

“Cheat Sheet” on How to Effectively Do a Word Bible Study

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Even though the average Christian does not know these languages, we can still do word studies because of the availability of many excellent translations and reference tools. In the past, people who were interested in doing personal Bible study had to learn the original languages. Only those who had spent years learning Greek and Hebrew were able to enjoy the exciting insights that come from studying the original words of Scripture. Today, however, the riches to be found in word studies are within reach of every Christian who knows what tools are available.

Definition

The Word Study Method of Bible Study takes a microscopic look at the origin, definition, occurrences, and uses of a particular word, especially as it relates to the context of a passage of Scripture. The purpose is to learn as precisely and comprehensively as possible what the biblical writer meant by the word he used.

TOOLS

- A study Bible
- Several recent translations (not paraphrases, though)
- An exhaustive concordance
- A Bible dictionary and/or encyclopedia
- A set of word studies
- A good English dictionary
- (If you've had Greek, a Greek New Testament or an Interlinear New Testament)

THREE COMMON DIFFICULTIES IN DOING WORD STUDIES

- *Sometimes several Greek words are translated by just one English word.*
- *Sometimes one Greek or Hebrew word is translated several ways in English*
- *Sometimes an original word is translated by a whole phrase in English*

1. Choose your Word

2. Find its English definition

Use your English dictionary and write down the meaning along with any synonyms or antonyms of the word.

3. Compare translations

Write down the significant differences

4. Write down the definition of the original Word

Look in your concordance or word study book and write down its definition. You may find a it has a number of usages.

5. Check the Word's occurrences in the Bible

Using your concordance again, find out how and where the word is used in the Bible. Ask how many times its used, in what books, what writers, in what book does it occur the most, where does it occur first in the Bible, where does it occur first in the book I'm studying.

6. Find the root meaning and origin of the Word

Some research is required here. Get a fuller discussion of the meaning and origin of the word.

7. Discover the Word's usage in the Bible

How is the word used in the Bible? The last step told you the root meaning but here find out how the word was used during the time the book was written, how it was generally used in the Bible, and how the word is used in the context of the passage.

8. Write out an Application

Ask yourself, "How can understanding this word strengthen my spiritual life?"