

How to Use

The Lutheran Study Bible

(Based on John 12)

Edward A. Engelbrecht

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3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
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Written by Edward A. Engelbrecht

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Manufactured in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09

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Hymnal Key

LSB = Lutheran Service Book
ELH = Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary
CW = Christian Worship
LW = Lutheran Worship
LBW = Lutheran Book of Worship
TLH = The Lutheran Hymnal

How to Use This Study

This course is designed to be used for small-group discussions. Each of the sessions will provide you with (1) a clear picture of where the session is going and what it is supposed to accomplish, (2) a way to lead into the session's study, (3) input and discussion questions to guide your study of the text, (4) suggested ways to follow up on the study during the week, and (5) closing worship aids.

You will not need a teacher for this course. The material will guide you through the study. No one will have to be the person with all the answers. But you will get the most from these materials if you follow these steps:

1. Assign a leader for each session. That person should do the following:
 - a. Work through the material before the session and, if possible, look at some additional resources to enrich your study.
 - b. Begin and end the session with worship. The devotional time may be quite brief; a prayer or a Bible reading is sufficient. The leader might assign the opening and closing to a worship leader for each session.
 - c. Keep the discussion moving. There is a tendency to get bogged down on some questions or points. The leader should be willing to say, "We'd better move on to the next point."
 - d. Make some choices if time is limited. The leader will want to select those items from the session's content that seem to be most helpful if it is clear there will not be time to work through all of the material.
 - e. Listen. Make sure everyone is heard. Give each person a chance to speak. Encourage participation.
 - f. Pray for all participants.
2. Prepare for each session. The discussion will work better, the material will be more meaningful, and the Word will speak more clearly if everyone in the class works through the session's material before the class session. Even if preparation is limited to reading through the texts that will be a part of the session's study, the effort will enrich your study.
3. Meet regularly (at least once a week) in a convenient and comfortable place. Too much time between sessions means that learning will be forgotten and much time will be used in constant review. Too little time between sessions does not allow time for you to connect what you have learned to your daily living.
4. Provide resources. You will need copies of *The Lutheran Study Bible* to use this study. Encourage those who do independent research to contribute what they have learned or discovered as you study.
5. Encourage participation. The course offers many opportunities to discuss biblical texts and to talk about application of the Word to each individual's life. The key is sharing. Everyone should have a chance to listen and to be heard. The goal is encouragement. You will want to build one another up as you study the Word and learn to use the tools of *The Lutheran Study Bible*. You will want to share the hope and the strength you receive by the power of the Spirit through that Word. Emphasize the positive. Share the joy of the Gospel.

Participant Introduction

Whether you have never read and studied the Bible before or have read and studied the Bible daily for years, *How to Use The Lutheran Study Bible* will guide you into using the many new features and tools in *The Lutheran Study Bible*. It is designed for introducing *The Lutheran Study Bible* to confirmation students, high schoolers, and adults. It assumes no knowledge of the Bible. (For example, the first two sessions work with page references rather than Bible chapter and verse references, which are introduced in session 3.)

Learn at your own pace, choosing the parts of the study that are most helpful for you. If some parts seem obvious or comfortably familiar, check to see whether everyone in your group understands, and move on to the next helpful segment.

Edward A. Engelbrecht
General Editor,
The Lutheran Study Bible

✘ Session 1 ✘

Opening Your New Bible

Our Goals for This Session

- To join the timeless conversation within and around God’s Word
- To understand that the Bible is God’s living Word, which changes our lives
- To find the prayers of the Word in *The Lutheran Study Bible*

Getting Started

If you buy a book at the bookstore or on the Internet, you usually start reading it at the beginning: chapter 1, page 1. Right?

Many people start reading the Bible this way, like they’re getting into a novel or how-to book. They soon find themselves in over their heads. That is because the Bible is such a huge book with such rich and timeless content. In this session, you will consider how to engage with the timeless conversation within and around God’s Word.

