

Lesson 3
Principles and Methods of Research

Outline

- I. Introduction: Attitudes for Effective Bible Study
- II. Principles of Bible Research
- III. Methods of Bible Research
 - A. Word Studies

I. Introduction: Attitudes for Effective Bible Study

A. Hunger for the Word

"My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God. For the LORD grants wisdom! From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to Him. Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. Wise choices will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe."

Pro 2:1-11

"I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food."

Job 23:12

"But He answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Mat 4:4

Ps 119:20; Ps 19:7-10; Ezekiel 3:1-3; Revelation 10:1-10

B. Love for the Word

And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love.

Psa 119:47

Ps 119:113,119,127.

C. Enjoyment of the Word

"as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,"

1Pe 2:2

Ephesians 5:26; Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 119:16; Ps 21:2; 37:4

D. Respect for the Word

I will study Your commandments and reflect on Your ways.

Psa 119:15

E. Teachable heart

"Teach me Your decrees, O LORD; I will keep them to the end. Give me understanding and I will obey Your instructions; I will put them into practice with all my heart. Make me walk along the path of Your commands, for that is where my happiness is found. Give me an eagerness for Your laws rather than a love for money! Turn my eyes from worthless things, and give me life through Your word. Reassure me of Your promise, made to those who fear You. Help me abandon my shameful ways; for Your regulations are good. I long to obey Your commandments! Renew my life with Your goodness."

Psa 119:33-40

Matthew 6:33; Mark 7:7

F. Meekness of spirit

"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."

Jas 1:21

"This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Could you build Me a temple as good as that? Could you build Me such a resting place? My hands have made both heaven and earth; they and everything in them are Mine. I, the LORD, have spoken! "I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at My word. But those who choose their own ways—delighting in their detestable sins—will not have their offerings accepted. When such people sacrifice a bull, it is no more acceptable than a human sacrifice. When they sacrifice a lamb, it's as though they had sacrificed a dog! When they bring an offering of grain, they might as well offer the blood of a pig. When they burn frankincense, it's as if they had blessed an idol. I will send them great trouble—all the things they feared. For when I called, they did not answer. When I spoke, they did not listen. They deliberately sinned before My very eyes and chose to do what they know I despise."

Isa 66:1-4

Phil 2:3; Acts 20:19; 1 Peter 5:5; Acts 13:7; 1 Corinthians 1:25-29; Jeremiah 4:22.

G. Meditation

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night."

Psa 1:1-2

“Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.”

Jos 1:8

Psalms 119: 48, 78, 148; Acts 8:27-40.

H. Worshipful spirit

Revelation 4-5. This book remained sealed until the worship arose.

II. Methods of Bible Research

A method is “A way; system; course of procedure; classification; logical arrangement; order.” (Collins’s Graphic Dictionary).

Bible research requires methodology. It requires, ordering and arranging ideas and subjects, and building line up on line and precept upon precept. It requires time and patience and help from the Holy Spirit.

A. Principles of Bible Research

1. Observation

Research and collection of all the Bible says on the respective subject.

2. Interpretation (Hermeneutics)

What does it mean?

What does it mean to me? What did it mean to them?

- a. What – exactly what is being communicated (not reading between the lines)?
- b. Of whom – who is being spoken about?
- c. To whom – who is being spoken to?
- d. With what words – in what language, with what terms, phrases, vocabulary, etc?
- e. At what time – when was it written?
- f. Where – what was the writer’s location, circumstances and perspective?
- g. To what intent – what was the writer’s purpose in writing?
- h. With what circumstances – what were the circumstances of the recipients?
- i. What goes before – the preceding context
- j. What comes after – what comes after the respective scripture.

3. Organisation

A heap of stones does not make a building. Therefore logical organisation of the information gathered is crucial for understanding, interpretation, and application.

4. Application

Knowledge is the possession of facts.

Understanding is the interpretation of facts.

Wisdom is the application of facts.

We need wisdom to apply what we learn, otherwise we are like those who look in the mirror of the Word and turn away and forget what we looked like.

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.

Jas 1:22-24

God's principles of truth are timeless,- truth is truth in every generation. "Application" then is the taking of truth communicated to one person or group of people and making it relate to another person or group of people.

B. Common Methods of Study

1. Word studies
2. Character studies
3. Place studies
4. Textual studies
5. Topical Thematic studies
6. Passage studies
7. Book studies

In all methods of study, the context principle should be upheld, i.e. the word (or whatever is being studied) should be looked at in its verse context and passage context.

