our sinful nature, we're unable to perfectly uphold any law set by God. According to Acts 15:8-9, how are we made clean?
27. Spend the remainder of your FIFTEEN thanking God for sending his Son to save us even though he knew we were unable to follow his laws perfectly.

Spend FIFTEEN—Day Five

28. Begin your FIFTEEN by reading Matthew 6:9-13. This passage of Scripture contains The Lord's Prayer. It is called The Lord's Prayer because Jesus was the first to pray it. For many Christians, this prayer is used routinely in corporate worship. Does the prayer have significance for you, or can it often become rote while praying? Why or why not?
29. What are some of the steps you can take to have greater focus on the words while you are praying it?
30. How might understanding the context of where the prayer originated help give the prayer greater meaning?
31. Read Matthew 6:5-8 to see what Jesus was talking about before he prayed The Lord's Prayer. What is the first statement Jesus makes about prayer?
32. Why did Jesus introduce The Lord's Prayer? (v. 9)
33. If The Lord's Prayer is more than just a prayer we pray together, but actually a model for our prayers, what lessons should we take from the prayer to shape our own prayers?

34. As you end your final FIFTEEN this week in prayer, pray as you feel led, then end with The Lord's Prayer.