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Tools for Biblical Studies



Authority of Scriptures - Steve Gregg

In "Tools for Biblical Studies," Steve Gregg emphasizes the importance of applying principles of interpretation when studying the Bible. To aid in biblical study, Gregg recommends using tools such as concordance, cross-references, and lexicons. When considering which version of the Bible to study, it is important to consider textual considerations and translational philosophy. Resources such as commentaries and Bible encyclopedias can provide additional context and understanding.

Transcript

This series could not be considered complete unless we talked a little bit about the proper methods of studying the Bible. A little earlier in the series when we were talking about the alleged discrepancies of scripture, we talked about some of the hermeneutics, which is the methods of interpretation of the Bible. You might get that mixed up with what we're now talking about is study the Bible.

When you study the Bible, you're obviously seeking to understand it, and therefore you have to apply rules of hermeneutics or the principles of interpretation. But that's not what I'm focusing on right now. I'm interested principally in knowing how to really study the Bible, not even so much just to understand the hard things that I understand, but how to absorb the truth of the Bible generally and to apply it in your life.

And that is what every Christian, I think, wants to do. I've given you two handouts on this subject. One is tools for biblical study, and the other handout is a three-stage procedure for inductive Bible study.

This will be the material that we'll be covering relevant to study the Bible, and it'll be mainly, of course, about personal Bible study. In this school, in classes, we're studying, we're teaching, lecturing. When Christians get together and someone lectures on the Bible, we sometimes call that a Bible study, although maybe it should be more properly called a Bible teaching, because not everyone is necessarily studying.

Mostly people are listening and absorbing the fruits of somebody else's study. I hope that you will become a person who studies the Bible on your own. I, myself, never was

formally trained in the Bible, but when I was young, even before I was a teenager, I read the Bible with great interest and with a desire to understand it.

And as I got older, into my teens, and began to interact with people who had different views, some of them non-Christians and some of them Christians with different opinions than mine, it became a great interest of mine to understand and know what the Bible said so that I could know which views were true and how to defend them and things like that. So I just immersed myself in the study of the Bible for many years. In fact, I'd say about six years, from the time I was about 16 until I was about 22, I probably didn't read anything except the Bible.

And I read it a lot. I read it too many times and with great profit, too. But I've had many people ask me over the years, what is the method of Bible study that you recommend? And are there any books or commentaries or whatever that you recommend so that I could get to know the Bible? I'm going to answer that question in the affirmative and try to give you some answer to that in this lecture and the next one, probably.

But the answer I usually give is I don't really know. Because I've read a lot of books about how to study the Bible, I don't know if I've followed any of those procedures really on a regular basis. When I say the Scripture, I just kind of hate to sound too mystical or anything, because it doesn't seem mystical to me.

I just let the Spirit lead to tell you the truth. I'll feel an urge to study a book of the Bible, it may be, or a subject in the Bible. And I'll simply open the Bible and start reading it, studying it.

If it's a subject, I'll get out some tools and concordance and cross-references and study it there. If I need to, I'll get out some Greek and Hebrew reference works if that seems like a sensible thing to do and if that looks like it'll help. But I don't really recommend one methodology of study.

I think that if a person loves the Bible and wants desperately to understand it and takes every free moment to read it and to search for the truth in the Scripture, and they follow common sense, I think that person can hardly fail to acquire a good understanding of the Bible. But there are some principles and some tools that can be recommended, and that's what I'll be doing in this lecture and the next one, I expect. The handout that I gave you that is entitled Tools for Biblical Study is something I'd like you to look at first.

I believe that you can get to know the Bible very well even if you have nothing but a Bible to study. If you have no other books, no other tools, I think you can get a very good understanding of the Bible. However, the Bible, of course, was not written in English.

It was written in Hebrew and in Aramaic and in Greek. Very little of it was written in Aramaic, a few chapters only, but part of it was written in Aramaic. The vast majority of

the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the entire New Testament was written in Greek.

These are languages that we don't speak. In fact, no one speaks them as they were written. The written Hebrew and Greek of the period of the Bible are dead languages today.

There is, of course, modern Hebrew spoken by Hebrews and there is modern Greek spoken by Greeks, but it's not exactly the same, a different form of the language, just like the way we speak today isn't the same as the King James Version. Languages change. And since no one here speaks New Testament Greek or Old Testament Hebrew, it means that if we're to read the Bible and understand its words, we either have to study Greek and Hebrew and read it in the original, or else acquire a good translation.

We can leave it to other people to go to the trouble of studying the Greek and the Hebrew and becoming masters of those ancient languages, and then in some measure we trust them and their competence in translating that into a language we do know, namely English in our case. I would certainly recommend, if any of you have the time and inclination, that you do study biblical Greek and Hebrew. It's amazing how accessible that is to us, because there are many, many books where you can even teach yourself New Testament Greek and teach yourself Old Testament Hebrew.

I've got many books on my shelf. The problem with that is most of us don't learn foreign languages just from a book. You can, but you have to be very motivated, and I guess I haven't been motivated enough.

I've often thought I would learn Greek and Hebrew if I were living in a situation where it was easy to find someone teaching a class on it. In fact, last year we even had a Greek teacher come and teach here New Testament Greek, and many of our students took his class. But unless someone is teaching you the language, you've got to be extremely motivated to learn the language just from a book.

Hudson Taylor learned Chinese that way. He had a Chinese-English dictionary, and he had a Chinese Bible and an English Bible, and from these he learned Chinese, comparing the passages in English and in Chinese and using a dictionary to sort out which words were what. And he actually taught himself Chinese that way and became a missionary to China.

But that's an unusual man who can do that. I seriously doubt that very many of you will become proficient in biblical Hebrew or Greek that way. If you have occasion to go to Bible college or seminary and take those languages, it could be a very fruitful thing to be able to acquire competency in those languages so that you don't depend on a translator.

You can just pull out the New Testament in Greek. It exists. You can get it.

I've got copies of it, and if I could read Greek, I could read that instead of reading a translation. But like most of you, I don't read Greek, and I don't read Hebrew. But that doesn't throw me into despair.

I've often thought it would be very helpful to know those languages, and I'd love to be able to read the Bible in the original languages. But I just haven't had the time or opportunity to master those languages. So I use translations as you do too.

Now, there is probably no language other than English into which the Bible has come to be translated so many different times. There have been over a hundred different translations of the New Testament into English by different translators. Not all of these are still in print, of course, but I dare say that if you looked at the total number of English Bibles available, there's probably, I don't know, I'd say there's easily 20 or 30 English versions available readily.

There are some others that you might be able to find in an antique bookstore or something like that that aren't in print anymore, but as far as translations of the Bible that are currently in print and available, I don't know. I'm guessing. I would say probably at least 20 different versions are easily available.

But not all are equally desirable. And so people are often asking, what is the best translation of the Bible? Since you can't read the Greek or the Hebrew, you're going to want to get a translation, at least until you can learn Greek or Hebrew, and you may never learn it. So you will be dependent on translators to a certain extent.

Now, I want to say this, that you will not be completely dependent on them, even if you don't learn Greek and Hebrew, because some of the tools we're going to talk about will give you access to the Greek and Hebrew meanings of things without necessarily learning the language. But we'll talk about that when we come to it. The most important tool you can have for biblical study is a Bible, obviously.

And so we need to talk about what the best Bible is. How do you decide in the world of Bibles, of English Bibles, the great plethora of Bibles that are available, how do you pick one out and make that the one you're going to use? Now, this does require a certain amount of thought, it seems to me, although any number of English versions might be adequate. Whatever version you start studying is likely to be the one you're going to want to stick with for a while, for the simple reason that if you memorize any scripture, you'll probably memorize from the version you're reading.

And if, you know, you read this version for a year or two, and you memorize a few dozen or a few hundred verses from it, and then decide, I don't like that version, I'm going to change over to this version for all my study, you'll be disappointed that you didn't, you know, start out in the same version that you're going to end up in. That was one advantage that existed when the King James was fairly universally used in the English

world, because a person could memorize scripture from the King James Version, and they'd know that 50 years later when they were old, that would still be the version that people would be reading and you'd still want to be quoting. And your children and your grandchildren would be quoting it in the same version that you memorized, and that you'd never come out dated.

But ever since, I don't know, probably the 50s or thereabouts, there's just been this rapid succession of new English translations that come out. And each one claims to be superior to all the ones before it, but what I have learned from looking at many, many of them, is that each version seems to improve in some ways on previous versions, but makes its own new changes that are not an improvement. Sometimes the old versions are better than the new ones on some passages, whereas the new ones are better than the old ones in some other passages.

