Things to consider when working with the text of the Greek New Testament

Check my suggestions for "[Best Resources for Original Language Bible Study](#)." In addition to your Bible software, note the lexical and grammatical aids I also suggest you use. It will be most helpful if you can work with the Greek in comparison with a variety of English translations, and I suggest at least having the following:

- For a more literal translation, use the **NASB**.
- For a more balanced translation, use the **NRSV** (or the TNIV or REB).
- For a more dynamic translation, use the **GNT=TEV** or **NLT** or **CEV** or *The Message*.
- Because of its venerable tradition and familiar wording and because its underlying Greek New Testament is based on the *Textus Receptus*, use the *KJV*.
- For its useful text notes, use the **NET** (preferably the NET Bible Diglot)
- Recommended but not required: For insight into what the Latin Vulgate renders, use the Douay-Rheims translation.

Some things to check in either the Greek or English translations:

- In the English translations, are there any obvious or striking omissions / additions? If so, is there a text critical issue? Otherwise, what is causing the difference?
- Are there any significant differences between the more literal and the more dynamic versions?
- Pay attention to connectives. (καὶ, δὲ, γὰρ, ἀλλὰ, οὕτως, τότε, οὖν, τε καὶ, ὅτι, μὲν… δὲ, etc.) How do they relate clauses to what precedes or follows?
- Are there are any key terms or special vocabulary? Are these words/concepts favorites of this author or unusual occurrences? Are there 'technical' religious terms that need clarification?
- Keep in mind that the original Greek texts did not have punctuation, and good Greek composition tends to longer sentences than preferred in English. Also note that some declarative sentences might be taken as questions.
- With synoptic texts, check the wording in the parallels for differences and points of emphasis.
- Is the text quoting Scripture? If so compare it to the LXX and the Hebrew Masoretic Text to note similarities and differences.
- Greek often likes to work with chiastic structures. Note the external 'frames' and the point of emphasis in the middle.
- Check the tense and mood of the verbs. How are they rendered in the English versions? Especially check for (circumstantial) participles and the range of translation that is possible. Also check for infinitive clauses remembering that both the subject and object of the infinitive are accusative case.
- Pay attention to subordinate clauses. Is it a matter of how a circumstantial participle is translated? (If so, what other possibilities for translation are there?) Is the Greek using a ἵνα, ὅπως, or ὥστε? If so, note the range of meanings they can have. Also remember that ὅτι can introduce a direct or indirect quote or a causal clause.
- Note cases of pro/nouns, especially pro/nouns in the Genitive and the range of meanings it can have.
- Check the prepositions and note possible range of meanings.
- If the text is a question, note whether the Greek uses an indicative or subjunctive mood verb. If it is a negative question, does the Greek introduce it with an οὐ or a μὴ?
- If there is a conditional clause, what type of condition is it? (Simple, future general, present general, contrary-to-fact) What are the implications?
- If there is a command, note the tense and force of the Greek imperative.
- In general, Greek prefers a VERB > SUBJECT > OBJECT order. If something other than the verb is the first element in a sentence, is it there simply for background or for emphasis?
- Check the NET Bible notes!