1. Word studies

Possibly the most basic method of bible study is a word study. One word is chosen, the word(s) in the original language is discovered, and this original word(s) is then researched. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of the word, one not only better understands the truth it represents, but also better comprehends the intent of the author in all the verses where that particular word is found.

As discussed already, in order to better understand the language gap between the biblical writers and the current readers, 2 major parts of the language need to be studied:

- Vocabulary – meanings of the words
- Grammar – the ways the words are put together in the language to communicate thoughts and ideas.

Word studies focus on the vocabulary. In order to better understand what the Bible writers were communicating to us in scripture, we must fully attribute the same definitions and connotations to the words that they did. It is often impossible for any English translation to perfectly express the full meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words. One Hebrew or Greek word may be translated by several English words in different contexts. On the other hand, one English word may be used to translate several different Hebrew and Greek words.

Our language often expresses our culture and belief system. Words are building blocks of understanding. To best understand God's Word, we need to build block upon block.

There are many methods of doing a word study, which all have strengths and weaknesses. Some are unreliable as to their conclusions, and others are not thorough enough to be of long term value. The method outlines below is simple, balanced and suitable for long term use.

a.) Definition

All available sources (Strong's, Thayer's, Vines, etc.) should be used to compile the definition of the word. These sources should be noted for future possible reference.

b.) Scriptural Analysis

All available scriptures where this word is utilised should be noted. **Observations, interpretations and insights** should be noted. It is important that these insights are gained from reading how the word is used and what it means in its context. The Englishman's Greek and/or Hebrew Concordance can be utilised for this.

c.) Organisation for Presentation

A summary of all the findings and insights should be made with the assistance of the following questions:

- (i) What?
- (ii) Who?
- (iii) Why?
- (iv) When?

(v) Where?

(vi) How?

There are the following guidelines and safeguards to bear in mind when doing word studies:

- To be safe in conclusions, Hebrew or Greek words only (not English words) should be used as the basis for word studies.
- Vocabulary is only a part of the language and so word studies alone, although of great value, are insufficient alone to totally bridge the communication gap.

Example of a word study:

*“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be **perfect**, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”*

2Co 13:11

a.) Definition**(i) Strong's**

Dictionary number – 2675

Transliteration - katartizō (*kat-ar-tid'-zo*)

Etymology - From [G2596](#) and a derivative of [G739](#)

Definition - to *complete thoroughly*, that is, *repair* (literally or figuratively) or *adjust*: - fit, frame, mend, (make) perfect (-ly join together), prepare, restore.

(ii) Thayer's

katartizō

1) to render, i.e. to fit, sound, complete

1a) to mend (what has been broken or rent), to repair

1a1) to complete

1b) to fit out, equip, put in order, arrange, adjust

1b1) to fit or frame for one's self, prepare

1c) ethically: to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be

Part of Speech: verb

A Related Word by Thayer's/Strong's Number: from [G2596](#) and a derivative of [G739](#)

(iii) Vine's

katartizo (G2675), "to make fit, to equip, prepare" (kata, "down," artos, "a joint"), is rendered "fitted"