You end up basically going out the same door you came in, in many cases if you change versions, you switch to a version that has improved on the translation of some of the passages over the version you were using before, but the new version has some things changed that are not as good as the one you're using before. So it's kind of a hard call. It's a very hard call.

And I will give you some guidance as to how to make some decisions in this matter, but I'm not going to tell you which version you should use. There are two major considerations in choosing a Bible translation for your study. One is textual considerations, and the other is the translational philosophy of the people who made the translation.

When we talk about textual considerations, we should be aware that the Old Testament manuscripts that are followed by all versions are pretty much the same. I mean, all versions follow very almost identical Old Testament manuscripts, but the differences exist in the manuscripts of the New Testament. There are thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament in existence, but they fall into two distinctive families of manuscripts.

There is that which is called the Textus Receptus, because that means the text that was received, that's Latin, Textus Receptus, because it was passed down for centuries, and the version that it embodies was received by those who, in the early days of translation, were translating the Bible into English and into German and other languages. They used this received text, the Textus Receptus, which was basically put together, if I'm not mistaken, by Erasmus from a lot of different manuscript copies that are around, he made what I think you'd call an eclectic text, where you've got various manuscripts, they don't agree with each other 100%, they have different little idiosyncrasies in them, but a scholar looks at them and he works on each passage and decides which passage has the best attestation in the most manuscripts, or whatever, or the best manuscripts. And

when that is decided on a text-by-text basis, you come up with a final version that's called an eclectic text.

As I understand it, the Textus Receptus was an eclectic text prepared by Erasmus, and it was the text that was used by the King James translators in 1611, it was used by Luther in his Luther translation back in the 1500s, and most of the older versions of the Bible in vernacular languages were taken from the Textus Receptus. Actually, today there are only two versions available in English that use the Textus Receptus. One is the King James version, and the other is the New King James version.

All other modern translations in English use a different set of manuscripts, which we would call the Alexandrian text, because they were found in Alexandria, Egypt. It's also called the Westcott Hort text. There are really only two manuscripts of this particular type, but they embody a type of text that's different than the Textus Receptus in some ways.

For example, there's several verses at the end of the Gospel of Mark that are in the Textus Receptus, but are not in the Alexandrian manuscript. There are also individual verses here and there that are in the Textus Receptus, but they're not in the Alexandrian manuscript. For example, 1 John 5, 7, which says, There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

That's in the Textus Receptus, but it's not in the Alexandrian text. There may be a good reason for it not being there, but that's just a fact. There are occasions where the Alexandrian text, the verses are shorter, because a word will be left out, or a phrase will be left out that is found in the Textus Receptus.

In other words, the Alexandrian text is briefer than the Textus Receptus, and the Textus Receptus is fuller. Now, modern scholars generally feel that the Alexandrian text is superior to the Textus Receptus, and for that reason, almost all modern translations of the New Testament are made from the Alexandrian text. This would be true of the NIV, of the New American Standard Version, of the New English Bible, Jerusalem Bible, the Revised Standard Version, and virtually all others.

All modern translations follow the Alexandrian text. Only the King James Version and the New King James Version follow the Textus Receptus. Now, when you buy a Bible and decide to use it as your study Bible, you're probably going to want to consider this, you know, what text was used by the translators of this Bible, and for that matter, which one's better? I mean, if they're different from each other, which is to be preferred? Now, that's a hard call, because while it is true that most scholars accept the Alexandrian text as superior, there are still many excellent scholars who feel that the Textus Receptus is superior to the Alexandrian, and that the reasons for preferring the Alexandrian text by modern scholars are not good reasons.

Now, what are the reasons? Well, here's the principal thing. The Alexandrian text is older, by a couple of centuries anyway, than the copies we have of the Textus Receptus. Generally speaking, scholars feel that if you get an older manuscript, it is closer to the original, of course, in time, and therefore, it is probably closer to the original in content, because you know that as something is copied and copied and copied and copied, there's a degree of textual corruption.

There are some copyist errors that enter. So, if you find the earliest possible copy, it is assumed that there will be the fewest copyist errors in it, that it will be closer to the original than some more recent copy would be, because more errors are likely to have occurred in the more recent copy than in the older copy. So, the idea generally is that if you can get back closer to the time of the original writing with the manuscript, then it's going to be pure.

It's going to have fewer flaws, and it is essentially on that basis that modern scholars seem to prefer the Alexandrian text, because it is older. It gets closer in time to the writing of the original. Now, is it closer in content to the original? We don't know.

We know that it doesn't have as many words in it. It's a briefer text. It has whole verses left out.

It has words left out of many verses. It's briefer, but is it closer to the original? Well, if it is, then one would have to assume that the Textus Receptus is something of a corruption, in that it has a lot of words and even verses in it that were not in the original. That, you know, the Alexandrian text, that's close to what the original said, and where there's differences, and the Textus Receptus has additional words, verses, or variant readings, that's just been corrupted over time, because the Textus Receptus is more recent in its vintage than the Alexandrian.

And so, this is very largely, I think, the way that scholars have evaluated it. Now, those who still think the Textus Receptus is to be preferred, the King James version, in the New King James, would argue that it is, well, it is true that the Alexandrian manuscripts are older, yet there's a bit of a problem with them. There were only two of them that have survived in that form.

Whereas there are thousands of copies of the New Testament that have survived in the Textus Receptus type. And for that reason, they say, well, listen, this is why. That the Alexandrian form was a corrupted version, and therefore, this being recognized early on, they didn't make many copies of it.

You know, that someone accidentally corrupted the, or maybe on purpose corrupted the text, the Church somehow discovered this and didn't make any more copies of it. So, there are very few copies of it. But that the Textus Receptus reflects the original text the way it was, the Church recognized it and made multitudes of copies of it, and that's why

we have thousands of copies of it.

You see, the fact that the text is earlier, and therefore closer in time to the original, doesn't guarantee that it's closer in content to the original, because it could be an early corruption. And while we don't have any very early copies of the Textus Receptus, it's not impossible that it may nonetheless reflect the original reading. And no one knows for sure.

The weight is like, you go by the age of the manuscript or the number of surviving copies of the manuscript to decide which is the true text. Well, it's a hard call, very hard call. Textual scholars generally say that the briefer text is more likely to be correct, and that, of course, favors the Alexandrian manuscript, because they're briefer, they have fewer verses, fewer words.

They say that it was not uncommon when people were copying manuscripts for them to add in the margin their own commentary. And when they did so, a later copyist, using that copy as their original, would sometimes copy what was marginal commentary from the original, they copied it into the actual text of their copy, so that new verses began to appear in later copies, which had originally been glosses and amplifications and commentary by an earlier copyist. So that the briefer version, that doesn't have all this extra stuff, is closer to the original.

And the one that's got all the extra words and verses and stuff is, you know, the corruption from copyist errors being added. Now that, of course, assumes a certain scenario, namely that copyists put their comments in one time and it became text in the next version. That may have happened sometimes.

I honestly don't know. I mean, my field is not textual criticism, and it seems not impossible that that could happen. On the other hand, the opposite process seems possible to me.

It seems very possible that a person who is copying something may accidentally leave something out without knowing it. His eye may skip a line, and so he copies, you know, the first line and the third line without realizing he skipped the second line. That could happen very easily and often does happen.

In fact, even when I'm reading out loud to the class, you know, I'll read down to the verse so-and-so, and I'll stop and make comments, and I put back in, and I put back in, I've forgotten where I left off, and I put in a verse further down, and I've missed something in between. I catch myself sometimes later realizing I did that. But I'm aware very much of when you're copying one thing down and making your own copy, it's easy to leave out a word or a phrase or a sentence and not know you've done so.

What would not be easy is to add a bunch of words and phrases and sentences and not

know you've done so. Because if a sentence is not in the original, and you make it up from nothing, how are you going to think that that was in the original? I mean, your own creative mind has to create the material, and you should be able to know that you're doing that. What I'm saying is it seems, and I'm no expert about this, but it seems to me more likely that in copying, the corruption would be in the direction of leaving stuff out accidentally, rather than adding stuff accidentally.

And if that is the case, if that's the right way to look at it, then it would be more likely that the fuller text is the original, which would be the textus receptus, and that the more abbreviated text, the Alexandrian, would be a corruption because it reflects someone forgot to add that verse. Someone left out that word by accident. Now, that's an easy mistake to make.

