

# The Christian Arsenal

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## Studying the Bible

It is our hope that these articles will lead you into a deeper appreciation of the Bible and help you to become a better and more confident student of God's Word.

## Objectives:

1. To increase the understanding of the Biblical commands associated with the study of the Bible.
2. To guide you in some basic considerations for building their personal Bible study library.
3. To survey the basic types of Bible study helps and references that are available for Christians to use and to provide recommendations and some evaluations the various areas of Bible study materials.

## God's Expectations

We will begin by asking you to look at the following scripture.

**2 Timothy 2:15** "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

This is a scripture that most of you have heard and seen many times but, have you really taken into consideration what this passage is saying? Let's examine the "*Verbal-Plenary Inspired*" words of this passage and see what God through *His revelation* is telling us. (For those who do not why I chose the term *Verbal-Plenary* and referred to the bible as *His revelation* please go back and review Lesson #1.)

- **Study** - The Greek word is "*spoudazo*". The meaning of this word is not to simply read and memorize. The word carries a strong connotation. It's meaning is to hasten to do a thing, to exert oneself, to strive and endeavor. The picture here is not a person who is simply reading but, of someone who devoting their entire heart, soul, energies and intellect to something.
- **Approved** - The Greek word is "*dokimos*". Looking at the earliest uses of this word, it is used when speaking of metals that have gone through the test of fire in a forge to check their purity. When you wanted to check the purity of gold or silver you would have it melted down to see if any impurities would float to the top or separate. After this the gold or silver would be "*dokimos*" approved. The word is also used to describe on who is having his faith tried and character tried and examined.
- **Unto God** - The one who we are to please is God, not man. The one whose approval we are to desire.
- **Workman** - The Greek word is "*ergates*". This word is used to describe one who works for another such as a field hand working in a vineyard. There are two important facets of this definition. First, the workman works! Second, the workman was not an independent consultant working where and when he felt like. The "*ergates*" worked for and under the direction of a property owner or supervisor.
- **Ashamed** - The Greek word here is "*anepaischuntos*". To be ashamed means to have a feeling or fear that prevents a person from doing something. It could be cowardice, timidity, lack of knowledge, embarrassment or other reasons that would produce shame in a person.
- **Rightly dividing** - The Greek word here is "*orthotomeo*". It is a compound word from "*orthos*" meaning straight and "*temno*" meaning to cut. This word was commonly used to refer to the process of plowing straight rows in a field. As people of the 21st Century, this may not mean much to us today. However, having had the opportunity to try my hand at plowing with a mule and an old fashioned plow, let me share some observations with you on this. It takes strength, stamina, skill, endurance, and your undivided attention. If you didn't understand your mule, your plow, and your field, well lets just say the results

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can be disastrous. We are called on to correctly and skillfully handle the Word of God and use it for its intended purposes.

- **Word of truth** - God's revelation to man that we now commonly call the Bible.

Let's look at this verse again and as you read it, think about the above definitions that you learned. 2 Timothy 2:15 "**Study** to show thyself **approved unto God**, a **workman** that needeth not to be **ashamed, rightly dividing** the **word of truth.**"

At this point you may feel slightly overwhelmed by the depth of the requirements from the verse above. Remember that you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you and He will enable and empower you so that you can do this!

## Your Bible Library

Every Christian should have some sort of Bible study library. It would seem kind of difficult to obey 2 Timothy 2:15 without one. This does not mean you need to spend thousands of dollars and purchase hundreds of volumes to have a Bible study library. A good bible study library can be assembled within just a few volumes. When I speak of your library, remember I am talking about your investment in something that will be a life long tool for you and your family. For example, I purchased the 5 volume set of the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible in 1978. For 24 years I have enjoyed these books. I have used by myself, members of my family have used them, as well as several friends and classmates. For all the use they are still there when ever I need them.

Depending on the age group you teach, your Bible study needs will be different as you prepare for the lesson you teach. In this section, I want to give you an over view of some of the basic types of Bible references and resource helps that are available to you.

The authors and editors of all works recommended are committed to the authority and inspiration of the Bible.

## The Study Bible

There are several good study Bibles on the market today. A good study Bible is can be a great companion for the student of the Word of God. There are some words of warning that I would give here. First, beware of the tendency to believe that the notes and comments are as equally inspired as the text of the Bible. While the author may be a brilliant Bible scholar, his words are just the words of a man. Second, read the scriptures first and foremost. Some have developed a habit of reading the comments and not the Bible itself. Below you will find a few recommendations for study Bibles. There are several on the market and it would take many pages to evaluate them all. I am including three that would be the best for teachers. These are the ones that I have used or have had other students of the Word recommend over the years.