An Unfolding Conversation

[Philip] asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Acts 8:30–31

1. Share with one another how you became interested in reading the Bible. If you have read the Bible before, include times you may have started and stopped.

The Bible was not written for our day and our hour alone, so it does not work like a book we might write today or choose from the bestseller list (although the Bible is the all-time bestseller!).

The Eternal Word

“All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

1 Peter 1:24–25 (cf Isaiah 40:6–8)

2. For a moment, reflect on the words *forever* and *eternal* in the passage above. What do they say about your experience of reading the Bible?

3. What expectations do the words *timeless* and *eternal* raise for you as you open the Bible for the first time or anew today?

Ultimately, the Bible was written for every day and every hour—it speaks to all of us about all our lives. So, when you set out to read and study the Bible, you are stepping outside your immediate concerns. You are joining a timeless conversation about eternal things; yet this conversation will lead you to deep and meaningful insights about your life right now.

4. Turn to the title page in *The Lutheran Study Bible* (just after the color plates in the front of the book). Read the quote from Luther at the bottom of the page. What is the purpose of the Holy Scripture?

The Lutheran Study Bible Foreword

So shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:11

The foreword to *The Lutheran Study Bible* introduces how Lutherans approach reading and studying the Bible. Turn to page xi of *The Lutheran Study Bible* and read the first five paragraphs of the foreword. (Divide the reading among volunteers.)

5. How did Luther’s study change His understanding of the Bible?

6. How has this changed and shaped the Lutheran Church?

In Closing

In a world that seems to live for the moment, thoughts like “timeless” and “eternal” can be overwhelming. Reading and understanding the Bible and finding answers in the Bible to your questions—these activities will likely take time, indeed, even a lifetime.

Cling to the Lord’s promise that He will give you life by His Word (Psalm 119:25b; John 6:68). Find the following prayer by Martin Luther on the inside front cover of *The Lutheran Study Bible* and read it aloud together:

Luther's Prayer to Receive the Word

Close by singing or reading in unison “Thy Strong Word” (*LSB* 578; *ELH* 72; *CW* 280; *LW* 328; *LBW* 233).

Thy strong word did cleave the darkness;
At Thy speaking it was done.
For created light we thank Thee,
While Thine ordered seasons run.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise to Thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia!
Alleluia without end!

Lo, on those who dwelt in darkness,
Dark as night and deep as death,
Broke the light of Thy salvation,
Breathed Thine own life-breathing
breath.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise to Thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia!
Alleluia without end!

Thy strong Word bespeaks us righteous;
Bright with Thine own holiness,
Glorious now, we press toward glory,
And our lives our hopes confess.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise to Thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia!
Alleluia without end!

From the cross Thy wisdom shining
Breaketh forth in conqu’ring might;
From the cross forever beameth
All Thy bright redeeming light.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise to Thee who light dost send!
Alleluia, alleluia!
Alleluia without end!

Give us lips to sing Thy glory,
Tongues Thy mercy to proclaim,
Throats that shout the hope that fills us,
Mouths to speak Thy holy name.
Alleluia, alleluia!
May the light which Thou dost send
Fill our songs with alleluias,
Alleluias without end!

God the Father, light-creator,
To Thee laud and honor be.
To Thee, Light of Light begotten,
Praise be sung eternally.
Holy Spirit, light-revealer,
Glory, glory be to Thee.
Mortals, angels, now and ever
Praise the holy Trinity!

✘ Session 2 ✘

Why a *Study Bible*?

Our Goals for This Session

- To learn about the two basic notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*: commentary notes and application notes
- To distinguish between interpretation and application
- To begin to understand the art of distinguishing and applying Law and Gospel

Getting Started

Choose two participants to dramatize or read aloud the following conversation.

Parent: Good morning, Honey.

Child: Morning.