So we really, it's an unsettled question. I mean, the vogue in biblical scholarship today is to just put a stamp of approval on the Alexandrian text, that that's the best text, the other is flawed. But not all scholars agree with that.

There are scholars who still support the textus receptus, and they have arguments in favor of doing so. And my conclusion is, I don't know. First of all, I do not have, and you do not have, the rest of my life to spend becoming an expert in textual criticism.

That's a lifelong study, and I doubt if any of you become textual critics by vocation. If you do, wonderful, but I'm glad someone does, because I don't want to. I'm glad someone's working on it.

But since we will probably never become experts in textual criticism, and by the way, even if we did, it wouldn't settle the question, because there are people who are experts who disagree as to the way the evidence leans. I'm of the opinion that it must not be all that important to settle this matter, because when you look at the differences in the Alexandrian text and the textus receptus, they are, in terms of the significance of their content, very, very, pretty close, pretty identical. Every doctrine of scripture that you would find taught in the textus receptus, you can find taught in the Alexandrian text too.

There's no doctrine left out. What is left out is a word here, a word there, a few verses here, which verses, by the way, are not necessary to establish any particular doctrine, so that I could say, I don't know if this verse was in the original or not. When I see the 1 John 5, 7, and I see that, you know, there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, these three are one, and I see that that is in the textus receptus, that's not in the Alexandrian text, I don't fret over that.

The verse might be authentic, it might not be authentic, I don't know. As long as there's a variant in the manuscript, it's possible to, it's a toss of a coin, it may be. But whether the verse is authentic or not doesn't change anything about my doctrine.

As far as I'm concerned, the doctrine of the Trinity can be established on other verses, we don't need that one. And likewise, all the other questionable things. Now, there are some people who get very paranoid about differences in text.

There are some who have suggested that the textus receptus is the only pure text, and that the Alexandrian text was produced as a result of a Gnostic conspiracy to destroy the Christian faith. And that all the versions that follow the Alexandrian text are New Age translations of the Bible put forward by people who are deliberately trying to corrupt the Christian faith and put forward a corrupted Bible. And so, you know, if you get the NIV or the New American Standard or any of those, you've got a New Age Bible in your hands here.

And I just, I just can't see it. I mean, I have looked at a list, someone sent me once a list of all the places in the New Testament where the textus receptus differs from the Alexandrian text. And I just can't see any conspiracy here.

Because, I mean, like a typical of the difference would be in the textus receptus, it says, Our Lord Jesus Christ. And in some passage like that, in the, in the Alexandrian, just say, Our Lord Jesus, might leave out the word Christ. Or in a similar case, it might just say, Jesus Christ, and leave out Our Lord.

Or it might just say, Our Lord Christ, and leave out the word Jesus. Now, you won't find any systematic elimination of the word Lord from the Alexandrian text in all verses where it appears, or the word Christ is not eliminated systematically, as you would expect if someone was trying to corrupt the manuscript by denying that Jesus is the Christ, or denying that Jesus is Lord. I mean, when you find a verse where the textus receptus says, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in that particular verse in the Alexandrian, it just says, Our Lord Jesus.

Obviously, it's left out the word Christ. And say, Oh, look at that, somebody is trying to deny that Jesus is the Christ. They left that word out of there.

But you look at the Alexandrian text, he's multiple, multitudes of times, he's called Christ, even in the Alexandrian text. It, it has more the appearance of a mistake, not a conspiracy. It's the kind of thing where we know that whoever put together the Alexandrian text was not trying to deny that Jesus is Christ.

They confirm it and affirm it again and again and again. But there are some verses where the word Christ is left out. But apparently by accident, it's the kind of thing that would not be a hard accident to make.

But see, that to me gives evidence that it is an accident, that it is an accidental corruption in the text. And that probably, you may be able to tell, I don't know if you can, I lean toward the textus receptus as the text I prefer. But I'm not going to say like some

of the King James only type people that, you know, any Bible using the other text, it's going to lead you down the fast track to hell.

Because actually all the doctrines in the NIV are the same doctrines in the KJV. I mean, the King James Version teaches all the same doctrines that the New International and the New American Standard and all the major versions use. So I'm not going to try to tell you you must get a version that uses the particular text of the New Testament that I prefer.

You may have very good reasons to prefer the alternate one. I mean, scholars obviously think they do. You have to make up your own mind.

I'll tell you one consideration I have in this matter, and it may not be a strictly speaking scholarly one, but the way I see it, the textus receptus has more words and more verses in it. Those words are either authentic, that is, they were in the original, or they're not authentic. They were added by someone along the way.

The Alexandrian text, which lacks those particular words and those particular verses, is either leaving out authentic verses or leaving out verses that someone added wrongly. Now, here's the call I have to make. I don't know if those words are authentic or not authentic because the manuscripts differ.

But on the chance that they are authentic, which is entirely possible, I don't prefer to get a Bible that leaves them out. I'd like to have all the probably authentic verses in the Bible I'm using, especially since even if those particular verses are not authentic, or those particular words weren't in the original, there's nothing heretical in them. It's not going to hurt me to believe what they say.

If I accept them as the Word of God and it turns out when I go to heaven, that particular sentence was a copyist error there, I've lost nothing. There's no heresy taught in these verses. But on the other hand, if they were authentic and I've been using the Bible and didn't have them, I would feel a little bit ripped off.

I'd rather have all the words of God, and it's just my own preference. People may go the other direction on that. But the first consideration in choosing a Bible that you'll have is, if you're making an intelligent choice, you'll prefer one or the other manuscript types.

And if you prefer the Texas Receptives, you're going to be stuck with either the King James or the New King James. When I say stuck, I don't mean to say that's a bad deal. I love the King James and I love the New King James.

I think they're fine Bibles. And as you can tell, I use the New King James here. And the only reason I use the New King James is because I was using the King James in this school until I started getting so many illiterate students that they couldn't understand the older English, I decided to accommodate them.

So I like those versions, but you might not. You might say, well, I don't think that Texas Receptive really has the qualities I'm looking for in the text. I'll go with the Alexandrian like most scholars do.

In which case, you've got a lot of choices. You can get the NIV or the New American Standard, the New English Version, the Revised Standard Version, the Jerusalem Bible, or a lot of others. Now, once you've decided which manuscript text you're interested in following as the one that you're going to use, and believe me, even if you pick the wrong one, you're not going to die.

It's not going to hurt you. The differences are minuscule. They're so little that it won't make a difference in your Christian life.

It's just a matter of being particular. But once you decide which text you're interested in using, there's another consideration, and this is a serious one. This, to my mind, is more serious than the textual consideration, and that is the translation philosophy.

The task of a translator is to carry over the thought, the message, of something in one language into a new language. Now, in some cases, there are not precise words in the new language, or the receptor language of the translation, that are exactly equivalent to the words in the original. There might be a Greek word, for example, that has no exact English equivalent.

It may have a close equivalent, or it may even have several possible English words that could be adequate translations of that one Greek word. And this means that translators have to make decisions. Now, there are two major translational philosophies.

One is what is called the formal equivalence philosophy, and the other is what's called dynamic equivalence philosophy. Formal equivalence philosophy, the translator says, listen, I'm going to make it as word for word as I can. The dynamic equivalence philosophy says, well, word for word is not important.

Idea for idea is more important. Thought for thought is more important. For example, there are idioms in every language that are not literal.

If I say I have a frog in my throat, I'm telling you something, I'm communicating, if this is the case, if I'm hoarse and I say I have a frog in my throat, I'm not lying to you, but I'm not you speaking the literal language either. I'm using a figure of speech that everyone understands what that means in English. What would it mean, though, in French, to say I have a frog in my throat? Wouldn't mean the same thing, you don't have the same idiom.

Suppose I was speaking to a French audience using a French translator. And I said, I've got a frog in my throat today. And the translator then has to translate that into French so that French speaking people can understand what I said.

Or at least what I'm trying to communicate. Would it be best for him to take the French words for I have a frog in my throat and translate them word for word, even though the French might not know what that means? Or should he take the equivalent idiom in French and just tell them that even if it's not word for word like what it is in English? For example, from what I'm told, the French have the equivalent expression, I have a cat in my throat. Now, I mean, that's their way of saying the same thing.

