

Bible Study Tools

Studying your bible is a very important part of your faith walk.

Here are some resources and tips to help you better understand what you read so you can have a deeper and more thorough understanding of God's word.

Chase A Verse

A good way to get a better and deeper understanding is by doing what I call chasing a verse.

Many bibles have a column of numbers running through the middle of the page. This is called a cross reference. If you will look at the small numbers you will see they coincide with the passages on the page.

These are followed by verses. If you look those verses up you will see they are related to the original verse. You can also check out the cross reference verses related to the verses you just looked up when you cross referenced the original verse.

By "chasing" these verses you can gain a broader understanding of the passage you are reading.

Another way to improve and expand your understanding is by looking up the words in the verses you are studying.

There are several good resources to help you do that.

Blue Letter Bible - www.blb.org is a website that has several versions of the bible you can read for free.

It also has a feature that allows you to look at a word's original Greek, complete with definition. (To access this feature, you must choose the King James Version (KJV) bible translation.)

To use this tool begin by using their search box to look up the word or verse you are interested in. Look at the middle of the upper part of the page and you will see a box marked Strong's. If you click on it then it will put a blue number by each word. Clicking that blue number takes you to the original Greek word and definition.

Another feature Blue Letter Bible has is a search box so you can look up words and it will show you every time that word is in the bible. It does differentiate between tenses so be sure to look at all of those too; for instance run and ran are considered two different things.

A good resource for studying a particular subject you are interested in is by consulting the Nave's Topical Index (also called Nave's Topical Bible) <https://www.naves-topical-bible.com/> (also available as a printed book). It is arranged by topic (also known as subject), and gives you virtually all the information from the bible on that topic. It is arranged similar to an encyclopedia.

Another thing you can do is read bible commentaries.

There are hundreds, maybe even thousands out there. Pray and ask the Lord to help you find the right one. There are some really good ones, and some really not good ones.

Be sure to compare what they say to Scripture. While they might be giving facts, they might also be giving opinion. Because they are written by men, what they say should be taken as secondary to what the Bible says.

There are books written to help you.

They have been written by people like Tony Evans, Priscilla Shirer, Michael Youssef, Ravi Zacharias, Alastair Begg, Lisa Tyrkeurst, Charles Stanley, and many others.

Pray hard about these books before you read them.

Go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to show you which books you should read, which you should avoid. Ask Him to lead you to good, bible grounded authors who will teach you the Truth of God's word.

Pray while you are reading the books. Pray you would understand what they are saying and that you would have the wisdom to apply it to your life.

A word of caution: bible commentaries and other books can be an invaluable resource to help you. Their authors have put in many hours of prayer and study before, and while, writing them. Just remember they are written by men and do not carry the same weight as Scripture. Their explanations may be spot-on, but always compare what they say with what Scripture says. When there is a conflict, ALWAYS go with what the bible says. This is especially important when what the bible says conflicts with what culture says. The world's opinions and attitudes change, God's word does not but it does ALWAYS take precedence, even if it seems outdated, out-of-touch or stuffy. There's no such thing as a "new and improved" understanding. God is the same today, yesterday, and forever. So is His word. Tread cautiously and doubtfully around someone who might tell you otherwise, either in person or in teaching.

Join a Bible Study

There are bible studies held in various churches throughout the country (and world). Call around or ask a friend to help you find one that fits your schedule.

There are online bible studies.

Bible studies are great opportunities to talk to other believers and fellowship while you learn.

Once again, be careful and prayerful about it before joining and while reading it's content.

Here's the great thing about continued Bible Study:

Over time as you look back you will start to see a pattern. You learned this thing and that thing and they are connected in this way, and that thing over there is connected in another way. It's like a spider web with lines connecting the pieces in various ways. Over time as you read and study more, the pieces will fill in and it will go from looking like a spider web more into a solid sheet of knowledge. This sheet of knowledge is a foundation on which to build an even deeper knowledge of who God is and how much He loves you!

Whatever study methods you use, understand you might not learn "big" things at first. It might seem slow going.

That's okay.

There's no timetable.

It's not a race.

It's more about steady effort than anything else.

Bible Study takes time. It takes effort.

There will be set backs and there will be times you don't want to do it, but with time and commitment you will begin to see and understand things on a much deeper level.

This new understanding will draw you in closer to Lord and strengthen your relationship with Him, which is what bible study is all about, so don't give up; just keep going!