

# Bible Study Resources

## Study Bible

A study Bible is the most common Bible resource, as it combines the Bible with additional notes to help you understand what the verses mean. It's important to remember that the notes are not perfect; they are just some one's opinion. Since the notes are just some one's opinion, it's important to pick a reliable study Bible – that is, one from a source that you generally trust.

## English Dictionary

A good English dictionary will help you understand many words in the Bible by providing definitions and synonyms (words that mean the same thing). The *Noah Webster 1828 Dictionary* is an excellent edition, but is expensive.

## Bible Dictionary

A Bible dictionary differs from an English dictionary. An English dictionary provides brief definitions for all English words; a Bible dictionary provides longer definitions for the important words in the Bible.

*New Unger's Bible Dictionary*

*Holman Bible Dictionary*

*New Bible Dictionary* (from IVP)

## Expository Dictionary

An expository dictionary is another kind of specialized dictionary. It will show an English word and then delve into the meaning of that word based upon the Hebrew or Greek word that it was translated from. (Remember, the original text of the Bible was written in these languages, not English!) One of the more well-known examples of this kind of dictionary is *Vine's Expository Dictionary*.

## Bible Handbook

A Bible handbook provides “big picture” information for each book of the Bible. It typically provides information about the author, the period during which the book was written, social conditions, and the primary message of the book

## Bible Commentary

A commentary provides a scholar's opinion about the meaning of passages in the Bible. The commentary is more in-depth than the commentary included in a Study Bible. Many, many, many different commentary series are available. It is important to find one that comes from a reliable source.

## **English Concordance**

An English concordance lists all of the words in the Bible and identifies the verse that the word occurs in. An abridged concordance is often found near the back of a printed Bible. (Abridged means that it is reduced in size and is not complete.)

## **Hebrew and Greek Concordance**

A Hebrew and Greek concordance is a longer version of an English concordance. It identifies all of the English words and also provides the Hebrew or Greek word that the resulting English word was translated from. A dictionary of the Hebrew and Greek words is often provided. The most well known of these concordances is *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. It is keyed to the King James Version. Other similar books are available for different translations.

## **Topical Bible**

A topical Bible really isn't a Bible at all, so the name is kind of confusing. Instead, a topical Bible is used to help you find verses in the Bible that deal with a particular topic. For instance, if you wanted to know what the Bible taught about marriage, you'd look up "marriage" in the topical Bible. It would refer you to various Bible verses discussing that topic. A well-known topical Bible is *Nave's Topical Bible*. A more recent (and probably easier to use) book is *Where To Find It In The Bible*.

## Let's Practice

Last week we had a question about fasting. What exactly was the fast that some of the religious leaders were participating in? Let's use some of these tools to find out.

1. What is the definition of "fast"? (Use an English dictionary.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What does "fast" mean as used in the Bible? (Use a Bible dictionary.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. From the above, how long did a fast usually last? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Use an expository dictionary. What else (if anything) do you learn about it? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Use a topical Bible to find some Bible verses related to this topic. Read a few. List anything more than you learn about it. \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. Compare the results of the topical Bible results with what you find in the concordance at the back of your Bible (if your Bible includes one). Which is easier to use? \_\_\_\_\_  
What are the differences? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you see an advantage to each? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Now dig into Strong's Concordance to see what it offers. Make any applicable notes. \_\_\_\_\_  
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