

Suggested Resources for Biblical Meditation

1. **Study Bible with Old and New Testament.** A study Bible can be expensive, but a good study Bible is an investment you will use for many years. It is worth it to take time to explore the various Bibles to decide what will best meet your needs. There are a number of factors to consider when purchasing a good study Bible. It is well worth the time to do a little research before making a purchase.

Which Translation or Version is Best? There has never been a time when there are so many translations of the Bible available. Choosing the right translation for a Study Bible is very important because you don't want to be inadvertently led into error by a Bible that is inaccurately translated. Many of the Bibles that have been translated into modern language are very readable but lose meanings that most accurately portray the original writers' intentions. Some translations have the liberal bias regarding doctrinal matters and have changed or deleted key words vital to sound doctrine, (i.e. "virgin" and replaced it with "young woman.") Remember there is no perfect translation because all translations are dependent upon the expertise of the translators in choosing the most appropriate words to portray the original language.

Additional features that are most helpful have included in your study Bible

- **Cross References** are the verses that appear along the margin of the Bible verses that direct you to other verses with similar meaning. They are very valuable tools to compare various passages for Biblical Meditation and study of the Word. Good cross references are a must and will be used extensively.
- **A Concordance and Dictionary** is helpful, but not essential, as the concordance in the Bible is rarely very extensive. It is preferable to purchase a good Strong's Concordance that has the Hebrew and Greek dictionary included with it.
- **Footnotes or margin notes:** Footnotes provide additional information regarding passages. Some offer historical information, or commentary. These are also often helpful, but not essential. Keep in mind that footnotes reflect the opinions of the person writing it, and are not always accurate and may reflect their own doctrinal interpretations. For this reason, it pays to research the particular Study Bible prior to making a purchase.
- **Maps** are often beneficial in following the locations and routes of men and women described in the scriptures. A set of maps that allow comparison of the lands in various Biblical times in history with present day map of the same area is helpful.
- **Additional Study helps:** Indexes, timelines, charts, etc. Every Study Bible will have a variety of different helps, so it is good to compare to see which are most beneficial to you.

What physical characteristics to consider in a Study Bible? It is heartbreaking to have to "retire" a favorite Bible because it is falling apart especially one that has grown so familiar through the years. You know just where every verse is located and its pages are full of notes and markings. For this reason, you want a Study Bible that will be durable. The purchase of a good quality study Bible can be a sizeable investment but it is well worth the cost. Since you will be spending time reading this book, make sure it has the physical features you need. Your Study Bible may not be the Bible that you carry with you to church, it will probably be larger and have more features than the smaller, more portable Bibles.

- **Cover:** If you can afford it, always purchase leather over the hard cover edition. Genuine leather is a better grade of leather than the bonded leather cover and will last far longer. Hard cover Bibles are less expensive but rarely stand up to extensive use over time. If you watch for them, leather Bibles are often available at very good prices on sale!
- **Quality of Binding:** Examine the binding of the Bible, or look for a review of the particular Bible online. Bibles that have a glued binding tend to come apart after time, while the true sewn bindings will last a lifetime. There are some Bibles that look sewn but are actually hybrids that are partially sewn and partially glued. If you would like to know more about Bible bindings, quality of leather, etc. this is a wonderful website that is very instructive:
<https://www.bibledesignblog.com/blog/2007/10/binding-types-g.html>
- **Margin size:** When comparing two Bibles, it is preferable for your study Bible to have wide margins to allow you to make notes, write definitions or additional cross references.
- **Font size and clarity:** The font chosen for the Bible should be sharp and clear, easy to read. Choose a font size that is comfortable for you to read. If it is too small, you will have a hard time studying from this Bible.
- **Quality of paper:** One has to weigh the tradeoff of having high quality, heavier pages that allow marking and highlighting without bleeding. Avoid paper that is too thin because it will bleed through and tear more easily when making notes or highlighting. Pages that are very thin are more difficult to use.
- **Red Letter Edition:** While this is not essential, it is very nice to have the words of Jesus written in red, to help you easily identify them.
- **Single column or double column:** This is a matter of preference. I like the ease of reading a single column Bible and it makes it easier to make notes in the margin. However, all other things equal I would not hesitate to purchase a double column if other features were desired.

How much money should I plan to spend on a Study Bible? This will be an individual preference. It is worth saving your pennies to get the one that you really want, because hopefully you will have this Bible for many, many years. There are a number of places on the internet that you can purchase a Bible at a very reasonable price. I have actually been very pleased with Bibles I have purchased on eBay that were not in print any longer. I also have found some really beautiful Bibles at thrift stores that sadly, show little or no wear. If cost is an obstacle, pray and ask the Lord to help you find the Bible He wants you to purchase!

Are there any specific Study Bibles that you recommend? There are many Study Bibles and they all have wonderful features that are very helpful! A few that I have used and found to be very nice include:

- **Ryrie Study Bible:** Published by Moody, this is a fairly conservative Bible with excellent footnotes, maps, concordance, cross-references and numerous other study helps. It has nice wide margins and fairly heavy paper. I do not agree with all of the footnotes, but overall, they are helpful. I have owned both a hard cover and bonded leather copies and the binding has come apart on both copies. I have not tried the genuine leather cover.
- **The International Inductive Study Bible:** This Bible is published by Harvest House, and was designed by Kay Arthur who teaches inductive Bible study. For this reason, there are no footnotes or commentary, but wonderful wide margins, nice maps, heavy paper quality and good cross references. This Bible is great for learning to study the Bible on your own, and allows you to complete your own outlines for each chapter. It is a very large Bible, however, and not one you want to carry around with you.