So if I'm speaking to a French audience, I've got a French translator, I say I've got a frog in my throat. Would it not be better for the translator to say in their idiom in French, I have a cat in my throat. It says the same thing, same idea.

But it uses language they can understand. They would immediately recognize the idiom in other words. This is where dynamic equivalence comes from.

The idea is, it's not always helpful to be word for word accurate, because the actual words may employ an idiom that is totally unfamiliar to people reading the receptor language. But if the translator understands the idiom in the Greek, and he knows it in his own language, let's say English, in English we say the same thing a different way. Would it not be better, he reasons, to give in the English translation the English way of saying the same thing.

So you're not so much going word for word the same, but thought for thought the same. This is what dynamic equivalence requires. Now, I think good arguments can be made for both philosophies.

I have my own preference in this case as well. Other people have other preferences. But one thing you should understand, that since no two languages are identical in terms of, you know, they have words that have identical meaning to each other all the way through their whole vocabulary, a translator has to make choices sometimes.

How to render something, because his goal is to be understood. His goal is to make something that's unintelligible to people who speak his language, understandable to them in his language. And translators have to make choices all the time.

You know, should I give the actual wording here, or should I make it more clear by using something that's more intelligible to people in this receiving language of the translation? I myself prefer a word for word translation as much as possible. If a translation is word for word, there will be problems understanding certain things. Because, of course, if the Hebrew says, you know, God examines the heart and the liver of man, you know, it doesn't mean that God's some kind of a soothsayer who takes out the liver of chickens and predicts the future.

The liver, in the Hebrew way of thinking, or the kid- not the liver, the kidneys, excuse me. The reins, the hearts and reins, it says in the King James. The reins is from the word

kidneys.

God examines the hearts and the reins of a man, the kidneys. Does God do that? Does he dissect people and look at their heart and their kidneys? No, not literally. That's an idiom.

To the Jew, the kidney was where the emotions come from. The heart was where the will resides. And so, in Hebrew, that means something to the ancient Hebrews.

Would it mean the same in English? Should I translate it, God examines the kidneys and the heart? Well, heart has similar meaning in the idiom of English, but kidneys does not. Should we find some kind of equivalent and change the translation? Some would say yes, but I myself, this is my own idiosyncrasy perhaps, I'd rather have them tell me what the actual words mean. And if I find an idiom hard to understand, I'll do my own research.

I figure if that translator can figure out what they mean, I can figure out what they mean, right? I mean, maybe I flatter myself, but I think I have at least average intelligence and I think some translators don't have better than average intelligence. I figure that I'd just as soon trust my own research to decide what the author meant when he used these words, rather than have some scholar tell me what he thinks the author meant. Because the more you use dynamic equivalence, the more you yield to the necessity of interpretation rather than translation.

You see this? If I say I have a frog in my throat, the translator who wants to make that in French something intelligible, he has to know exactly what I mean by that idiom. What if he mistakes it? What if he thinks that I mean something entirely different than what that idiom means, but he thinks it, and then he translates what he thinks it means into other words in French, the meaning is lost entirely because he had to interpret my meaning before he could translate it, and he may have misinterpreted it. That's a possibility.

Now, I can misinterpret it too, but at least I'd rather live with the consequences of my own misinterpretations than the consequences of someone else's misinterpretations. Like, hey, no one has to follow me in this, you don't have to agree with me, that's just the way I am. I would rather do my own research, just tell me what the words are that he used, and I will do the research to find out, to my satisfaction, what they mean in terms of the idioms and the forms of speech.

A formal equivalence translation will be more accurate word but it will be harder to understand for you, because it will have these idioms uninterpreted, merely translated, and those idioms will be foreign to you. There's a lot of things in the Bible that are expressed in ways that we just wouldn't express them, and it'll make it harder, more opaque, more difficult to immediately get the meaning if you get a formal equivalence translation. And some people are looking for an easy read, you know, and if you want an

easy read, don't get a formal equivalence translation.

Get a dynamic equivalence translation, or a paraphrase. A paraphrase is a third kind, and that's where there's no attempt to follow the wording of the original at all, it's just like, it's another step beyond dynamic equivalence, where you just kind of put it in your own words, you know, the general idea. The Living Bible is a good example of a paraphrase.

The Phillips translation is, there's a new one out called The Message, it's a paraphrase. These are not translations, although The Message is said to be a translation, J.B. Phillips said his was a translation too, but all people know that it's really a paraphrase, didn't follow word for word, or even necessarily, I don't think there's a high degree of interpretation. What I want is a translator who's not going to interpret for me, I just want him to translate for me.

The difference between translation, it means this word means this, this Greek word is basically equivalent to this English word. That's what I want him to tell me. I'll do my own interpreting, thank you, but just tell me what the Greek words and Hebrew words mean, and I'll work on it from there.

Some people don't want to do that work. They just say, listen, this guy's a scholar, I'll never be a scholar. Let him study ancient methods of expression, let him search out the other documents that use that idiom, let him, you know, study up the cultural and historical background, let him make those decisions, just give it to me easy.

Just give it to me so I can understand it easy, so I don't have to think hard about it, don't have to study hard about it. People who want to do that should get a paraphrase, or at least a dynamic equivalence translation. There's a story told about, I don't remember, I think it was in Papua New Guinea, some missionaries came there and they were translating the Bible into the language of the people.

It might not have been Papua New Guinea, it might have been another tribal group, but they came to places where the Bible speaks of Jesus as the Lamb of God, and the places in the Bible talk about sacrificing lambs and so forth. And the people to whom this translation is being made, or for whose benefit it's being made, didn't know what a lamb was, they'd never seen one, they didn't have sheep. They were jungle people, never seen a sheep.

And therefore, when the translator came to passages like, you should sacrifice a lamb, the translator had to make a decision. Do we make up, in their language they didn't have a word for a lamb. So do we make up a word for lamb, or should we find something, a dynamic equivalence? Well, some translators apparently decided that since these people, they sacrificed wild pigs, that the idea of Jesus being the lamb is the idea that he's a sacrifice victim.

And so they could call him the wild pig of God that takes away the sins of the world. Now that's not a translation, that's a dynamic equivalence, because they figured, well, the meaning in the original is that Jesus is the sacrifice animal, the sacrifice victim for our sins. And since these people, these translators knew nothing about lambs, but they did sacrifice pigs, let's go ahead and make Jesus out to be the pig.

Now, some people might say, well, that's reasonable. How else could you handle a problem like that? Well, one way you could do it is to, if they had no word for lamb in their language, make up a word or introduce a word for lamb, and then put in a marginal note, put a lamb, is an animal that, you know, in Israel, they tended these animals and bred them, and they got wool from them, and they ate them, and they're a meek sort of a creature that follows very readily after its owner and its shepherd, and they were frequently offered as sacrifices. I mean, you could explain in detail what a lamb is if they don't know.

But as soon as you make it the pig of God, what you've done is you have decided that all that is involved in calling Jesus the lamb is that he was a sacrifice, and nothing more, nothing more about lambs is implied. And since a pig is a sacrifice to them, we'll make him the pig of God. But what if there is more implied in the lamb of God besides the fact that he's sacrificed? What if that's maybe one of the main ideas, but maybe something about his character, maybe something about his purity, who knows? I mean, what are we going to say when he says, my sheep know my voice, my pigs know my voice? There's no parallel to that.

Pigs don't follow like sheep do. It's much, it seems to me, much better to translate formally equivalent, word for word, using the same linguistic forms as the original, and where there is a problem like that, write an explanatory note somewhere, have it in the margin, put it in the footnote or something like that. That way people can, you know, not lose so much as would be lost by the interpretive decisions of a dynamic translator.

One of the guys who sometimes teaches in this school, a guy named John Cook, has had three of his, two of his children gone through this school different years. He's a good friend of ours, an excellent teacher. I don't know if he's teaching this year.

I don't think he is here, but I believe it was his father. Yeah, it was his father. He was a translator of the Bible to a group of people in China, tribal people, and I think it was the Lisu people.

Does anyone know the Cooks? Anyone here know the Cooks? Was it the Lisu people? I think it was. Pretty sure. The Lisu people were like a tribal mountain people in China, and I believe John Cook's father, or his grandfather, wherever they are, went in there, you know, it was his father, and he translated the Bible into the Lisu language.

He followed a formal equivalence philosophy, word for word, which has its problems, of

course, I mean, in the sense that it's a little harder to understand in a receptor language. They didn't have all the cultural background to make sense of it, but he just felt that that was the way to be true to the Bible. He followed it word for word.

