

HOW TO STUDY YOUR BIBLE

A RESOURCE FOR WOMEN

STUDY TOOLS & PRACTICE EXERCISES

1. STUDY BIBLE

In comparison to a standard Bible, a study Bible includes notes, brief background information, introductions and limited commentary, along with cross-references. Before purchasing a study Bible, it's important to know that many are written with a particular theological perspective or audience in mind—such as women, men, students or specific denominations.

Recommendations:

[ESV Study Bible](#)

[The Zondervan NIV Study Bible](#)

2. BIBLE HANDBOOK

A Bible handbook is a great starting point for exploring the historical and cultural context of a biblical book. It typically provides an introduction with a brief summary of main themes, authorship, recipients and date of writing. This is an ideal resource for those who want to go deeper in personal devotions or Bible study.

Recommendations:

[The Bible Handbook](#) - The Daily Grace Co.

OR [The Bible Handbook](#) - Amazon

Dockery, David S., ed. [The Holman Bible Handbook](#). Nashville: Holman, 1992

Gravely, Edward D., and Peter Link Jr. [Bible 101: From Genesis and Psalms to the Gospels and Revelation, Your Guide to the Old and New Testaments](#). Adams Media, 2023

3. BIBLE DICTIONARY & ENCYCLOPEDIA

These resources are helpful when studying a specific topic, name or place mentioned in a passage. Organized alphabetically, they offer a wide range of information. For example, if you're reading 1 Samuel 4, you could look up "Ark of the Covenant" for further explanation and background.

Recommendations:

Butler, Trent, Chad Brand, Charles W Draper, and Archie England, eds. [Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary](#). Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003.

[Zondervan Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#)



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4. OLD TESTAMENT & NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION AND SURVEYS

These resources provide overviews and background information for each biblical book. Introductions are typically more technical, focusing on scholarly discussion about authorship, date and historical context. Surveys, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the book's content and themes. These are especially helpful for Bible teachers or anyone doing more in-depth study.

Recommendations:

Simpson, A.B. [The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown](#). New York: Christian Alliance Publishing Company, 1907

Hill, Andrew E., and John H. Walton. [A Survey of the Old Testament](#). 4th ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2024

5. COMMENTARIES

Commentaries are in-depth resources that present another person's study of the Bible. They offer detailed insights into the historical-cultural context of a book, as well as introductory material such as author, recipients, setting and outlines. Because commentaries vary in depth, focus and quality, it's wise to consult more than one to gain a well-rounded understanding.

While many commentaries are part of larger multi-volume sets (which can be expensive), it's often more beneficial to invest in a couple of well-regarded commentaries on a single book from different sources than to buy one full set. Two affordable, quality commentary series that cover the Old and New Testaments are listed below.

Recommendations:

[The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition](#): Two volume set

[The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#): Two volume set

6. BIBLE ATLAS

Often overlooked, a Bible atlas is a valuable tool for understanding the people, places and events of Scripture. Beyond just maps with geographical details, atlases include timelines, charts, photographs of key locations and visual aids to help you better grasp biblical narratives in their historical setting.

Recommendations

[The Bible Maps Handbook](#) - Daily Grace Co.

OR [The Bible Maps Handbook](#) - Amazon

Currid, John D., and David P. Barrett. [Crossway ESV Bible Atlas](#). Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2010



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7. Concordance & Lexicons

These tools are essential for word studies and understanding the grammar of a passage. An exhaustive concordance lists every occurrence of a word in Scripture and often includes a numbering system (like Strong's numbers) that links to the original Greek or Hebrew. A lexicon is a dictionary of biblical Greek or Hebrew words, providing definitions and additional linguistic insights.

Recommendations

Vine, W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003.

Mounce, William D., general editor. Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006

Biblehub.com - Online resource for Greek word studies. See Resource: "[Interlinear Word Study Basics](#)" for further directions.

Study Tool Exercises

1. Read Romans 13:1-7

Using a Bible handbook and dictionary, identify the genre, author and date of writing. Then, list 10 historical-cultural observations relevant to that time period. How do these observations contribute to the overall context and meaning of the passage?

2. Read Numbers 21:4-9

Using a commentary, trace the word "serpent" or "snake" (depending on your translation) throughout the Bible. Consult one to three commentaries on this passage. What is the theological significance of this account, and to whom does it ultimately point?

3. Read Revelation 2-3

List the seven churches that receive the letter. Using a Bible atlas, locate each of the churches and trace the route a messenger likely followed to deliver the letter. Then, read Revelation 3:14-22 and, using a commentary or New Testament survey, compile a list of historical-cultural facts specifically related to Laodicea.

(Duvall, J. Scott, and Hays, J. Daniel. Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 2001. Print.)

4. Read the letter of 1 Peter

Using a handbook, commentary or New Testament introduction, list 25 historical-cultural observations that shed light on the context of the letter.

