

# Accurately Handling the Word of Truth

## Resources

This guide will walk you through the process of studying the Bible, giving excellent resources for each step of the journey. Then at the end I will get practical and tell you how to make the best use of your time and money by listing the absolute musts, and the next group after that.

## Methods

Let's start by looking at resources that tell us **How to study the Bible**. Here are several good ones:

1. Living by the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the Bible, by Howard & William Hendricks. Moody Publishers, 2007.
2. How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart. Zondervan, 2003.
3. Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty, by Merrill C. Tenney. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989.
4. How to Read A Book, by Mortimer J. Adler & Charles Van Doren. Simon & Schuster, 1972.
5. Know Your Bible, All 66 Books Explained and Applied. Barbour Publishing, 2008.

We study the Bible Top-down and then Bottom-up.

**Top-down** means we ask questions about the passage in question in the context of: (1) the entire Bible and what it is about; (2) the Testament that the passage appears in; (3) the Book it appears in; (4) the chapter; and (5) the paragraph. We also let other related passages across the Bible speak to and add insight about the verse in question. For example, if we were studying a passage in 2 Timothy, we might use the book of Acts to give us historical details about Paul and Timothy.

## Resources for Top-Down Study

So what are the key resources for doing the **Top-down study**?

I will first describe the category, and then give recommendations under that category.

A. **The Bible** in several good translations, with at least one study Bible as well. Here are the ones I find myself reading regularly these days:

1. New American Standard, Updated edition. (NASU)
2. King James Version. (KLV)
3. NET Bible from [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)
4. Thompson Chain-Reference Bible
5. The New International Version (NIV)
6. Young's Literal Translation
7. Ryrie study Bible in the New American Standard Version (Moody Press).

B. **Exhaustive Concordances.** This gives you all the occurrences of a word in the Bible. There are two kinds of Concordances. You want to have both kinds. One works with words in English and the other works with the words in the original language (Greek or Hebrew). "Exhaustive" is as opposed to the rinky-dink (incomplete) concordances we sometimes find at the back of our Bibles. Important: get the Concordance that matches the version of the Bible you read most often, ie , the New American Standard.

1. The Strongest NASB Exhaustive Concordance, Zondervan, 2004. (words in ENGLISH)
2. Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament. Public Domain. This provides every occurrence of every Greek word in the New Testament. Most effective when used in Bible software (see below). (words in GREEK)
3. Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the New Testament. Public Domain. This provides every occurrence of every Hebrew word in the Old Testament. Most effective when used in Bible software (see below). (words in HEBREW)

C. **Encyclopedias & Bible Dictionaries.** These are more or less the same kind of resource when it comes to the Bible. They are loaded with factual information about Bible people, places, things, events and so forth. Here are a few recommendations in this category:

1. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 4 volume set, ed. G. W. Bromiley. Eerdmans, 1995.
2. New International Bible Dictionary, 1 volume, ed. J.D. Douglas. Zondervan, 1999.
3. Fausset's Bible Dictionary.

D. **Commentaries.** Commentaries provide explanation and interpretation of Bible passages from an expert. You have to be wise in the use of commentaries because often the writer has certain biases. The best ones stick closely to the original language and are rich in bringing other Bible passages to bear on the passage in question. This is a huge category and right now I will only scratch the surface.

For starters, get a general purpose commentary that looks at all the books in the New Testament or the Old Testament. This category really gets interesting when you start to build a library of commentaries on individual books of the Bible. Here are two general purpose commentaries that I use:

1. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament Edition. Eds. John Walvoord and Roy Zuck. Cook Communications Ministries, 2004.
2. Keil and Delizsch Commentary on the Old Testament
3. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary

### **Resources for Bottom-Up Study**

Now it is time to learn about the key resources for doing the **Bottom-Up study**.

I will first describe the category, and then give recommendations under that category.

- E. **Interlinear Bibles.** An interlinear Bible has the English words on one line, and then the Greek or Hebrew words on another line, and an English transliteration of the Greek or Hebrew on a third line. Often the interlinear will also give grammatical information about the Greek or Hebrew word as well. I have used the electronic versions for so long now that I could not even find my old printed interlinears.
- F. **Lexicons.** Lexicons give us the meaning of Greek and Hebrew words in the time they were written in the Bible. They are typically organized like an English dictionary, by letter of the Greek or Hebrew alphabet. In addition, there is a numbering convention called Strong's numbers. Bible lexicons limit their treatment to words that appear in the Bible. Here are the Greek and Hebrew lexicons I consult most frequently:

1. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Third Edition (BDAG), revised and edited by Frederick William Danker, University of Chicago Press, 2000.
2. Strong's Greek/Hebrew Definitions.
3. Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament, Edited by Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
4. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, Based on Semantic Domains, Johannes Louw and Eugene Nida, editors.
5. New Testament Lexicon, Translated and revised and enlarged by Joseph Henry Thayer.
6. The Brown-Driver-Brigg's Hebrew and English Lexicon, F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, Hendrickson Publishers, 2004.
7. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Harris, Archer, & Waltke, editors.