- Thompson's Chain Reference Bible has long been a favorite study Bible for several generations of Christians. It has gone through several revisions and is available in different translations and formats. I would rank it as one of the best study Bibles on the market today. It has survived the test of time and had graced thousands of Christian's book shelves. The cross references, outlines, archaeological supplement, and other sections would make this a welcome addition to any Bible study library. Published by B. B. Kirkbride Co.
- The NIV Study Bible is very popular with teachers. It has a concordance, 20,000 annotated footnotes, introductions, outlines, maps, and other helps. It has been on the market for 10 years and has been well received by students of the Bible as. The theological and doctrinal notes are conservative. This Bible would make a good addition to any library. Published by Zondervan Publishing House.
- The Word in Life Study Bible is perhaps one of the finest study Bibles for the teacher that you can get. It is relatively new and has been around since 1996. This Bible has introductions, book outlines, maps, charts, character outlines, information on manners,

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customs, history, politics and several articles on applying the Bible to today's world. There are many unique features in this Bible that I have not found in others. I have seen one volume Bible commentaries that have not had near this much information. The scholarship is conservative and solid. This would be a great addition to any Bible study library. Published by Thomas Nelson Publishers.

## Bible Dictionaries

There are several good Bible dictionaries on the market today. They make quick access to information possible and supply good concise article on subject you are researching. There are Bible encyclopedias but unless you are going to be doing some in depth studying or are planning to go to seminary, they will probably have a little more information than you want to sit down and read through. Below is a list of good Bible dictionaries. Any one of these would make a splendid addition to your Bible library.

- [New Unger's Bible Dictionary](#) edited by Dr. Merrill F. Unger published Moody Press.
- [Wycliffe Bible Dictionary](#) edited by Charles Pfeiffer, Howard Vos, and Charles Rea published by Moody Press.
- [Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary](#) edited by Dr. M. C. Tenney published by Zondervan.
- [Holman's Bible Dictionary](#) published by Holman Press.

## Bible Concordances

A concordance is a tool to help you find where a word is used in the Bible. There are three that I will list for your consideration. There are more out there depending on what translation of the Bible you are want a concordance for.

- [Strong's Exhaustive Concordance](#) is probably the most popular concordance in existence. It has the every word in the KJV and has a numeric index to a Greek and Hebrew lexicon. It is published by various publishers.
- [Young's Analytical Concordance](#) is a massive work that will give you basically the same information as Strong's but in a slightly different format.
- [Crudens Concordance to the Bible](#) is an easy to use concordance that lists the major entries and usages of words in the Bible. This is far easier to use for a quick reference.

## Bible Commentaries

In the area of commentaries there are literally hundreds and hundreds of commentaries that could be listed here. I am going to list a few here that would be good for a teacher to have. Just because a book is not on this list does not mean that it is not good. This list is to provide some basic suggestions for those who might want to add a commentary to their Bible library. If you want more detailed information on commentary sets or on an individual book of the Bible, you may want to ask you pastor or feel free to contact us via email.

- [The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) comes in two volumes. Volume 1 is the Old Testament and volume 2 is the New Testament. Edited by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck. Published by Chariot Victor Publishing.
- [Believer's Bible Commentary](#) by William McDonald published by Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- [Wycliffe Bible Commentary](#) edited by Charles F. Pfeiffer and E. F. Harrison published by Moody Press.
- [The New International Bible Commentary](#) edited by F. F. Bruce published by Zondervan

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Publishing.

## Bible Handbooks

A bible handbook is an often over looked part of a library. For quick concise information, pictures, charts, maps, and book surveys, they cannot be beat! I still find these to be very useful. You need to pick one from the list below, you will not be disappointed. Every one of these works deserves a gold star.

- The New Unger's bible Handbook was originally edited by dr. Merrill F. Unger and now has been improved and revised by Gary N. Larson. It is published by Moody Press.
- The Zondervan Handbook to the Bible published by Zondervan Publishers.
- Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible published by William B. Eerdmans Publishers.
- Halley's Bible Handbook this is the granddaddy of Bible handbooks. It has been around for many years before any of the above works were on the market or some of their writing staff were born. It was born out of H. H. Haley's conviction that everyone should read the Bible everyday. It is published by Zondervan. A time honored classic.

## Two more Jewels for your Bible library

- The Nave's Topical Bible originally compiled by Chaplain Orville J. Nave. This monumental work is a listing of 20,000 topics in the Bible with over 100,000 scripture references. You simply look up the topic you want and you will find scriptures written out in Biblical order from Genesis to Revelation. This book has been a best seller for the last 75 years! It is published by several different publishers.
- Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words edited by W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White Jr. This is the easiest work to use to discover the Greek and Hebrew meanings of Biblical words. This is another one of those classics that is on the must have list.

You can order these books and others through from Amazon.com. A portion of your purchase is donated to Wright Track Ministries without adding anything to your cost. Just click on the icon below and a portion of your purchase will go to support this ministry. God bless you and thank you!

