

Bible Study Tools

There are a number of very helpful Bible study tools.

1. SEVERAL VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE - You can get a better sense of the meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew by using several versions of the Bible.

A translation = AS LITERAL AS POSSIBLE. An example is the New American Standard.

A paraphrase = A FREE OR LOOSE TRANSLATION. An example is The Living Bible. A paraphrase is always easier to read, but it may not always be accurate. Many times a paraphrase includes some of the translator's ideas of what the text means. In other words, the translator also does some explaining along the way.

A Study Bible = a translation with all kinds of notes, and introductions, and study helps built right into the Bible. There are a number of them available, some good, some not so good. One of the better ones is the Thompson Chain-Reference Bible. It lists many topics, has a very good chain-reference through the Bible, outlines and a topical index are also included.

2. CONCORDANCE - A concordance is an alphabetical list of all the words in the Bible. It is a tool, then, that allows the Bible student to study all of the places in the Bible where certain words or ideas are found. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance has Hebrew and Greek dictionaries, which are designed for the use of English readers. It is called an "exhaustive" concordance because it includes every single word in the Bible.

3. WORD STUDIES - Word studies are expanded dictionaries of words used in the Old and New Testament. They tell you the wider meanings of Greek and Hebrew words and how they were used in their historical setting and in the Bible. Word Studies frequently use Strong's numbering system as a reference. A set of Word Studies is a **must** for a serious bible student.

4. BIBLE DICTIONARIES/HANDBOOKS - A Bible Dictionary is like a one volume encyclopedia of Bible facts, including people, places, and doctrines. A **Bible handbook** is a kind of combination Bible Dictionary and Bible Commentary. Instead of listing topics alphabetically, a Bible handbook lists them in the order of the books of the Bible, giving historical and theological information along the way. I recommend either Unger's Bible Handbook or Halley's Bible Handbook. Both have been around for years, and one or the other is available in bookstores.

6. BIBLE COMMENTARY - A commentary is a chapter by chapter, verse by verse, sometimes word by word explanation of the Bible, taking into consideration matters of language, history and theology. Nearly any one volume commentary by a major Christian publishing company is going to be helpful. There are also many individual commentaries on each book of the Bible, if you want more detail. Or you can get commentary sets, which may have twenty or thirty volumes of commentaries, something like an encyclopedia. As you can well imagine, building a Bible study library can become an expensive proposition!

7. CROSS REFERENCE HELPS - A cross reference is an invaluable tool to help you find other passages in the scripture that deal with the same concept or thought or phrase. Most study bibles have a cross reference column in the center.

8. BIBLE SOFTWARE - There are many types of bible software that are available. Bible software is loaded with many types of bible tools. This has become the most economic way to obtain many bible study tools.

9. REFERENCE BOOKS/TOPICAL BIBLES - There are many different books written by men concerning all kinds of topics and teachings. These can be a great help, but always be very careful to make sure proper interpretive rules are employed.

10. INTERNET - There are many helpful and not so helpful websites to aid in your study of God's Word.

Guidelines for Interpretation – Basic Hermeneutics

1. Taken in its customary, **normal**, and natural sense
2. Taken within its **context** of word, phrase, or larger passage
3. **Scripture must interpret scripture**, and be compared to scripture
4. **Antinomies**, scripture never contradicts scripture, it is always consistent with all of scripture
5. Near and far applications
6. **Key words** to understand in symbolic scripture- *Hyperbole- Metaphor-Anthropomorphism- Parable-*

1. Taken in its customary, normal, and natural sense - Here we must obviously allow for symbolism and typology and figures of speech. The bible frequently uses analogies to give us greater understanding because many of its principles are spiritual realities and cannot be seen. We must take the scripture first, at its face value, and understand it literally. This is the ***literal method of bible interpretation***. In short, we read and evaluate the scripture with the same normal understanding of words or symbolic language of any normal communication. Concerning the first advent of Christ there were at least 60 aspects of Christ's life and ministry that were literally fulfilled. Shouldn't we then expect the bible to speak to us at our level, in a method of plain understanding? Of course, after all hasn't God made Himself clearly seen? If we cannot take the scripture literally, than who is to say what interpretation is right or wrong, where is the standard of proper allegory, or who's allegory is right. That is foolishness. God said it, and that settles it.