b.) Scripture analysis

Scripture reference	Observation – usage in passage, brief verse quote, important details	Interpretation – topical significances and insights
Mat 4:21	James ^{G2385} and ^{G2532} John ^{G2491} <u>mending</u> ^{G2675} their ^{G848} nets ^{G1350}	Making complete by bringing each strand back into place and in connection with others – thus restoring usefulness.
Mat 21:16 (Ps 8:2)	have ye never ^{G3763} read, ^{G314} Out of ^{G1537} the mouth ^{G4750} of babes ^{G3516} and ^{G2532} sucklings ^{G2337} thou hast <u>perfected</u> ^{G2675} <u>praise?</u> ^{G136} a quote from Ps 8:2 Out of the mouth ^{H4480 H6310} of babes ^{H5768} and sucklings ^{H3243} hast thou <u>ordained</u> ^{H3245} <u>strength</u> ^{H5797} because of ^{H4616} thine enemies, ^{H6887} that thou mightest still ^{H7673} the enemy ^{H341} and the avenger. ^{H5358}	Jesus quotes Ps 8:2 and interchanges “ordained strength” in the Hebrew with “perfected praise” in the Greek. The Hebrew “strength” is ‘o`z ‘o`z, oze, oze (H5797) From H5810; strength in various applications (force, security, majesty, praise): - boldness, loud, might, power, strength , strong. The Hebrew “ordain” is ya`sad, yaw-sad'(H3243). A primitive root; to set (literally or figuratively); intensively to found; reflexively to sit down together, that is, settle, consult: - appoint, take counsel, establish , (lay the, lay for a) found (-ation), instruct, lay, ordain, set, X sure. Greek for praise is ainos,, ah'ee-nos (G136). Apparently a primary word; properly a story, but used in the sense of G1868; praise (of God): - praise.
Mark 1:19	James ^{G2385} and ^{G2532} John ^{G2491} <u>mending</u> ^{G2675} their nets ^{G1350}	
Luke 6:40	The disciple ^{G3101} is ^{G2076} not ^{G3756} above ^{G5228} his ^{G848} master: ^{G1320} but ^{G1161} every one ^{G3956} that is <u>perfect</u> ^{G2675} shall be ^{G2071} as ^{G5613} his ^{G846} master. ^{G1320}	RWP: The disciple is not above his master. Literally, a learner (or pupil) is not above the teacher....But here Luke adds: “But everyone when he is perfected shall be as his master” (<i>kate`rtismenos de pa`s estai ho`s ho didaskalos autou</i> ). The state of completion, perfect passive participle, is noted in <i>kate`rtismenos</i> . The word is common for mending broken things or nets (Mat 4:21) or men (Gal 6:1). So it is a long process to get the pupil patched up to the plane of his teacher.
Rom 9:22	the vessels ^{G4632} of wrath ^{G3709} <u>fitted</u> ^{G2675} to ^{G1519} destruction: ^{G684}	RWP: Fitted (<i>kate`rtismena</i> ). Perfect passive participle of <i>katartizo`</i> , old verb to equip (see note on Mat 4:21 and see 2Co 13:11), state of readiness. Paul does not say here that God did it or that they did it. That they are responsible may be seen from 1Th 2:15.
1 Co 1:10	Now ^{G1161} I beseech ^{G3870} you, ^{G5209} brethren, ^{G80} ... that ^{G2443} ye all ^{G3956} speak ^{G3004} the ^{G3588} same thing, ^{G846} and ^{G2532} that there be ^{G5600} no ^{G3361} divisions ^{G4978} among ^{G1722} you; ^{G5213} but ^{G1161} that ye be ^{G5600} <u>perfectly joined together</u> ^{G2675} in ^{G1722} the same ^{G3588} mind ^{G3563} and ^{G2532} in ^{G1722} the same ^{G3588} judgment. ^{G1106}	RWP: There be no divisions among you (<i>me`te`i en humin schismata</i>). Present subjunctive, that divisions may not continue to be (they already had them). Negative statement of preceding idea. <i>Schisma</i> is from <i>schizo`</i> , old word to split or rend, and so means a rent (Mat 9:16; Mar 2:21). Papyri use it for a splinter of wood and for ploughing. Here we have the earliest instance of its use in a moral sense of division, dissension, see also 1Co 11:18 where a less complete change than <i>haireseis</i> ; 1Co 12:25; Joh 7:43 (discord); Joh 9:16; Joh 10:19. “Here, faction, for which the classical word is <i>stasis</i> : division within the Christian community” (Vincent).

		These divisions were over the preachers (1:12-4:21), immorality (1Co 5:1-13), going to law before the heathen (1Co 6:1-11), marriage (7:1-40), meats offered to idols (1 Corinthians 8-10), conduct of women in church (11:1-16), the Lord's Supper (11:17-34), spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14), the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15). But that ye be perfected together (<i>e ̄te de kate ̄rtismenoi</i>). Periphrastic perfect passive subjunctive. See this verb in <u>Mat 4:21</u> (<u>Mar 1:19</u>) for mending torn nets and in moral sense already in <u>1Th 3:10</u>. Galen uses it for a surgeon's mending a joint and Herodotus for composing factions. See <u>2Co 13:11</u>; <u>Gal 6:1</u>.
2 Co 13:11	Finally,^{G3063} brethren,^{G80} farewell.^{G5463} Be perfect,^{G2675} be of good comfort,^{G3870} be of one mind,^{G5426 G846} live in peace;^{G1514} and^{G2532} the^{G3588} God^{G2316} of love^{G26} and^{G2532} peace^{G1515} shall be^{G2071} with^{G3326} you.^{G5216}	Popular: Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect ('perfected'). The word 'adjusted' (as a net put in order for casting), 'thoroughly furnished,'—be of good comfort ('comforted'); be of one mind,—the want of which was the first thing he complained of in his First Epistle (<u>2Co 1:10</u>); live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you,—compare <u>Mat 5:9</u>, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." Henry: Thus the apostle concludes this epistle with several good exhortations. (1.) To be perfect, or to be knit together in love, which would tend greatly to their advantage as a church, or Christian society. (2.) To be of good comfort under all the sufferings and persecutions they might endure for the cause of Christ or any calamities and disappointments they might meet with in the world. (3.) To be of one mind, which would greatly tend to their comfort; for the more easy we are with our brethren the more ease we shall have in our own souls. The apostle would have them, as far as was possible, to be of the same opinion and judgment; however, if this could not be attained, yet, (4.) He exhorts them to live in peace, that difference in opinion should not cause an alienation of affections - that they should be at peace among themselves. He would have all the schisms that were among them healed, that there should be no more contention and wrath found among them, to prevent which they should avoid <i>debates, envyings, backbitings, whisperings</i>, and such like enemies to peace. 2. He encourages them with the promise of God's presence among them: <i>The God of love and peace shall be with you, 2Co 13:11</i>. Note, (1.) God is the God of love and peace. He is the author of peace, and lover of concord. He hath loved us, and is willing to be at peace with us; he commands us to love him, and to be reconciled to him, and also that we love one another, and be at peace among ourselves. (2.) God will be with those who live in love and peace. He will love those who love peace; he will dwell with them here, and they shall dwell with him for ever. Such shall have God's gracious presence here, and be admitted to his glorious presence hereafter.

