

Lesson 3 – How to Study the Bible
Learning How to Use Bible Tools
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Introduction: There are many Bible tools that can speed up the study process.

- A. It is important to remember that our goal is to search the scriptures and see for ourselves what God wants.
 - 1. It is important that we understand the limits of a Bible tool. How many have used religious leaders and commentaries as a short-cut that actually closed their opportunity to understand scriptures? (**Jn 7:46-49**)
 - 2. We will examine various aides and how to use them. We will also examine the limitations of these tools
- B. The most important step you should be continually taking is regular Bible reading!
 - 1. For those who wish to listen to the Bible read there are many good audio recording available for that purpose. You could play the Bible while driving or doing other activities.
 - 2. Bible reading allows you to become more familiar with context and the overall theme of the Bible. (**1 Tim 4:13**)
 - 3. While reading you should take note of words and passages that you do not understand and develop a process that will allow you to study further.

I. How to use different translations

- A. Is a given translation accurate?

“Some principles for determining the worthiness of a particular version of the Scriptures are timely: (1) Not every translation is correct, and no translator is inspired of God to do his work. (Any version claiming inspiration or special guidance for the translator bears watching.) (2) If translation is done accurately, we do not lose the original meaning, as some claim, but rather gain it! (3) Though clear, understandable English is desirable, it should not be gained at the expense of truth, as has been done with most modern versions. What good is clear, understandable English that does not translate the truth? (4) All words added as thought necessary by the translator should be italicized to signal their addition. This is violated by the Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible. (5) Group translations are much more preferable than one-man translations because the one man would be more likely to impose his ideas, doctrines, and commentary upon his work, not being restrained or checked by the group. Most modern versions are the work of one man-for example, Today's English Version (Good News for Modern Man) and The Living Bible.” - Bobby Graham – A Study of Translations

- B. Does the translation indicate where they added words that were not in the original language?

One of the major faults of this version is its omission of italics whenever words have been supplied by the translators, thus giving no indication of where the sacred text spoke or where the translators spoke. - Bobby Graham – A Study of Translations, The RSV

- C. Does the translation show a doctrinal bias?

The plan of salvation could not be learned from this perversion. It speaks of Abraham finding favor with God by faith alone in Rom. 4:12; says that trusting (faith) is a gift from God in Eph. 2:8; words Rom. 8:3 thusly: "We aren't saved from sin's grasps by knowing the commandments of God, because we can't and don't keep them"; and Rom. 6:3 like this: "We became Christians and were baptized." - Bobby Graham – A Study of Translations, TLB

- D. You should compare versions and place weight upon the more accurate versions.

When there is a conflict in translations, you should use word studies to resolve any questions.

II. How to do a Bible word study (Material from another Author)

- A. Using Strong's Concordance as a starting point

1. English words today may have meanings that are foreign to the meaning of the original Bible words.
 2. The use of some modern versions may misdirect the student away from the original meaning of the word.
 3. Most Bible versions use transliterated words (like “apostle,” or “baptism”) which are not translated.
 4. Word studies help to answer religious error (consider “Easter” in Acts 12:4)
 5. Words studies help us avoid making the wrong point based upon an assumed meaning of an English word (consider “peculiar” in 1 Pet. 2:9; or “scarcely” in 1 Peter 4:18)
- B. **Step 1:** Locate the English word you want to study using the King James Version.
Example: “Destroy” in Acts 6:14
- C. **Step 2:** Look up the English word in Strong’s Concordance. Go down the list to the Bible verse that contains the word you want to study. Take note of the number to the right of the entry. Example: of Nazareth shall *d* this place...Acts 6:14 2647
- D. **Step 3:** Go to the Hebrew/Greek dictionaries in the back of Strong’s Concordance and locate the number. Example: In the Greek Dictionary go to number 2647
- E. **Step 4:** After you find your number, examine the five pieces of information to the right of the number you have selected.
1. Example: 2647. καταλύω kataluō, *kat-al-oo’-o*; from 2596 and 3089; to *loosen down (disintegrate)*, i.e. (by impl.) to *demolish* (lit. or fig.); spec. [comp. 2646] to *halt* for the night :- *destroy, dissolve, be guest, lodge, come to nought, overthrow, throw down.*
- F. **Step 5:** Write down Strong’s definition of the original Hebrew/Greek word you are studying. Compare Strong’s definition with others who use Strong’s numbers.
Example: 2647. *loosen down, disintegrate, demolish, halt* (Strong’s)
 2647. (1) *to unloose, to destroy, (2) to render void, (3) to pass the night, lodge* (Berry)
 2647. *kata, “down,” intensive, “to destroy utterly, to overthrow completely”* (Vine)
- G. **Step 6:** Write down the different English words used to translate the original Hebrew/Greek word. Example (#2647):
1. destroy [Mt.5:17(2x); 26:61; 27:40; Mk.14:58; 15:29; Acts 6:14; Rom14:20; Gal 2:18]
 2. dissolve [2 Cor.5:1]
 3. be guest [Lk.19:7]
 4. lodge [Lk.9:12]
 5. come to nought [Acts 5:38]
 6. overthrow [Acts 5:39]
 7. throw down [Mt.27:42; Mk.13:2; Lk. 21:6]
- H. **Step 7:** Compare the meaning of the English word in your Bible with the original definition of the Hebrew/Greek word. Example: “Church” – is it a building? “Baptism” – is it sprinkling? “Pastor” – is he the preacher?