2. Taken within its context of word, phrase, or larger passage - The context involves the person or kinds of persons being addressed in a passage and their historical setting and situation. Without understanding the proper context of a passage, it is almost impossible to gain an accurate understanding of spiritual truth without having the relevance of its hearers and the situation being addressed. ***This is elementary to a proper understanding of the scripture.*** Out of context, we could make the bible say just about anything we want it to, but in context it speaks to us exactly what God intends to communicate, and furthermore what we are expected to obey.

3. Scripture must interpret scripture, and be compared to scripture - A word phrase or concept should first be studied in light of its use in the bible book being studied and then in light of its use in other passages in scripture. The scripture will not communicate in one passage a truth or principle that it will violate in another. When apparent contradictions arise, it is because of our lack of understanding of the given truth. This is why we need to look to other passages in the scripture, to get a perspective of given truths from many angles, in different contexts which bring out the full meaning of a given truth. We must let the whole of scripture and the character of God, (which is communicated in the whole of scripture), guide and lead us into the understanding of truth. The more important a truth is, the more carefully related truths should be compared and examined. Because scripture is always its own best interpreter, careful comparison always adds depth and clarity to our understanding.

4. Antinomies, scripture never contradicts scripture, it is always consistent with all of scripture - After carefully studying all the related passages on a given issue and comparing them one to another, no interpretation is valid which does not harmonize with all the passages. If the Word of God is without errors, it will never contradict itself. If two passages seem to contradict each other, the truth has not yet been discovered, and we can only take a position based on what is clearly stated. In this case we should continue to seek the truth, and at some time in the future, we will find, for he who seeks finds. This is an essential fact, truth is absolute and cannot contradict itself.

5. Near and far applications - Many prophecies in the bible have what we call dual fulfillments. This means that they may come to pass more than one time in history. Examples being the destruction of Babylon, Antichrist/Antiochus Epiphanes and others. Just think, the Old Testament continually tells of the coming of Christ, who would save Israel and restore all things, the coming ruler of all yet the suffering servant of many. At the same time that all of these prophecies are true, they will be fulfilled at two different times in history. We must be careful not to rule out the possibility of this principle occurring in many prophecies.

6. Key words to understand in symbolic scripture-

Hyperbole-- A hyperbole is an exaggeration used for effect-- an overstatement. "I'm so hungry I could eat a horse" obviously is not literally true. It is an exaggeration used to convey the idea of extreme hunger

Metaphor-- A simile makes a comparison by using a word such as "like": "Life is like a circus." A metaphor is a similar comparison, except that it omits the word "like": "The world is a stage." Metaphors such as "I am the door" <John 10:9> are easily recognized.

Anthropomorphism-- Do rivers have hands to clap <Ps. 98:8>? Does God have eyes <Ps. 33:18>, although He is spirit <John 4:24>? Anthropomorphism's in the Bible describe God and non-human objects as though they have human characteristics.

Parable- A symbolic story used to illustrate a given truth or principle. The kingdom of God is like.... <Mark 4:26>

Example of method

Ephesians 5:5 - 5 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. NASB

1.Context – Ephesians 5:1-12

2.Translations

(KJV) – 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (KJV)

(NIV) – 5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person-- such a man is an idolater-- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. (NIV)

(NKJV) - 5 For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (NKJV)

(DBY) - 5 For this ye are [well] informed of, knowing that no fornicator, or unclean person, or person of unbridled lust, who is an idolater, has inheritance in the kingdom of the Christ and God. (DBY)

3.Treasury of Scripture Knowledge or other CROSS REFERENCE

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 - 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. NASB

Ephesians 5:3 - 3 But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints;