Well, since that time, by the way, most of the Lisu have become Christians, they're following God, they've grown, they have their own pastors, they have outreach, and so forth. They're wonderful results of the mission to the Lisu. John Cook went back there a year or two ago and visited them and saw the fruit of his father's work, something like 50 years later.

But there are attempts now by modern missionaries to re-translate the Bible to the Lisu in a dynamic equivalence Lisu translation of the Bible. And when the Lisu saw what was being done, they were insulted. They said, you're treating us like children.

What, you think we can't think as well as you can think? You know, like you have to make all the interpretive decisions for us? I mean, isn't that a little condescending? Isn't it condescending? For a translator to say, you could never understand this as well as I understand it, therefore I'll have to rephrase it for you, for your simple-minded folks. I mean, that's how I feel when I read the NIV, which is a dynamic equivalent. I feel like these people are dumbing it down for me.

And I don't feel, I mean, I don't think I'm overly arrogant, but I don't feel like I need to have it dumbed down any more than they need it dumbed down for them. They're just humans. They're not inspired.

What if they're misinterpreting it and handing it down to me in their corrupted interpretation? This happens, by the way, a fair bit. The NIV, I sometimes pick on the NIV, but not because it's worse than a lot of other versions. It's not worse than a lot of others.

There are many others that are worse than the NIV, and the NIV actually has some strong points. The reason I pick on the NIV is because it's the most popular version, and so many people just love it, that it bothers me that it is so widely accepted and uncritically accepted. It is an instance of a Bible that is translated by a dynamic equivalence philosophy.

There are worse cases. There are worse examples. But the NIV is bad enough.

Bad in the sense I'm talking about. Now, I mean, if dynamic equivalence is the right way to go, then the NIV is a wonderful Bible. But take, for example, the case of the use of the word *sarx* by Paul.

The Greek word *sarx* means flesh. Everybody knows it means flesh. I mean, everyone who knows Greek may know it.

It means flesh. This stuff that's hanging on your bones is *sarx*. In the Greek, it's flesh.

And yet, flesh or sarx is used sometimes literally and sometimes metaphorically. Sometimes all humanity is called all flesh, right? All flesh is as grass, and as a flower of the grass they fade away, the Bible says. Flesh, humanity.

Other times, it means the physical body. My physical body is my flesh. But the word sarx also is used by Paul in another sense.

And scholars are not 100% agreed into what sense that is. Paul has a special usage in his writings of sarx, where he appears to be talking about not the physical body and not humanity in general, but rather human nature in its fallen state is our flesh. He talks about the flesh lusts against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh.

Now, that could be the body. The flesh could be body in that. But in a case like that, many translators believe that Paul is using the word sarx in a special sense that's not usually used, namely of fallen human nature or what they call the sinful nature.

And what you'll find in many cases, certainly every dynamic equivalent version will do this, NIV included, and this bothers me when they do, is they will come to the places where Paul uses the word flesh or sarx there, and where they think it's applicable, they'll change it, and they'll call it sinful nature. They'll translate, they'll say the deeds of the sinful nature are evident in Galatians 5, where it says the works of the flesh, in the King James Version, and what it says in the Greek is the works of the flesh, literal. But the NIV and many other modern translations say the deeds of the sinful nature, obviously translate sarx as sinful nature.

Now, let me just say this, I don't even object theologically with the suggestion that Paul uses the word sarx sometimes to mean the sinful nature. I'm not sure they're right, but it seems to be right in many cases. But I just don't want them telling me where they think he means it that way and where they think he doesn't.

Let them tell me what Paul said. After all, his readers had to read what he actually said. They had to decide, didn't they? I mean, didn't the original Galatians, when he said sarx, I mean, flesh, if he meant sinful nature, didn't they have to figure that out for themselves? Didn't they have to acquaint themselves with his meaning by immersing themselves in his language, his writings, and say, oh, I see a consistency here.

He's using this word a certain way. I mean, in Greek, it means flesh. If he didn't literally mean flesh, but meant something else, then his original listeners had to sort that out for themselves.

Why can't I sort that out for myself? I don't want to be told when the translator thinks it should be interpreted this way. When, in fact, Paul doesn't say it should be interpreted that way in that case. I want to know what Paul said, tell me the words he used, and then I will look for the patterns myself, for my own satisfaction, and decide when I think the

context justifies this other meaning, if it does at all.

I don't want others making that choice for me. Maybe I'm just a rebel, but I do like to think for myself, please. And I mean, another example, common in the NIV, and also in other versions, is that Paul, in about five places, speaks of what he calls the new man and the old man.

You know, putting on the new man, putting off the old man. You're probably familiar, that's Paul's language. The other parts of the Bible don't use it.

But Paul, about five times, uses the expression old man or new man, or both, together. Now, the words in the Greek, the word man in the Greek is *anthropos*, as in anthropology. The word just means man.

It's the Greek word for man. But translators or interpreters often believe that when Paul talked about the old man or the new man, he meant my old self or my new self. Now, maybe he did, maybe he didn't.

There are other possibilities. When he talked with the old man, he may mean my old self, but he doesn't say that. There is a word for self, and there's another word for man.

And to say my old man is not the same thing as say my old self. These are different words. The King James says, and the New King James, following a formal equivalence translation, say the old man and the new man.

Now, let's face it, those terms are not immediately understandable. What does he mean, old man? Well, if he means my old self and my new self, then it would be very helpful, perhaps, to have someone tell me that he means that. But maybe he doesn't mean that.

There are some other theories about what he meant, and I personally hold a different one. And I don't appreciate it when I read a Bible translation where Paul actually said the old man, and the translator tells me that he said my old self, when in fact, I don't even think he meant that when he said the old man. I think he had an entirely different idea.

But if I read the dynamic equivalence, I'm stuck with the translator's own interpretation, his own theological convictions come in there. Happens all the time. A translator can't help but put his own conviction in there, sometimes in his choice of words.

But I'm looking for a translation that the translator is at least committed to word-for-word translation rather than thought-for-thought. And it's not that I'm opposed to a good thought-for-thought translation in general. In fact, I will look at the NIV or the Living Bible or the Phillips translation or Jerusalem Bible many times.

If a passage in my King James or my New King James is really hard for me to understand, I'll often consult these other translators because these people paraphrase it and they say

what they think it means. Now I'll check it out and say, well, that gives me some light. I mean, sometimes I think they're right.

Sometimes I don't. But I at least like to consult them. Looking at a dynamic equivalence translation or a paraphrase is like looking at a commentary.

You get somebody's opinion about what it means. I don't mind that. I'm always eager to hear people's opinions, but I'm not going to accept them as Bible truth.

I want to know what the Bible says and I will reach my own conclusions about what it means. I don't want someone telling me what it means and changing my Bible to reflect what they think it should mean. That's my personal hang-up.

So you need to decide. There's a trade-off in Bible translations. You can either have it extremely literal word-for-word, in which case it's a little harder to understand, or you can have the translator make it a lot easier to understand, in which case he can't keep it as literal word-for-word.

So the decision is, do you want a readable Bible, an extremely readable, easily, the truth is understood right on the surface, at least the translator's opinion of what the truth is rather than the surface, or do you want one that's a little harder to read but more accurate and you can think for yourself? That's your choice. The trade-off is between accuracy and readability. We live in an age of sound bites and short attention spans and low levels of literacy, and of course the popular Bibles are the ones that you don't have to think very hard about, and it makes kind of obvious what the guy means.

When you read it right off, you can almost get it in your sleep, and that's how people like it. But the problem is, whenever you take the easy route, you surrender a certain amount of your freedom to think for yourself, and I don't think it's good for people to surrender their freedom to think for themselves. I think people ought to be made to do a little more hard work.

I think they ought to exert a little more energy, not be so lazy, and do some thinking, do some research if they have to, and search the scriptures, as the Bible says to do, rather than have someone else search them for you and get it to you pre-digested, like Pablo. Now, that's my, you can tell I feel strongly about that. So you can choose formal equivalence or dynamic equivalence.

Now, of the existing translations readily available in bookstores today, there are only three translations that really follow a formal equivalence philosophy. The King James did that, the New King James did that, and the New American Standard did that. Now, you'll notice that if we compare that with the earlier considerations about textual considerations, there are three available today, translations readily available at the stores, that follow what we call a more literal or formal equivalence philosophy of

translation.