Gal 6:1	Brethren,^{G80} if^{G1437} a man^{G444} be^{G2532} overtaken^{G4301} in^{G1722} a^{G5100} fault,^{G3900} ye^{G5210} which are spiritual,^{G4152} restore^{G2675} such an one^{G5108} in^{G1722} the spirit^{G4151} of meekness;^{G4236} considering^{G4648} thyself,^{G4572} lest^{G3361} thou^{G4771} also^{G2532} be tempted.^{G3985}	RWP: If a man be overtaken (<i>ean kai prole ἡmphthe ἰanthro ἦpos</i>). Condition of third class, first aorist passive subjunctive of <i>prolambano</i> ἦ, old verb to take beforehand, to surprise, to detect. Trespass (<i>parapto ἡmati</i>). Literally, a falling aside, a slip or lapse in the papyri rather than a wilful sin. In Polybius and Diodorus. <i>Koiné</i>[28928]ῆ word. Ye which are spiritual (<i>hoi pneumatikoi</i>). See note on <u>1Co 3:1</u>. The spiritually led (<u>Gal 5:18</u>), the spiritual experts in mending souls. Restore (<i>katartizete</i>). Present active imperative of <i>katartizo</i> ῆ, the very word used in <u>Mat 4:21</u> of mending nets, old word to make <i>artios</i>, fit, to equip thoroughly.
1 The 3:10	Night^{G3571} and^{G2532} day^{G2250} praying^{G1189} exceedingly^{G5228} that we might see^{G1492} your^{G5216} face,^{G4383} and^{G2532} might perfect^{G2675} that which is lacking^{G5303} in your^{G5216} faith?^{G4102}	Popular: They had made advances, but had not yet attained perfection. So long as Christians are in this life, there is room for growth, and those who have made greatest proficiency are precisely those who may most hopefully be stimulated to further attainment. The deficiencies in the faith of the Thessalonians were probably such as could be removed by instruction. Already their faith was genuine, rightly based, and masculine, but it needed that enlightened knowledge of duty and of the truths of Christianity which tends to a mature and fullorbed character. Henry: The best of men have something wanting in their faith, if not as to the matter of it, there being some mysteries or doctrines not sufficiently known or believed by them, yet as to the clearness and certainty of their faith, there being some remaining darkness and doubtings, or at least as to the effects and operations of it, these being not so conspicuous and perfect as they should be. The ministry of the word and ordinances is helpful, and to be desired and used for the perfecting of that which is lacking in our faith. EBC: Paul's love for the Thessalonians did not blind him to their imperfections. It was their faith which comforted him in all his distress, yet he speaks of the deficiencies of their faith as something he sought to remedy. In one sense faith is a very simple thing, ... It is related on the one side to knowledge, and on the other to conduct. Timothy saw that while the Thessalonians had the root of the matter in them,...they were ignorant of much which it concerned Christians to know; they had false ideas on many points in regard to which God had given light. They had much to do before they could be said to have escaped from the prejudices, the instincts, and the habits of heathenism, and to have entered completely into the mind of Christ. In later chapters we shall find the Apostle rectifying what was amiss in their notions both of truth and duty; and, in doing so, opening up to us the lines on which defective faith needs to be corrected and supplemented. But we should not pass by this notice of the deficiencies of faith without asking ourselves whether our own faith is alive and progressive.
Heb 10:5	Wherefore^{G1352} when he cometh^{G1525} into^{G1519} the^{G3588} world,^{G2889} he saith,^{G3004} Sacrifice^{G2378} and^{G2532} offering^{G4376} thou wouldst^{G2309} not,^{G3756} but^{G1161} a body^{G4983} hast thou prepared^{G2675} me:^{G3427}	RWP: A body didst thou prepare for me (<i>so ἡma kate ῆrtiso ἡmoi</i>). First aorist middle indicative second person singular of <i>katartizo</i> ῆ, to make ready, equip.