G. **Grammars.** Greek and Hebrew Grammars, like their English counterparts, teach the parts of speech (nouns, verbs and so on) , the noun system (ie; case, number and gender), the verb system (ie; tense, voice and mood), vocabulary, and other basics of the language.

1. Basics of Biblical Greek: Grammar, by William D. Mounce. Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.
2. Basics of Biblical Hebrew: Grammar, by Gary Pratico and Miles Van Pelt. Zondervan, 2001.
3. Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, by Daniel B. Wallace. Zondervan, 1996.

H. **Exhaustive Concordances.** See B above. Repeated here because vital to Bottom-Up study as well as Top-Down study.

I. **Text Criticism.** These resources come into play when you find a substantive difference between translations and want to learn whether the difference is a translation issue or a text issue. If it is a text issue (differences in the underlying Greek text), these resources will explain the nature of the difference.

1. A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament, second edition. Bruce Metzger. United Bible Societies, 2002.
2. **Greek New Testaments.** You want at least two of them: one in the Byzantine Text tradition (such as the Textus Receptus or Robinson-Pierpont), and the other from an Eclectic text (such as the Nestle-Aland).

## Other Specialized Resources

J. **Theology.** These are books that are categorized by subject, such as the Trinity, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Justification, the church, and future things. These are just a sampling but represent solid work in their category:

1. The Complete Green Letters, by Miles J. Stanford. Zondervan, 1993. Our identity in Christ.
2. Things Which Become Sound Doctrine, by J. Dwight Pentecost. Kregel Publications, 1965. Doctrinal studies of fourteen crucial words of faith.
3. Jesus Christ our Lord, by John Walvoord. The Moody Bible Institute, 1969. A majestic look at our Lord Jesus Christ, His Person and His Work.
4. Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology, by J. Dwight Pentecost. Zondervan, 1964. a comprehensive text on the subject of still-unfulfilled prophecy.

K. **Practical Living.** These are books that describe how we are to live in light of who we are in Christ. They are categorized by area of living: prayer, marriage, on the job, church life, serving others, evangelizing, defending the faith (apologetics) and so forth. Again, here are just a few to get started:

1. Body Life, by Ray Stedman. Discovery House Publishers, 1995. How a congregation can live according to what is revealed about the body of Christ in the New Testament epistles.
2. How-to Book on Personal Evangelism, by Larry Moyer. Kregel Publications, 1998.
3. With Christ in the School of Prayer, by Andrew Murray. Whitaker House, 1981.
4. So What's the Difference?, by Fritz Ridenour. Regal books, 2001. A look at 20 worldviews, faiths and religions and how they compare to Christianity.

## Helpful web sites

[www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com)

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

## Getting Started

Here are five recommended resources to get first:

1. **Know Your Bible, All 66 Books Explained and Applied.** Barbour Publishing, 2008. [or something similar...]
2. **A Bible translation or study Bible** that you do not already have.
3. **The Strongest NASB Exhaustive Concordance,** Zondervan, 2004. (words in ENGLISH)
4. **New International Bible Dictionary,** 1 volume, ed. J.D. Douglas. Zondervan, 1999. or similar.
5. An **Interlinear** Bible.

Here are suggestions about the next five resources you want to have when you have the time and money:

6. **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Third Edition (BDAG),** revised and edited by Frederick William Danker, University of Chicago Press, 2000.
7. **The Brown-Driver-Brigg's Hebrew and English Lexicon,** F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, Hendrickson Publishers, 2004.
8. **Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament.** Public Domain.
9. **Basics of Biblical Greek: Grammar,** by William D. Mounce. Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.
10. **The Complete Green Letters,** by Miles J. Stanford. Zondervan, 1993. Our identity in Christ.

How to save time and (in the long run) money too:

### **Software**

[www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net) free

[www.biblesoft.com](http://www.biblesoft.com) PC Study Bible. Getting the Reference Library gets into the Big bucks...yet and worth every penny and more

[www.logos.com](http://www.logos.com) Logos Bible Software. Gets into even bigger bucks!