The King James and the New King James use the Textus Receptus. The New American Standard use the Alexandrian text. So, regardless of which text you prefer, you can still get a formal equivalency translation using the text you prefer.

Okay? Now, as far as dynamic equivalence translations, they are myriad today. The NIV is the most popular. The New English Bible is a popular one, but not as popular.

It's more popular in England and America. The Revised Standard Version, of course, now there's newer versions of these. You've got, instead of the New English Bible, that's outdated.

They've revised it now. It's called the Revised English Bible. The Revised Standard Version, RSV, has now been updated.

They call it the New Revised Standard Version. The Jerusalem Bible, I think, now is available as the New Jerusalem Bible. The Jerusalem Bible, by the way, is a Catholic translation, but it's sort of the equivalent of the NIV for Catholics.

It's a good translation as, you know, dynamic equivalence translations go. I actually enjoy reading it. I've read the whole New Testament.

I might have read the whole Bible. I think I read the whole Bible in the Jerusalem Bible. I found it very good reading.

By the way, I find the NIV very enjoyable reading. Very enjoyable reading. It reads very smoothly and quickly.

It just makes me angry when I hit a place where they didn't, when they weren't as honest as they should have been, because I know something about what the Greek says, even though I don't read Greek. I've done a fair bit of research of my own. And when I find them doing things like what I mentioned, it just makes me upset with them and says, this is not the Bible for me.

But at the same time, it's a very pleasant Bible to read and largely reliable. So you'll find that almost all modern translations, apart from the King James, the New King James, and the New American Standard, are going to use the dynamic equivalence to a certain extent. You've also got, of course, paraphrases, the Living Bible, the Message, Phillips translation, and most children's Bibles are going to paraphrase things.

They're not going to translate it all. There is a new, what is it called? The New Living Translation. And that is put out, I think, by the same publisher as the Living Bible.

Now, the Living Bible is a paraphrase made by Kenneth Taylor for his children years ago. The New Living Translation, I think, was an attempt by scholars to come out with a Bible

that was as smooth and pleasant and easy to read as the Living Bible, but was more accurate. Not so much a paraphrase, but more accurate.

I cannot tell you how they turned out. I mean, I haven't read that one. It's been out only too recently and I haven't read it.

There are several other versions that have just come out in the last few years, or at least I've only heard of them in the last few years. It used to be, whenever a new translation came out, I bought it and read it. I did that with the New American Standard.

I did that with the NIV. I did that with the Today's English Version, which is called Good News Bible, or Good News for Modern Man. I did that with the RSV.

Whenever a new translation came out, I bought it and read it through. Because I was never stuck on the King James. I never felt like, you know, you've got to stick with the King James.

I was always looking to see if there's a better version. When I read them, I always found that, it's no improvement. It's no improvement over the King James.

The King James has its problems. Even though its translators were excellent scholars, and they followed a formal equivalence translation generally, and they've used the manuscripts that I personally am inclined to trust more, it still has its problems. It's a human production, and because of that, there are areas where the translation could have been improved on.

And I think the new King James has improved on it in some cases, but I'm not sure that it's improved in every case. I am not willing to say that all around the new King James is better than the King James, but I think it's about equal. It's about the same number of areas where it could be improved.

But every translation has its flaws, and for that reason, I'd like to recommend, in addition to whatever translation of the Bible you choose, to get something else. There's special Bibles I'd like you to consider. You can buy a Hebrew, English, Interlinear Old Testament, and a Greek, English, Interlinear New Testament.

On our shelves, all the books I'm recommending here, I think are probably on the shelf back there, so you can look at them in case you want to consider buying some. We're not selling them, but you can look at it to see if it's useful before you decide to go to a bookstore and buy one. But the Hebrew, English, Interlinear Old Testament is in usually three volumes.

It's pretty big. And the Interlinear New Testament, Greek, English, can be gotten in one volume. There's more than one available version of that.

But the thing is, what an Interlinear Bible has is the actual Greek words or Hebrew words, as the case may be, the actual text of the Bible in the original language, and under each word is a near-as-possible English equivalent word. I mean, if you want formal equivalents, it doesn't get any closer than that. Usually they have over on the side column some translation or another to consult with, to look at it side-by-side with.

You can get it with the NIV or the RSV or the King James or something else in the side column, depending on who the publisher is and what they think is a good translation to stick to. But the main feature of an Interlinear Old Testament or Interlinear New Testament is that you have the actual words in the original language, which you probably can't read for yourself, but under each word it has the actual closest English equivalent. Now, one advantage of this is that you can learn a little bit about Greek or Hebrew without learning the whole language, and you can look at some verse where you're wondering, you know, is this translation better or the other one? And you can look and see what the Greek word is, and there's other ways you can access information about that Greek word.

By the way, what I found was very helpful, back in the days when I used to buy each new translation that came out, I can't anymore, they come out too rapidly now, I can't read them all, I don't want to, anyway. But I used to buy a new translation and read it, and what would happen is because I was, I cut my teeth on the King James Version as a child, I know it intimately, when I would read a passage in a new translation that was significantly different than what the King James said, I mean, I expect it to be different wording, but where the actual meaning of a verse seems to be significantly different than what I remembered the King James saying in that passage, I would then go to my English Interlinear and see which one was closer to the original. Amazingly, in most cases the King James was closer, and the new version had not improved on it, they'd actually not, weren't as good, but sometimes it was the other way around.

Sometimes the new translation had a better translation. But what was helpful to me is that by reading a different translation, it made me look up something in the Greek I might not have bothered to look up otherwise. You know, seeing the difference, when I see this translation is different than that, it raises the curiosity, let me go to the Interlinear, I'll find out who's telling the truth here, and then I gain information about the original text I wouldn't have gotten if I'd only read one translation and never questioned it.

So, I think it's valuable to read more than one translation. You can buy a lot of different translations, but one good way to get it is to buy the Comparative Study Bible. It's a parallel Bible, it has four columns, and it has the King James Version in one column, the Amplified in one column, it has the New American Standard in one column, it has the NIV in one column.

Now, that's a very helpful collection of translations. The King James is a good one, the New American Standard is a good one, though using the Alexandrian text, and the NIV is a good example of a dynamic equivalence translation. The Amplified Version is simply a version where the translator decided to put in every conceivable shade of meaning of every Greek or Hebrew word they could, so that a word had more than one possible meaning.

Instead of the Amplified Version just making a choice and using that word, it would choose one word and then in parentheses it would put in all the other possible ways that word could be used. Some people think that's a really wonderful Bible, but to my mind, I have a couple problems with the Amplified. One is that it's totally unnecessary to give all those words, because even though the Greek word in some cases can have all those meanings, in each case it doesn't have all those meanings, and it gets really burdensome to read a Bible that takes so many words to get through a verse, you have to read so much.

But also I found that the Amplified Version does more than just translate, it puts brackets in where it explains what the translator thinks was the meaning of something, and their own private theology is expressed frequently in those brackets, which in many cases I think is not good theology, but of course that's my choice of theologies. But what I'm saying is the Comparative Study Bible has the whole Bible in four versions side by side in columns, a big book of course, and it's useful, because you can just look across the page and see how different translations are under it, or you can do a similar thing just by buying different translations and reading them. It's helpful because as I say, they can take you back to the Greek and Hebrew by seeing the differences, and then you look to see who's right, and then you learn something about the original language and the original version.

Now in addition to Bibles, there are other tools I'd like to suggest that you get. Some of these would be optional, others are almost absolutely mandatory. The single most important book you can buy besides the Bible, in my opinion, is a Strong's Concordance.

Is there anyone here who's never used a concordance? Okay, everyone then knows what a concordance is. It's a book that has every occurrence of every word in the Bible, in the English Bible, listed, and you look up the word that you're interested in, and it'll show every place in the Bible where that word occurs. Now some concordances, like the Strong's, will also give you, beside each word, it'll give a little number that has four digits in it, and that number consults dictionaries in the back of the book.

If you look up a word in English, it's possible that there are maybe three or four different Greek words that are all translated by that English word at one time or another in the Bible. And so if you're looking up this one English word, and you look at the little number by each occurrence, you know, in Genesis so-and-so, in Exodus so-and-so, you'll be able

to look at the number and see if it's always the same word or not, or if it's a different word. And you can look up that number in the dictionaries in the back, and it'll give you some explanation of that Greek or that Hebrew word.

