

7 Simple Steps for Doing an Awesome Topical Bible Study

To understand the heart of God and the teaching of Scripture on a specific topic, then you need to know how to do a topical Bible study. So, let's dive in!

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Prepare to do a Topical Bible Study

01

You could choose to study something that just interests you or something that came up in a sermon you heard. Or you might choose a topic based on a need in your life, such as a recent discussion with your children, or because you want to think Biblically about current events. One popular way of choosing a topic is to study a problem you are personally struggling with. You could also be interested in diving deeper into a topic that you heard someone preach about.



Look Up References

02

Use an exhaustive concordance or an online concordance, not just the concordance in the back of your Bible. An exhaustive or online concordance will give you every occurrence of the word (in the Bible version you're using).

You can also use www.studylight.org as the primary resource for obtaining these online

Once you have your list of references – it might be very long! – start looking them up and making notes about what each verse says. **An example using the topic God's will is shown below.** Your goal is to get an idea of what each verse says so that you can eliminate the less helpful verses and choose the most helpful in the next step.

REFERENCE

SUMMARY OF THE VERSE(S)

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Matthew 7:21 | → | Not everyone who says, Lord, Lord will enter heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father |
| Mark 3:35 | → | Whoever does the will of God is my mother and brother and sister |
| Romans 12:2 | → | Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by renewing your mind so you can prove the will of God |
| 2 Corinthians 8:5 | → | Gave willingly of money, but first gave of themselves by the will of God |
| Galatians 1:4 | → | Jesus gave Himself according to the will of God |

Choose 10 – 20 verses to study

03

You want to whittle your long list of verses down to the most important, the most appropriate, the most helpful for the topic. These are the verses you will spend time studying closely, reading the context, and using to guide your thinking.

If you have the time and interest, there is no need to eliminate any verses – you can certainly do an exhaustive study. Also, **if your topic is small**, for example, “meekness,” then you might not want to eliminate any verses. The reason to eliminate verses from your list of references is to give yourself a manageable number to study and not overwhelm yourself.

The goal is to get a usable number of verses to study that will give you a good overview of the topic. Unless you’re going for an exhaustive study – then, more power to you!!



Ask Questions

04

Second to choosing your topic, this step will have the most impact on your study, so take your time. You need to come up with a list of two to five questions to ask about each verse on your trimmed down list. The questions need to be focused on what you want to know.

For example, if you’re studying worship, you might ask: “When should we worship?” “Who should worship?” “What is worship?” “How is worship done?” “What are the results of worship?” Try to use the basic question-starters: who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Try not to have more than five questions, as it can get overwhelming. You could find yourself asking and answering 100 questions if you have 5 questions and 20 verses to find the answers. Don't make it too hard on yourself but do come up with questions that will give you insight into your topic.

Read the Verses, Answer the Questions

05

This step is really the work step. It will take the longest to do. It will also be the most interesting and rewarding step because you will be in the Word.

You can list the answers underneath each verse, like an outline. I make a table on my computer, and write the verse in one column, the answers the second. You can also do this using pen and paper. The questions I asked for the study on God's will were:

1. What is the will of God for believers?
2. Why am I to do God's will (motive, result, reward)?
3. How am I to do God's will? (attitude, action)?

Draw a Conclusion or Summarize Your Findings

06

There is no one right way to do this. You might want to make a list of answers to each question. You might want to write a paragraph for each question. You might want to synthesize an answer that combines elements from several questions. The main point is to look at your answers all together to the complete view of what the Word teaches on the topic you chose.



It is easy to skip this step, to be satisfied with satisfying your curiosity about a topic. But if you do that you are robbing yourself of the life-changing power of the Word. **We should never study with Word without making a deliberate plan for changing our lives to match what we learned.**

In the study we did on God's will, I wrote down two applications: **one was to be in the Word daily**, so I could renew my mind. It's so important to make time for reading the Word. **The second application was to manage my time better**, so I could get everything done.

Topical Studies – Choices, Choices!!

Deciding what to study may be the hardest part of a topical study – there are so many good choices. To help get you started, here's a partial list of topics.

- Abide
- Anger
- Blessing God
- Blessings of God
- Commandments
- Delight
- Diligence
- Evangelism
- Fear
- Forgiveness
- Fruitfulness
- Giving
- Grace
- Holiness
- Hope
- Humility
- Joy
- Might
- Name of God
- Obedience
- Peace
- Power
- Praise
- Prayer
- Prayers of Jesus
- Prophecies about Jesus
- Purity
- Righteousness
- Sin
- Thankfulness
- The Word
- Waiting on the Lord
- Wealth & Possessions
- Wisdom & Foolishness

What is your one takeaway from this session?

