

# How to Study a Word in the Bible

(Taken from Dr. Moore's Christian Mentoring Notebook: "Building Disciples" – *out of print*)

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There are some 13,000 different Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible. While knowledge of the original languages is a vital tool in discovery, any person taught by the Spirit and using a good Concordance or Word Pictures can mine gold from God's Word.

The Bible may be compared to a spiritual supermarket. There are some 31,000 verses, or 31,000 canned goods, boxes, and frozen foods. One can read the label on every can in the supermarket, and still starve to death. It's getting the contents into the stomach that counts; Bible study methods are "can-openers" that enable us to assimilate Bible truth into our lives. Words are the basic unit of study. They unlock treasures from the very heart of God.

## 1. HOW TO STUDY A WORD

- Buy a large size Concordance (Young's or Strong's preferably or the best complete concordance for the translation you use daily). You may also use a topical text book, or Naves Topical Concordance; most references in the back of Bibles are totally inadequate to properly study a word in depth. Use whatever you have on-hand to begin this exciting kind of study.
- Ask in prayer for wisdom from God; the Holy Spirit desires to teach you the Scriptures (see John 16:13). He is a patient, loving Teacher. No study will produce a radical change in one's life unto Christ-likeness, unless we study with the openness of a servant to listen and obey the words of the Lord.
- Our goal is to learn from a word of Scripture how it can become a part of our life — its truth assimilated into our hearts. We are seeking answers to questions. Some words "grab" you and in discovery reveal a central truth through Scriptures. The word "know" is an example.

Example: If you were to call the great men of the Bible together and ask them a question, "What have we discovered as the most important goal in life for any disciple of Christ?"

What would they answer? How would Moses, David, Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Paul, Peter, and finally our Lord answer this vital question of priorities?

Get the echo of unity among these giants on what is first for the Christian as you read these references: Exodus 33:13, 14; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Jeremiah 9:23, 24; Hosea 4:6; Daniel 11:32; 1 Corinthians 2:2; Philippians 3:10; 2 Peter 1:2, 3; 3:18; John 17:3

## 2. Look at one of the Word Study Guide (See Separate Sheet)

- Choose a word to study. Write your chosen word in the blank on the right near the top of the study guide.
- Look up references of the word. BEGINNING AT THE BACK of the Bible — *not in the helps* — note, in order, references from the Epistles of Peter, John, and Paul. Then copy down references from the Gospels and Acts; next note those used on this word

in the Psalms, then further study may be done with the rest of the Old Testament. It has been found that the mine of gold is more rapidly found examining the use of a word in the New Testament, first.

- Seek to write down in the square blanks question words: WHEN, WHERE, WHY, WHO, WHAT, HOW? Then, prayerfully seek to match the reference when possible with one of the words; you are looking for answers to questions about the word.

Example: Word "minister." Here are some references where the word is used. Matthew 20:27, 28; Romans 13:4; 2 Corinthians 3:5, 6; 1 Corinthians 16:15a. The first three references tell me, on looking up the verse in the Bible, that they share "who" is a minister; Christ Jesus, Rulers, and every believer. 1 Corinthians 16:15 became my verse to Personalize (see Part III) in blank. Under "How" to minister I placed the following: 2 Corinthians 3:6; 2 Corinthians 4:1; Colossians 4:17; 2 Corinthians 6:3; 1 Peter 4:11.

- Sometimes you will find a reference that gives you a definition of what a word means, such as "grace" (2 Corinthians 8:9).
- The most important part of the study is Step 3 (next). From all the references and compartmentalizing under topics or questions, ask God for ONE truth, one verse that can become a part of your life. I usually link this verse with the word I'm studying, memorize it, and write in some cross reference from my study into the margin of my Bible by that verse. Be specific in your application, and then check yourself out daily, to see if the truth is becoming a conscious part of your life. In the King James Version, 1 Corinthians 16:15, 16 says that this first family of converts in Achaia were "addicted" to ministering to the saints. What a challenge for my own life. Use modern versions to give insight and clarification.

3. GROWTH ASSIGNMENT: Study the word "follow." Below is a partial listing of the verses that will be a blessing to you; not all are listed from the dozens more in the Bible. But you can begin profitable study with these. Remember as you share together in a group, not everyone will categorize a verse under the same question word. So that you will receive the most growth from this part, you will need to look up each reference in your own Bible(s). Let each person be guided by the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:15; 2 Timothy 2:22; Romans 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Corinthians 14:1; Philippians 3:12; 1 Timothy 6:11; Psalm 23:6; Luke 9:23; John 1:27; 8:12; 12:26; 10:27; Matthew 4:19; Hebrews 6:12; Psalm 63:8; Matthew 4:25; 8:19; 19:21, 27; Matthew 9:27; 10:38; 26:58; 1 Peter 2:20-21; John 21:19; 3 John 11; 2 Peter 1:16; 2 Peter 2:2, 15; Exodus 23:2; Hosea 6:3.

Study ONE aspect of a key Bible word such as the word "glory," "glorify." We are made to glorify God. The following verses give us help in HOW to glorify God: Psalm 50:23; Isaiah 60:21; 61:3; Haggai 1:8; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; Romans 4:20; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 10:31-33; John 11:4; 14:13; 16:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:12; 1 Peter 4:14. Always check verses in their context for initial interpretation.

# Digging into a Word Study

On a separate sheet of paper, use the following outline to do the word study.

## STEP I

Use concordance (Youngs, Strongs, Crudens if possible). Look up and write down all references that seem to answer who, what, when, where, why, or how. (Begin in New Testament Epistles, then Gospels, then Psalms, and Old Testament.)

**REFERENCE**

**THOUGHT**

## STEP II.

Now group your references, as many as possible, under: Who, What, When, Where, Why, or How.

DEFINITION OF WORD

OTHER FINDINGS

## STEP III.

Personalize a verse — choose most important verse — white it down in your own words.

STATE why you need the verse.

PRAYERFULLY write what you will do now to get this truth into your heart and life.

## STEP IV.

Outline or group your discoveries together for sharing with a friend, a relative or some ministry. You keep only what you give away.

ACTION TAKEN: Make your study a center part of prayer and meditation for at least a week.

Choose for personalization: seek each day to do one of the following:

1. Apply. 2. Prayed back with God. 3 Review verse. 4. Share with another, etc. 5. Other idea.

Circle each day one of the above is accomplished:

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY

Prayer-Application