

Bible Study Resources Quick Guide

Bible study tools are any resources that can assist people in reading, understanding, and studying the Bible. They can help provide important historical context, find translation differences between versions, determine the true meaning of a passage, and assist readers in applying the lessons to their own lives. Secondary resources equip you with the understanding you need to answer your questions.

It's important to remember that while "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16), outside Bible tools are not. They have limitations, so we need to not elevate them to the level of authority Scripture has, we need to consult multiple sources, and we need to use reputable sources so we can stay faithful to the text of Scripture.

Types of Bibles

Study Bible: combine multiple study tools into one relatively compact volume. The notes are usually more concise than full commentaries, and often the text of the Bible is placed alongside or above the notes.

Logos Bible Study App: Faithlife Study Bible (free)

Print Bibles with Filament App

Print Study Bibles, such as NIV Study Bible

Logos (free & paid versions)

Parallel Bible: gives the text of multiple translations all lined up so it's easy to read them together. This helps us get a better sense of the original intended meaning, and it can help us find more accessible wording in difficult passages. Switching up your Bible translation also helps very familiar passages be read with fresh eyes.

Print Parallel Bibles

BibleGateway.com (free)

BibleHub.com (free)

BibleCC.com (free)

Journaling Bible: Has extra wide margins for note taking; some have full blank pages for note taking. Often we process better when we do some writing and note-taking, so this is an extremely good method of study; plus, you can carry your study notes with you easily.

Faith Womack, YouTube: How to Faith a Life

Loose-Leaf Bible: large, three-ring binders containing every page of Scripture laid out with roomy margins and, typically, slightly wider line spacing. Extremely good for marking up the text, taking notes, and you can copy pages and write all over them without destroying your Bible.

BibleGateway.com (look up a passage, click the printer icon - free)

Inclinyheart.com/printable-bible-texts (NET Version) (free)

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Reader's Bible: an easy-to-read, simplified version of the Bible. A Reader's Bible strips the text down to the most basic elements required for reading, containing only page numbers and references.

BibleGateway.com (settings, hide/show cross-references, footnotes, verse numbers, headings, and red letter - free)

Digital Bible: lets you add infinite notes, switch translations, access study aids super easily, and none of it is limited by space. The downside: you're on a screen and some people work better with tactile writing. Plus, some of these work best on a computer and that's not always possible to carry that with you.

Logos (free & paid desktop version, free phone app)

Word-for-Word Translations: these are literal translations, and tend to be the most historically accurate. They attempt to find a one-to-one English word for every Hebrew and Greek word written in the original texts.

New American Standard Bible

Thought-for-Thought Translations: also called the dynamic equivalent of the original text; they attempt to convey meaning by translating entire phrases into contemporary language, grammar, and styles; they are just as biblically faithful as word-for-word translations, and often more understandable, especially for newer believers.

New International Version

New Living Translation

Paraphrases: aka free translations; they translate more loosely while attempting to capture the same overall meaning; paraphrases are not translations because they include more interpretation; treat them more like commentaries.

The Message

Supplementary Bible Study Tools

These resources are not Bibles themselves, but they do provide valuable insights and supports. It is healthy and wise to interpret Scripture in the community of the church, and to avail ourselves to the insights other Christians have discovered.

Bible Dictionary: collects important information from the Bible about people, places, concepts, doctrines, and more, all in one centralized, convenient location, often also including other relevant Bible passages which helps us let Scripture interpret Scripture. A Bible dictionary will provide. Some will also provide you with the information on the original languages

Lexham Bible Dictionary (for free on Logos)

Tyndale Bible Dictionary

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Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary

Bible Encyclopedia: Similar to Bible dictionaries, but with a greater scope; they tend to have much longer articles and provide more historical and cultural detail.

www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/ (free)

biblehub.com/encyclopedia/ (free)

Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible

Commentary: The best and most reliable are written by Bible scholars, translators, theologians, etc. While the above resources are best for helping us determine what the Bible *says*, commentaries (and many of the following resources) help us determine what the Bible *means*.