Heb 11:3	Through faith ^{G4102} we understand ^{G3539} that the ^{G3588} worlds ^{G165} were framed ^{G2675} by the word ^{G4487} of God, ^{G2316} so that things which are seen ^{G991} were not ^{G3361} made ^{G1096} of ^{G1537} things which do appear. ^{G5316}	Popular: 'Have been framed'—the reference is to the preparation and completing of the world according to the design of the Founder. RWP: Have been framed (<i>kate rtisthai</i>). Perfect passive infinitive of <i>katartizo</i> , to mend, to equip, to perfect (<u>Luk 6:40</u>), in indirect discourse after <i>nooumen</i> .
Heb 13:21	Make you perfect ^{G2675 G5209} in ^{G1722} every ^{G3956} good ^{G18} work ^{G2041} to do ^{G4160} his ^{G848} will, ^{G2307} working ^{G4160} in ^{G1722} you ^{G5213} that which is wellpleasing ^{G2101} in his sight, ^{G1799 G848} through ^{G1223} Jesus ^{G2424} Christ, ^{G5547} to whom ^{G3739} be glory ^{G1391} for ever ^{G1519 G165 G165} Amen. ^{G281}	RWP: Make you perfect (<i>katartisai</i>). First aorist active optative of <i>katartizo</i> , to equip, as in <u>Heb 10:5</u> . A wish for the future. See <u>1Co 1:10</u> ; <u>2Co 13:11</u> ; <u>2Ti 3:17</u> . Popular: Perfect you (not the common word so translated. It means to complete all the parts, to put them in order, and fit them for use), make you ready, active, fit, in every good work to do (literally, to do out and out so as to accomplish—the force of the tense) his will, doing in you (the same repetition of words as in <u>Php 2:13</u>) that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ
1 Pet 5:10	But ^{G1161} the ^{G3588} God ^{G2316} of all ^{G3956} grace, ^{G5485} who hath called ^{G2564} us ^{G2248} unto ^{G1519} his ^{G848} eternal ^{G166} glory ^{G1391} by ^{G1722} Christ ^{G5547} Jesus, ^{G2424} after that ye have suffered ^{G3958} a while, ^{G3641} make you perfect, ^{G2675 G5209} stablish, ^{G4741} strengthen, ^{G4599} settle ^{G2311} you.	Popular: The idea conveyed by the 'perfect' is that of <i>preparing completely, equipping fully, bringing into fault less order</i> , so that nothing shall be wanting. It is the term which is used for 'perfect' in such passages as <u>Luk 6:10</u> , <u>1Co 1:10</u> , <u>1Th 3:10</u> , <u>Heb 13:21</u> ; and it is applied to the <i>mending</i> of broken nets (<u>Mat 4:21</u>), and the <i>restoring</i> of one in fault (<u>Gal 6:1</u>), etc.

RWP: Robertson's Word Pictures

Popular: A popular commentary on the New Testament

Henry: Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible

EBC: Expositor's Bible Commentary

c.) Organisation

(i) What is it to be perfect?

- Mature
- Complete, whole
- Lacking nothing
- Mended
- Useful and fitted for appropriate use
- Unified
- Adjusted
- Thoroughly furnished

(ii) Who is to be perfected?

- Churches and congregations
- Individual disciples

- People

(iii) What are the objects of perfection?

- Natural: Nets, relationships, good works, worlds, body
- Spiritual: Praise, strength, faith

Homework:

1. Do a word study in the format illustrated above on a Hebrew or Greek word of your choice. Remember to start with the verse where it is found.

Extra:

1. In the charismatic world of Christianity, Greek words are used to mean certain things. For instance, the Greek word "*logos*" is generally used to describe the written word of God, and the Greek word "**rhema**" is generally used to describe a word that God speaks personally to one or a group, whether it be a revelatory word, a "now" word that comes alive in the heart and mind of the hearer, a prophetic word, etc. Using the various bible research tools at your disposal, can you justify the specific use of these words in this manner?
2. In a similar fashion, the word "*kairos*" is used to describe an opportune period, time, or season when a window of opportunity is open, so to speak. The Greek word "*chronos*" is used to describe time as in chronological time. Using the various bible research tools at your disposal, can you justify the specific use of these words in this manner?