Wonderful tool. The best tool other than a Bible a person can have. If I were to be stranded on a desert island and could have only two books, there's no question, it'd be a Bible and a Strong's Concordance.

Now, there are other concordances. The Young's is a pretty good one. Cruden's is a popular one.

It has often been said that Strong's is for the strong, Young's is for the young, and Cruden's is for the crude. But that's actually a pretty good evaluation of the relative value of those books, although I think Cruden's for the crude is a little harsh. Cruden's Concordance doesn't have the Greek and Hebrew dictionaries in it and the number system, and therefore it doesn't have quite the same value as Strong's and Young's.

Young's Concordance also differentiates the different Greek and Hebrew words for an English word, but in a different format. To me, Strong's is the easiest to use and the most useful, and both Strong's and Young's both claim to have every instance that every word in the Bible occurs. So, if you could think of only one word from a verse that you can't very well remember where it is, you can look up that word in the Strong's and you'll find that verse you're looking for if you're willing to look through sometimes two pages of listings.

But the fact is, there's nothing better. There's nothing better for the English-speaking, English-reading Bible student because you can look up every occurrence of a word in the Bible. You can see how many different Greek or Hebrew words are used.

You can look in the back and see the nuances of the different words. By all means, if you do not have one, buy a Strong's Concordance. Its value has been long recognized by Christians so that it's mass produced.

It's a huge book. You can buy it for \$10 if you go to Pilgrim's Bookstore or get it through CBD. You wouldn't expect to get a book that big for \$10.

It's a book that if it wasn't such a, if they didn't mass produce them and people didn't buy them up by boxes, churches and schools buy them cartons. If it wasn't mass produced, you'd expect to pay \$50 or more for a book that size. It's incredible value for about \$10 and it'll cost you a lot less than your Bible will cost you and it'll be second only to your Bible in terms of value to you as a student of the Bible.

Now there's some other tools that will help you get at the original languages and I can't overestimate or overstate how valuable it is to be able to get at the original languages. If you can't read Greek and Hebrew, that doesn't mean you have to be at the

mercy entirely of people who do. If you would take the time, and no one ever does, to look up every word in your Bible in the Greek and Hebrew, you'd learn as much probably as the Greek and Hebrew scholars know.

You can't do that. But there will be times where you will find verses that use a word and you wonder if that translation is the best translation and what exactly that word means and so forth. And the Greek scholars know it and the Hebrew scholars know it, but you don't know it because you're not a Greek or Hebrew scholar.

Well there are books that will help you to know that. For one thing, you can buy lexicons. A lexicon is a book that has all the Greek or the Hebrew words, if it's Old Testament or New Testament respectively, all the Greek and the Hebrew words in the Bible and then it'll give an explanation in English of what that word means, what all the possibilities are that it means, and in some cases, some lexicons will give you several examples of how that word is used in classical writers and Plato and Socrates or whatever.

They'll give you quite a wide variety of ways of getting at the meaning of that word, usage and things like that. Very valuable. We have all the lexicons I'm recommending here we have on the shelf there and you're welcome to look at.

For the Old Testament, well for the New Testament, Greek lexicons, you can get Thayer's in a paperback. You know, you can buy a Strong's, a Strong's is a big book, but you can buy a paperback version, it's much more compact. And there are Greek and Hebrew lexicons put up by the same publisher, I think it's Baker, that are just the same size as the paperback Strong's and you can get three books that are exactly the same size in paperback, the Strong's Concordance, the Thayer's Lexicon, and in the Old Testament, the Jusiunus Lexicon of the Hebrew.

Now the value of this, of these particular lexicons, the Thayer's and the Jusiunus, is that they have every number numbered with the Strong's numbering system. See, Strong, back in the, whenever it was that Strong lived, he gave every word in the Bible, every Greek and Hebrew word, a number on their hand or on their forehead. Actually, it's a dictionary number, it's a number that corresponds to the dictionary entry in the back of the Strong.

But, if you don't read Greek or Hebrew, you might have a hard time looking up in a lexicon, which lists the words in their actual Hebrew and their Greek form, you might have a hard time looking up a word, but the Jusiunus in the Old Testament, the Thayer's in the New Testament, both are key to the Strong's numbering system. So you can find the number of the word in the Strong's and look up the same number in the lexicon, it'll tell you a lot more about it than those dictionaries in the back of the Strong's can tell you. There are some lexicons that are quoted more often by scholars than Thayer's and then Jusiunus.

In terms of the New Testament, the Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich lexicon of the New Testament Greek is a prestigious one, people often quote, scholars seem to respect. And the Old Testament Hebrew, the Brown-Driver-Briggs lexicon is pretty well respected, we have those on the shelf if you ever want to take a look at them or use them in your studies while you're here. In addition to lexicons, you will probably want to get an expository dictionary of Bible words, either you can get New Testament words or Old Testament words or now you can buy them in one volume.

The most famous of these expository dictionaries is W.E. Vines. W.E. Vines was a Plymouth Brethren scholar and he wrote other things besides this book but his most famous work is his expository dictionary of New Testament words, he's got a lot of copies of it over there. And it's been expanded since he died to include Old Testament words, some other scholars have worked.

And that's probably the easiest resource to use to understand what the Greek word is or the Hebrew word is in a passage. You look up the English word like you would in an English dictionary and when you look up the word that you're interested in in English, Vine will tell you all the different Greek words individually, A, B, C, D, and different Greek words that are used in the New Testament that are translated with that English word. And he will explain the specific meaning of each Greek word and nuances and how they're used and so forth.

And you can learn almost everything you need to know about the Greek or the Hebrew meaning of a thing from just one of these expository dictionaries. One of the problems with Vines is that his own theology comes out a little bit once in a while. I mean occasionally he's given an objective thing but sometimes he'll go off and give sort of a theological thing, his belief in eternal security or his belief in the preacher of raptures that will come out even though the passage, the word he's talking about doesn't teach anything about such.

He just kind of likes to explain and expand sometimes. It's hard to get a scholar to not intrude his own ideas and to just be objective. But Vines is a very good resource.

There's also a Nelson's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words available or Old Testament, I forget. Anyway, Vines is the most accessible. Now you may want to get Bible commentaries, though I don't necessarily say that's necessary.

They are helpful if you want to study carefully. The problem of course with the commentary is that the commentator is giving his opinions just like I give mine. There's nothing wrong with using a commentary any more than there's anything wrong with listening to me or anyone else speak from the pulpit.

A commentator is just doing it in writing. He's explaining what he thinks the verse means. Now I've heard people say, oh I stay away from commentaries because I just

want to read the Bible.

I want to understand it. I don't want man's opinions and so forth and so on. Well the same person better not listen to any sermons or any Bible teachings verbally because they're getting the same kind of thing only verbally.

There's nothing wrong with using commentaries or listening to teachers so long as you're not letting them be the final word. So long as you're letting them give you some ideas to think on, some things to look at, some things to check out, and often they can help a great deal. Commentaries are helpful in giving sometimes the historical background of a passage that you wouldn't ordinarily know because good commentators are good scholars.

They know history. They know culture and things like that. That's part of what they study.

It's one of their disciplines and so you can get a lot of relevant information that helps to understand what a passage means by using commentaries. There are innumerable commentaries. New sets are coming out all the time.

I can't keep up with them and I don't use commentaries all that often. When I do, I'll tell you what I find most helpful. I've got many commentaries in our library but there are definitely two resources in particular in this area that I could recommend fairly wholeheartedly.

One is anything written by F.F. Bruce. He also was a Plymouth Brethren scholar like W.E. Vine, but much more of a free thinker. He didn't follow Plymouth Brethren theology all the time and he was a very objective thinker for the most part and a very careful scholar.

He was considered until his death, well his death was probably 20 years ago almost now, but F.F. Bruce was considered to be the dean of evangelical scholars. In fact, until he came along, fundamentalist evangelicals were viewed by liberals as unscholarly, naive types and F.F. Bruce's work basically elevated the status of evangelical scholarship to a respectable level. I must confess, I don't agree with him all the time, but he's always helpful, always helpful to read him.

He's written commentaries on every book of the New Testament somewhere or another, but different books are in different sets. He never wrote a set of commentaries on the whole New Testament. But generally speaking, once you've read F.F. Bruce's commentary on a book of the New Testament, you don't need to read much of anyone else's.

It's just duplication. Anything that's of value, he has included it. I don't mean to say that he's the only commentator you'll ever need, but over the years I've read F.F. Bruce and other commentators, I get more and more, I'm kind of learning that once you've read F.F.