One-Volume Bible Commentaries:

Logos App

What the Bible is All About by Henrietta Mears (good for beginners)

New Bible Commentary by D A Carson

Believer's Bible Commentary by William MacDonald

Most commentaries have multiple volumes and go passage-by-passage to follow the biblical text; they often include introductions to each book of the Bible and provide information on the author, context, and themes.

High Definition Commentary Collection (Logos)

Lexham Context Commentary: New Testament

Tyndale Commentaries

NIV Commentary

Word Biblical Commentary

Baker Exegetical Commentary

Free Online Commentaries:

www.studylight.org/commentary.html (recommend the verse-by-verse)

www.blueletterbible.org/study.cfm

deeperstudy.com/link/commentaries.html#nt (online commentaries, by book of the Bible)

www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/

bible.org/ (topical search seems to work best)

www.monergism.com/

www.thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/ (for more recommendations)

www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/top-5-commentaries (top 5 commentary recommendations for every book of the Bible)

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Concordance: Studying a passage in isolation puts you at risk of misinterpretation; we need to study Scripture in historical and cultural context, *and* in the context of the whole Bible, i.e. cross-referencing or thematic study. Concordances list every word of the Bible and the passages in which that word appears, based on the original languages; this helps us find how a particular author is using the word, how the Bible unpacks the meaning of that concept throughout all of Scripture; it also helps you find passages where meaning is clearer to help interpret where meaning is unclear

Everyday Access: Your Bible Concordance

The New Thematic Concordance

Strong's Guide to Bible Words

BibleGateway.com (free, keyword & subject search)

Harmonies: take books of the Bible that overlap one another in content, and they show how the books fit together. In other words, they reorganize biblical content to flow chronologically so that you can find parallel passages more easily.

Harmony of the Gospels

Jesus Christ: The Greatest Life

A Simplified Harmony of the Gospels

Chronological Bible Reading plans (available online)

Lectionary: Bible reading plans that organize texts and passages into weekly readings. They often span three-year cycles, designated years A, B, and C. The idea is to provide believers around the world with a shared reading schedule, and some include reflections on the text.

Book of Common Prayer

Book of Common Worship

The Bible App Reading Plans

Seeking His Face by Philip Reinders

Devotional: intended to help us with interpretation of Scripture, and sometimes application & personal growth. There are many different types of devotionals, based on topic, book of the Bible, focusing on a single passage, etc.

Connect the Testaments: A Daily Devotional (free, Logos)

My Utmost for His Highest

Streams in the Desert

Lysa Terkeurst's Devotionals (she has several now)

Lectio365 App (free)

Bible Atlas: Bible atlases are collections of maps that show the world as it was in biblical times and can be extremely useful for seeing how different biblical locations

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fit together in context. Many study Bibles also include maps, and Google searches can help you locate free ones online, but Bible atlases help you uncover what makes locations significant. These are especially good for visual learners.

Lexham Geographic Commentaries

New Bible Atlas

Zondervan Atlas of the Bible

Bible Study Software/Apps: all of the above, but available in one program/app.

Logos, free and paid versions

Accordance (free 90-day trial)

E-Sword (free, but the format is very 90s)

Olive Tree Bible App (free and paid)

Bible Studies & Teachers: A Bible Study is a more complete resource than a devotional, and often includes all three steps of Bible study. Some studies include more or less commentary; some include journaling exercises; often they include reflection questions; all include guided Bible reading. They are one of the best ways to study Scripture, when you have a trusted guide who is faithfully passing the best of what God has helped them learn from Scripture and trusted teachers and pastors and scholars in the Church. The Bible is meant to be interpreted in community, not in isolation from other believers; as long as it is done well, this includes in person as well as online and in print.

For recommended studies, please connect with the Discipleship ministry of our church (there are too many to list here, but we'll happily help you narrow the list down!)