**Bible Study Resources**

This guide will help you find the resources you need to take your study of God’s word to the next level. Always remember that the best resource you have is the Word of God itself! Reading the bible and relying on the Holy Spirit to illuminate the truths that it contains is the most helpful way to study the bible. However, there are many additional resources that are very helpful in digging out some deeper truths that we may not be able to uncover otherwise.

**What Version of the Bible Should I Get?**

The first question you have to ask yourself is which version of the Bible do I want to read? For many years this wasn’t even a question, people just automatically assumed that the KJV was the best one to use. But in recent decades, many great translations have been introduced that are worth considering.

There are two basic methods of translating the scriptures into the English language. (Remember, the bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek)

**Formal Equivalence –** Translating the words directly from the original into English while still making it readable. This is the best way to understand the text as it was written without learning Hebrew and Greek.

Pros – More accurate translation

Cons – Not always the easiest to read or understand

Common Versions:

New King James Version (1982)

New American Standard Bible (1971, 1995)

English Standard Version (2001)

**Dynamic Equivalence –** Translating the thoughts that the original writer intended into words and phrases that we can understand today. This can be helpful when it comes to understanding some phrases that were used when the original was written but no longer make sense to us today.

Pros – Easier to read and understand

Cons – The translators must interpret the original writer’s intention.

Common Versions:

Good News Bible (1966)

Contemporary English Version (1995)

**Balance between Formal and Dynamic Equivalence** – Some translations use both formal and dynamic equivalence in order to produce a translation that is both easy to read and accurate.

New International Version (1978, 1984, 2011)

New Living Translation (1996)

**Paraphrase –** This really isn’t a translation, but more like retelling the story in your own words. These bibles can be used for reading, but are not very good for in depth study. Sometimes reading a paraphrase can cause you to look at a passage from a different point of view, but always consider checking the scripture again with a good translation.

Common Paraphrase Bibles:

The Message (2002)

The Living Bible (1971)

**Which Study Bible Should I Get?**

Once you have determined which version of the bible you want to use for study, it’s time to consider a good study bible. A study bible offers more than just the text of the scripture. Most of them include cross references, book outlines, commentary notes, maps, concordances, character studies and articles on various topics. These additional tools can be a great help when it comes to understanding the scripture.

Some study bibles have articles that emphasize specific themes while others are more comprehensive. Here’s a list of some good choices:

NIV Study Bible – good comprehensive study bible

Life Application Study Bible – emphasizes notes on practical application of God’s word

Full Life Study Bible (Fire Bible)– emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit

Archeological Study Bible – focuses on the history and culture of biblical times

Apologetics Study Bible – provides articles that answer the questions of skeptics

Thompson Chain Reference Bible – good for topical study

**What Other Kinds of References are Helpful?**

Many times a good study bible can be a tremendous resource and all you will need for studying the scripture – along with the guidance of the Holy Spirit of course! But there are definitely times when additional resources can be helpful. Here are some typical tools that you may want to check out.

**Dictionaries** – A bible dictionary is useful when you want to understand a particular word in the passage. It is often helpful to know how the ancient culture of bible times understood words and concepts.

**Commentaries** – Commentaries are books that contain more extensive notes on the bible. Some are more extensive than others, ranging from a commentary on the entire bible to ones dealing with only a portion of a book of the bible.

**Concordances** – Most study bibles have a concordance in the back, which is helpful for finding additional passages that include a key word you are studying. It is also helpful for finding a passage when you can’t remember where it is but remember some of the words in the passage. A concordance can be small, like the ones included with a bible that only contain some words and references, to complete concordances which include every word in the bible and every passage it is used in.

**Lexicons** – Lexicons offer more detailed information on the original meaning of words from the Hebrew or Greek language.

**Encyclopedias** – Bible encyclopedias offer articles on numerous topics that help to define everything from cultural customs to theological terms. One of the best encyclopedias is the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.

**Parallel Bibles** – If you have ever wanted to compare two different versions of the bible side by side, then this is what you need. Parallel bibles can be found with various versions for comparison.

**Interlinear Bibles** – This bible will contain the original language of the bible, Hebrew or Greek, with the corresponding English word underneath it. Sometimes the order of words is important in the original language and this resource will help you to see that.

**Topical Bibles** – Topical bibles offer lists of scriptures that relate to particular topics. This allows you to look up scriptures related to a particular topic you are studying.

**Digital Resources**

There are many great digital resources available either as stand-alone software or online resources. There are plenty of apps available as well for Android and Apple. Many of these digital resources are free.

**Paid Resources** (All are available for Windows, Mac, & Mobile)

***Logos***

<https://www.logos.com/>

<http://www.biblia.com/> (free web version)

If you are using the Bible Engagement app then you already have a Faithlife account which is used to access Logos. The software that runs the program is free and they also have free books, but most library packages are expensive. You can get a basic starter package for $49.

***Accordance***

<https://www.accordancebible.com/>

Another expensive solution but there is a free version called Accordance Lite with some study tools.

***Olive Tree***

<https://www.olivetree.com/>

Many free resources available. Also contains many languages

E-Sword

<https://www.e-sword.net/>

The basic package is free but paid content is also available.

**Free Resources**

***Bible Study Tools***

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/>

Great online resource with bibles, commentaries, word studies, encyclopedias and more.

***Bible Gateway***

<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

Great resource for many different versions of the bible in many languages. Allows you to read two different translations side by side.

***Blue Letter Bible***

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/>

Has similar tools to “Bible Study Tools.”

***YouVersion***

<https://www.youversion.com/>

A very popular mobile app and website that allows you to read the bible. They also have custom designed reading plans to keep you engaged.

Other sites to consider:

<https://biblehub.com/>

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/>

<https://netbible.org/>

[www.studylight.org](http://www.studylight.org)