
The Tools and Resources you need to Know About!

Into Thy Word Ministries www.intothyword.org

These are the research book resources to help you to understand the text of the Bible, its meanings, and historical circumstances, so you can get more out of your studies. These are also available in computer software form and on our website channel ([Bible Study Aids](#)), which makes the job fast and easy!

Why do we need tools? Is not the inductive process all we need? Yes and no. Yes, the inductive process gives us the main tool, God's Word, and helps us compare passages to other passages with investigative questions and reason. However, we are reading a work written in other languages over 2000 years ago and in another culture. So, there is a lot that does not transcribe into the language and culture in which we find ourselves today. Thus, we need some tools to help us in this quest to be good expositors.

The question becomes *how do we further and more intensely engage the Bible, dig, and get more tools to dig more out?* The following steps of this curriculum will slow you down to explain the methods and tools, and give you more tools to dig out even more of what is there. In addition, make sure you do not read in what you *want* to find. This is called the science of *exegetical method*, but there is no need for big words here. These are the basic procedures, combined with inductive tools that a pastor or experienced teacher of the Word learns in Bible School and Seminary with which to prepare sermons and commentaries, but boiled down to a clearer and simpler way that anyone can understand and apply.

Concordance: This is the "Yahoo" and "Google" of the Bible; you can use a key word and find the passages that you want, and even others that expand on it. This resource is a complete alphabetical listing of all the words in the Bible. A concordance can be very helpful to clarify word meanings as you look them up in their various contexts; if in doubt, look it up! It relates the principle themes, doctrines, and ideas. It works just like an Internet search without the clicking. Let's say you remember a verse that said something about "wings of eagles," but you did not know how to find it. Just look up the key words, "eagle" and "wings," and visit the *sites*, i.e. passages, until you get to the one you want. Sometimes, it can be hundreds, like for "prayer," or just a few, like eight for "eagle" or seven for "wings." It is easy!

Commentaries: They are designed to expand on the thoughts of the passage through original language study, historical information, settings, and in-depth study by learned scholars with various viewpoints and biases; be aware of this and remember they are expounding their ideas and insights, but not necessarily His. There are many good and bad commentaries. Talk to your pastor, who is knowledgeable and teaches correctly; he may recommend some. For students, I recommend the *NIV Bible Commentary* by Zondervan and *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* by Walvoord and Zuck, Victor Books. The *IVP Bible Background Commentary* by IVP press is phenomenal for getting

the cultural backgrounds. The *Bible Exposition Commentary* by Wiersbe is very basic and insightful. Then, there are multi-volume sets. Pick from such solid biblical publishers as Tyndale, Inter-Varsity, Zondervan, Moody Press, Eerdmans, Baker, or Thomas Nelson.

Ask a pastor you trust because, unfortunately, there is a lot of garbage out there. Beware and be discerning; always compare Scripture to Scripture, and do not rely only on other people's opinions!

Study Bibles: These are Bibles with some basic notes to help you dig deeper into the text. I recommend the *New Geneva Study Bible*, now called *The Reformation Study Bible*, and the *NIV Study Bible*.

However, do not solely rely on commentaries and study Bibles because you will get addicted to relying on them and, thus, get lazy in your personal studies! Nothing beats studying for yourself! Use the commentaries just to see what you may have missed, and for what you do not understand!

Lexicons: These are the linguistic tools to help you define the word meanings and vocabulary. This is very similar to a dictionary that explains the meaning of Hebrew or Greek words. Even if you do not know the original Greek or Hebrew, these tools help describe the word meanings, grammatical structure, and some give you more information about the "morphological" variations; some even provide references for where and how the words are used in other ancient literature. I like the software and web-based ones best; you hold your mouse over a word and a window pops up giving you the details of that word. The book version you can use like a dictionary. If you know a little Greek, the *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* by C. Brown is excellent. For those more advanced in their Greek, then you know about the more scholarly, analytical ones like *Kittle Lexicon* (warning This is an indispensable in-depth work, but tends to be liberal in theology, if you are discerning, this is a must have available on CD too).

Bible Dictionary and Bible Encyclopedia: These work just like a standard dictionary or encyclopedia, with the exception that the words and topics are found in Scripture. This can be a great tool for finding out more information, subjects, and terms so you can understand what is being said or what is going on such as *The IVP Dictionary of the New Testament*, Intervarsity Press, and *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. I have found the *New Bible Dictionary* by Eerdmans to be one of the best. Baker and Zondervan also have several good ones to choose from.

Maps: Most Bibles have maps in them that are designed to show you where events happen and where they are going on; it gives you a "where" perspective, especially in the book of Acts where there is a lot of traveling.

Books about the Bible: These books help the student to understand what the Bible is about and give general overviews. One such book is the classic, *What the Bible is All About* by Henrietta Mears, founder of "Gospel Light," one of the largest and best

producers of Sunday School curriculum. Also, these two works are very helpful: *With the Word* by Warren Wiersbe provides a devotional overview, and *Haley's Bible Handbook* provides overviews and historical facts.

Theological Dictionaries: These books go in-depth, providing more than just a general understanding of major theological points, such as *Colin-Brown* by Regency and *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* by Baker.

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