Bruce, anything of value, the others are going to say he's already said it.

You know, you don't, you save time. You don't read F.F. Bruce first. Also, there's a set of commentaries in paperback that are much more affordable than most sets.

Commentaries are usually in big sets, usually hardbound and expensive. There's a set of commentaries that are called the Tyndale Commentary Series. There's a set of them in Old Testament, there's a set in New Testament.

Each volume is written by a different author on different books of the Bible. They are paperbacks, so they're very affordable. From CBD, I think you can probably get the whole set of the Old Testament for, I don't know what it is now, around \$100, maybe a little more, and the whole set of the New Testament for about \$100.

That might not sound very cheap to you, but you look at the cost of other sets and you'll realize that's a pretty good deal. And I have found that these commentaries, though I don't agree with the theology all the time, are fairly consistently balanced. They tend to give all the sides, you know, if there's more than one way of looking, they give all the opinions and show fairly good representation of the various possibilities.

Each commentator that I've found in that set has been very good and very responsible, not too dogmatic, and willing to show you what the different possibilities are and different opinions are on the subject. I like that in the commentator and therefore I can give them my recommendations. In addition to Bible commentaries and these other things we've talked about, there are some other miscellaneous books that I could recommend.

You can certainly do without them, but you can benefit from them if you happen to be putting together a library and you're not sure what's good and what ain't. One of my very favorite tools is an old book. It's at least several hundred years old.

It doesn't really have any one author to it. I think in the current editions you'll find a forward written by R. A. Torrey, and so his name is sometimes associated with it. Although it's really, I don't know who put it together.

Torrey was familiar with it. He was a contemporary of D. L. Moody, and he said it was a valuable book to him, but I don't know who wrote it, but it was before him. But it's called the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge.

Now this exists in an older version and a newer version. I like the older version better. The newer version was put together by someone who wanted to intrude all of his own interpretations of things, whereas the older version was considerably more objective.

The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge is like a any passage in the Bible by chapter and verse. You could open to a page that would be Psalm 100, and then you'll see under it

verse 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and so forth, just like you would in the Bible. But instead of the Bible verse itself, you'll find under each number a long list, usually a long list, of references to other verses that talk about the same thing.

So it's like an extensive cross reference tool. Now if you have a Bible that has a margin in the middle, that has C over here, and here's another reference to the same thing, you know what we're talking about by cross reference. It might have a margin on the side sometimes.

There'll be a footnote or a note in the verse, and you'll look over in the margin, and it'll give you some other biblical reference. You turn that reference, and you find that that's also talking about the same thing as the verse you're looking at. The Treasury of Scripture and Knowledge does that for every verse in the Bible, and with many, many more cross references than any reference Bible could ever contain.

I mean, it's an incredible resource. And the original one's very compact. It's small print, and it's a compact book.

The newer one is a bigger book, more unwieldy, easier to read print, but I don't care for the opinions of the guy who intruded his commentary. For the most part, the Treasury of Scripture and Knowledge is not a commentary. It simply shows you where to look elsewhere in the Bible to see other verses on the same subject, and that's a very valuable tool.

Some people would use, and I didn't put this in the notes, so you could, Nave's topical Bible. Nave's topical Bible is also a very well-touted tool. Billy Graham says second to the Bible.

It's the book he uses more than any other. It does sort of the same thing, but in a different format. Nave's topical Bible, you look up a word or a subject, and the subjects are listed in alphabetical order, and it'll simply give many passages in the Bible without any commentary, just give the actual passages of the Bible that talk about that subject.

That's called a topical Bible. That can be helpful. In recent years, a couple of volumes have been put up that I think are very valuable.

They're kind of unwieldy. They're big, not easy to carry under your arm, but they're valuable. One is called The Complete Word Study Old Testament, and one is called The Complete Word Study New Testament.

And I've got it backward here. I said that, oh, no, I got it right. The old, no, I have it back.

The Old Testament is edited by Spiros Zodiontes and Warren Baker, and the New Testament is by just Spiros Zodiontes. He's a Greek. You can probably tell by his name, and he's a Greek scholar.

He's also, some of his theological positions are put in footnotes, but basically, the value of these books are that they have the text in the King James of the Old Testament and the text in the King James of the New Testament, respectively, in these two books. There's one for the Old Testament, one for the New. Every word in the text has a number over it.

That number is the Strong's Concordance number for it, and he also has put the Strong's Dictionaries in the back of the book, so you don't have to turn it over to your Strong's Concordance. You can look up the number for every word in the King James Bible, and the Strong's number is over the word in the text, and you can look it up in the back of these books. They have the Strong's Dictionaries reproduced there, but more than that, in addition to the Strong's Dictionaries, they have some other lexical aids, like a more complete treatment of some of the major words, also numbered by the Strong's system.

Also, you can look up every word number in the back in another part of it, and it will tell you every place in the Bible where this particular Greek or Hebrew word is used. It will give you all the references if you're interested in finding that out. It can be helpful for some kinds of study.

But then, even maybe more uniquely, in addition to the Strong's number, it also has a code number or some letters which tell you what part of speech it is, what tense it is, like verbs can be of many different tenses in the Greek or Hebrew, and it has sort of a code that tells you each word, whether it's masculine or feminine in the original, or whether it's past tense or aorist tense or perfect tense or whatever. It tells you all this grammatical stuff, every word in the Bible. Now, without you looking at it, I can't really explain better than that how it works, but if you would look through one of these, if you're a real student of the Bible, you'd immediately see how useful these resources are.

They're not extremely expensive. Another thing that a lot of people have found helpful is Haley's Bible Handbook. It just goes through every chapter of the Bible, and Haley, the author, summarizes, gives background information, tells of archaeological discoveries that relate to it, and so forth.

It's kind of like a commentary, but it's not verse by verse, it's more chapter by chapter. It's more of a summary, and it gives other information of interest. Actually, in the back, he's got a very helpful summary of church history.

It goes through all of church history, talking about the high points of it. Haley's Bible Handbook. Then there's other kinds of resources like Bible encyclopedias and Bible dictionaries.

There's any number of Bible dictionaries. I can't tell you which one's better than another. There's so many of them out now.

Most major Bible publishers have put out also a Bible dictionary. Erdman's or Baker's or Nelson's or someone else. They all have their own Bible dictionaries out.

A Bible dictionary is just where you look up a Bible word, and it gives you in English sort of a summary of the meaning of that word. If you want to go into more depth, you can buy a Bible encyclopedia. The International Standard Bible encyclopedia, I think, is in four volumes.

It's recently come out in a newer version. We have the old version back there on the shelf. Then there's also the Zonderman Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible.

That's in five volumes. These are real helpful. Any subject in the Bible you want to know about, you look them up just like you'd look up in an Encyclopedia Britannica.

The difference is Encyclopedia Britannica covers a lot more subjects that aren't related to the Bible, but these volumes are directly related to biblical subjects. Any subject, any place, any person in the Bible, any concept in the Bible, you look it up there, and it gives an encyclopedic summary of the information, and it's very helpful. Some of you may not be motivated to do a lot of in-depth study.

I really hope that you will be motivated to be serious students of the Bible and that you will use some of these tools. Certainly a good Bible and a concordance is the least that every Christian should have if they can get them. Some parts of the world you can't get those, but you can here, and it'd be almost negligent not to have a good translation of the Bible and a good concordance.

But some of these others would be more optional, depending on how much you want to study deeply. I like to study deeply, and so I have all these books and many more besides, but these are some of the ones that would make a good basic Bible study library. If you had all these books, it wouldn't take up much room.

You could carry them all in a carton and take them wherever you go, and you would always have the ability to study something out about as much as anyone would ever need to study anything else. Anyway, Bible study is not something you do once through and then put it aside. It's a lifetime study, because the more I read the Bible, it's been 30 years or more now that I've been teaching.

I read it for 10 years before I started teaching. The more I read it, the more I see new things. It's a lifetime of study, and to have the right tools will make your study a lot more enjoyable, a lot less frustrating.

If you don't have access to certain information that you feel like you need to understand a passage, it can be very frustrating. But if you have these tools, you'll have just about everything you'd ever need to understand, or at least to get to the bottom of things and understand the Bible passage you're interested in. Okay, we'll stop there.

We were going to talk about the three-stage procedure for inductive Bible study. We'll do that next time, and that'll be our final lecture in this series.