Hebrews 13:4 - 4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. NASB

Galatians 5:21 - 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. NASB

Colossians 3:5 - 5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. NASB

1 Timothy 6:10 - 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. NASB

1 Timothy 6:17 - 17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. NASB

Revelation 21:8 - 8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." NASB

Revelation 22:15 - 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. NASB

4.Interlinear - Eph 5:5 For <gar> this <touto> ye know <este> <ginosko>, that <hoti> no <ou> <pas> whoremonger < pornos>, nor <e> unclean person <akathartos>, nor <e> covetous man <pleonektes>, who <hos> is <esti> an idolater <eidololatrias>, hath <echo> any inheritance <kleronomia> in <en> the kingdom <basileia> of Christ <Christos> and <kai> of God <theos>. (KJV)

5.Concordance

1 Corinthians 5:9-11 - 9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the **immoral** people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler — not even to eat with such a one. NASB

1 Corinthians 6:18 - 18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the **immoral** man sins against his own body. NASB

Ephesians 5:5 - 5 For this you know with certainty, that no **immoral** or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. NASB

1 Timothy 1:10 - 10 and **immoral** men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, NASB

Hebrews 12:16 - 16 that there be no **immoral** or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.

Revelation 21:8 - 8 "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and **immoral** persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." NASB

Revelation 22:15 - 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the **immoral** persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. NASB

6. Word Study

NT:4205 4205. po/rno - pórnos; gen. pórnou, masc. noun from pernáœ (n.f.), to sell, which is from peráœ (n.f.), to pass through, carry over (particularly as merchants) and thence to sell, which in the NT appears Pipráskœ (4097). A whoremonger or male prostitute. **In the NT a fornicator** (1 Cor 5:9-11; 6:9; **Eph 5:5**; 1 Tim 1:10; Heb 12:16; 13:4; Rev 21:8; 22:15). **The Greeks considered one who prostituted himself for gain as a Pórnos**. In this sense it seems to be used in 1 Cor 6:9 where malakoí (pl.) (3120), the effeminate, are also mentioned. The distinction between them and pórnou, fornicators, seems to consist in that the pórnou prostitute themselves for gain, but the malakoí, effeminate ones, do it without charge. **It is in this manner that the word is used in Eph 5:5**; 1 Tim 1:10. The word also has the meaning of an impure or unclean person of whatever kind, and it is thus used in 1 Cor 5:9-11 (cf. 5:1,13); Heb 12:16; 13:4; Rev 21:8; 22:15.

Pórnos does not occur in the Sept.

Deriv.: porneúœ (4203), to commit fornication.

(from The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament © 1992 by AMG International, Inc. Revised Edition, 1993)

7. Commentary

Adam Clarke's Commentary: - Verse 5. For this ye know] Ye must be convinced of the dangerous and ruinous tendency of such a spirit and conduct, when ye know that persons of this character can never inherit the kingdom of God. See ACC for Eph 5:3; and see the observations on the Greek article at the end of this epistle. See ACC for Eph 6:24

Geneva Bible Notes: Verse 5 -

5:5 (2) For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an (b) idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

(2) Because these sins are such that the most part of men do not consider them to be sins, he awakes the godly to the end that they should so much the more take heed to guard themselves from these sins as from most harmful plagues. (b) A bondslave to idolatry, for the covetous man thinks that his life consists in his goods.

Albert Barnes' NT Commentary:

Verse 5. For this ye know. Be assured of this. The object here is, to deter from indulgence in those vices by the solemn assurance that no one who committed them could possibly be saved.

Nor unclean person. No one of corrupt and licentious life can be saved. See Re 22:15.

Nor covetous man, who is an idolater. That is, he bestows on money the affections due to God. See Col 3:5. To worship money is as real idolatry as to worship a block of stone. If this be so, what an idolatrous world is this! How many idolaters are there in professedly Christian lands! How many, it is to be feared, in the church itself! And since every covetous man is certainly to be excluded from the kingdom of God, how anxious should we be to examine our hearts, and to know whether this sin may not lie at our door!

Hath any inheritance, etc. Such an one shall never enter heaven. This settles the inquiry about the final destiny of a large portion of the world; and this solemn sentence our conscience and all our views of heaven approve.