- **New American Standard Bible Reference Edition** by Foundation Publications, is a wonderful wide-margin Bible with excellent cross references. This is my favorite Bible! The paper quality is excellent and if you use a highlighter or write notes, it does not bleed through to the other side. It has concordance and maps, but does not have any footnotes or commentary. It is my main study Bible at this point. I love the quality of the binding, the paper and print quality. I have had mine for over twenty years and the binding is still perfect.
 - **Spirit-Filled Life Bible** by Nelson Publishers, edited by Jack Hayford, it is a less conservative Study Bible than the Ryrie. It has very helpful Word Studies, with Book introductions, outlines and notes by many contemporary Bible Scholars. It also has “Word Wealth” in which many key words are defined. I find the notes and study helps to be extremely anointed. My copy has narrow margins which make it less than desirable for adding notes.
 - **The Hebrew Greek Key Study Bible** by World Publishers was compiled by Spiros Zodhiates, and he has placed the Strong's reference numbers after many key words and included a dictionary in the back which will give you not only the Strong's definitions for each word, but also an expanded dictionary for many of the words. My copy did not have cross references which I feel was a real weakness to this Study Bible. However, newer editions may be available that include cross references.
 - **The English Standard Version Study Bible** is an excellent translation. This is another very large Bible but filled with background notes and excellent maps. It is published by Crossway Bibles, Wheaton, IL.
2. **Dictionary of the English Language:** Looking up even common words that we believe we understand can open up nuances of meaning that will help us to better understand words used in the Bible. Older dictionaries are often more useful in understanding word meanings than updated dictionaries. Watch thrift stores or used book sales.
 3. **Webster's 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language** is a fabulous study tool. Noah Webster originally wrote this dictionary to help those studying the Bible understand the meaning of the words. Over the years, meanings change and this allows us to have an understanding of the older meanings when the Bible was translated into English. This dictionary has been reprinted and is available for a very reasonable price. It is also available along with many other dictionaries online at: www.onelook.com
 4. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and Dictionary.** Strong's number system and lexicon provides the Hebrew and Greek words used in the original language and also provides definitions that expand the meaning of these words. Strong's is so simple that anyone can learn to use it without any training in Greek or Hebrew languages.
 5. **Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words** by W.E. Vine and Merrill Unger. This updated version has a topical index that is very helpful.
 6. **Spiros Zodhiates** has produced a wonderful set of study tools, including:
 - a. **Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible (which has Strong's numbers and an expanded dictionary of the meaning of words in the Hebrew and Greek).**
 - b. **The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament**
 - c. **The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament**

- d. **The Complete Word Study Old Testament**
- e. **The Complete Word Study New Testament**
- f. **Word Studies from the Greek New Testament** (4 volume set) by Kenneth S. Wuest

Additional study tools that are helpful:

1. **A notebook and/or three ring binder.** You will want to save your notes from your times of meditation and prayer! A notebook allows you to record your study notes and prayers and will allow you to return to certain topics to provide persevering prayer as well as to remember to thank the Lord for answers to prayer!
2. **Soft colored pencils.** As you study various topics, you can use a color system, to underline verses or mark in a distinctive manner so you can return to the study time and again. For example, you can identify all verses that refer to the “fear of the LORD” in purple, or verses referring to God’s love with a red heart beside them. Verses about the crucifixion can be marked by a cross and references to Satan or the demonic with a small pitchfork. Marking verses makes them stand out and easy to locate.
3. **A nice set of fine or Micro point pens that allow you to make notes in the margins of your Bible.** I like to use pens that are archive safe so they will not run if the page gets wet. The micro point pens are usually sold in the “drafting” section of office stores. They will allow you to write in very small print and still remain legible.
4. **It is also helpful to keep a set of notecards to write down verses that you want to memorize or refer to often.** Put your notecards up in key locations where you will remember to re-read them.
5. **A good daily Bible reading guide is also helpful.** The Bible is full of promises for those who are daily in His Word. A good reading guide will keep you focused and help you to know what to read next. I like the reading guides that let you read 1-2 chapters in Old Testament along with a chapter in the New Testament and then maybe a chapter in Psalms or Proverbs as well.

Study Helps on the Internet:

www.blueletterbible.org This website allows you to search for key words, topics or by specific Bible references. If you use the King James Version, you can look up the definitions in the Strong's Concordance.

www.biblegateway.com This site has many translations of the Bible, access to commentaries. It allows you to complete key word searches, study of passages or topics.

www.biblestudytools.com Features dictionaries, extensive encyclopedias and commentaries, daily devotionals, and over twenty translations of the Bible.

www.biblehub.com The Bible Hub features topical, Greek and Hebrew study tools, plus concordances, commentaries, dictionaries, sermons and devotionals.

www.netbible.org The Net Bible site has a powerful search tool by which to begin your study. It allows you to access a number of Bible translations, commentaries, Strong's concordance, maps, sermon illustrations and other resources.