Parent: After I drop you off, ask what time I should pick you up. Then give me a buzz.

Child: Gotcha! Is it okay if I hang out for a while?

Parent: Not too long. I've got to make some stops on the way home and the florist closes at 5.

This might not be the same conversation you would hear at home, but conversations like this are held each day all across the English-speaking world.

7. Imagine being someone new to the parent-child conversation above. How might the words of the conversation mislead you about what the parent and child are discussing?

When you open the Bible and start reading, you are checking into a distant culture and conversation. What's more, as noted in the first session, you are checking into conversation that is timeless and eternal. You are having the experience of an outsider, one who likely does not know the dynamics of the language, setting, and issues.

Filling in the Gaps

Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules.

Exodus 24:3

Context—this is where a Study Bible comes in handy. The main feature of a Study Bible, commentary notes, helps you understand biblical culture and the conversation in its fuller context. Take a moment to skim the following Study-Bible-treatment of the conversation above:

Honey. A nickname used by family or friends to express how sweet or dear someone is to them. **drop you off . . . pick you up.** Describes taking someone for a ride in a vehicle, leaving him at his destination, and returning to give him a ride home. **buzz.** The sound made by a ringing telephone. The child is to call the parent and explain when the parent should arrive to take the child home. **Gotcha!** An expression meaning, “I understand and will do what you have asked.” **hang out.** To spend time with friends. **make some stops.** Fulfilling tasks such as buying things at the market. **the florist closes at 5.** The parent plans to purchase flowers as one of the tasks to be fulfilled. Businesses usually lock or “close” their doors in the evening, so the parent and child will be traveling home around 5:00 p.m. The child will be away from home most of the day.

8. Reflect for a moment on how the notes sound to you as a cultural insider, one who knows and perhaps often has a conversation like the one above. How necessary or helpful are such notes for you?

Study notes fill in the context a person needs for understanding, because context is the key to discovering meaning. Whether you are hearing a conversation or reading a book, you need context.

Then and Now

Read aloud John 12:12–19 (below).

The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

“Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
sitting on a donkey's colt!”

His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”

9. What challenges does this passage offer to you as a reader? In other words, what questions might you have for Jesus or another person on the scene?

10. Discuss with your group how the setting for your study of the Bible is different from that experienced by these ancient witnesses. Briefly note some differences based on the text of John 12 above.

In this study, you will have opportunity to investigate aspects of John 12.

Application of the Bible

Now when they heard this [message] they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Acts 2:37

The Lutheran Study Bible is designed to provide you with context for the Bible passages you read. Interpretation is the first step when studying the Bible. However, there is also a second step: application of Law and Gospel. What is the difference between the Law and the Gospel?

- A. The Law teaches what we are to do and not to do; the Gospel teaches what God has done, and still does, for our salvation.
- B. The Law shows us our sin and the wrath of God; the Gospel shows us our Savior and the grace of God.
- C. The Law must be proclaimed to all people, but especially to impenitent sinners; the Gospel must be proclaimed to sinners who are troubled in their minds because of their sins. (*Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation*, question 85)

The Lutheran Study Bible helps you reflect on how passages of God's Word apply to your life and the lives of those with whom you live and work day by day. It does this by pointing out the two main messages of the Bible: the Law and the Gospel.

11. Read below the application note for John 12:12–19. Notice that the first sentence gives a summary and context for the passage. How does the rest of the note do more than just "fill in the gaps"?

12:12–19 Riding on a donkey, Jesus enters Jerusalem on the Sunday of Passion Week. Leaders of the Jewish nation reacted as we often do when we are no longer in control: frustrated and fearful. But Christ comes in a humble and gentle manner, eager to listen to our prayers for salvation. • Hosanna! Please save us, O blessed Lord. Amen.

A typical application note in *The Lutheran Study Bible* presents (1) a summary or context for the Bible passage, (2) the Law of the passage as it relates to your life, and (3) the Gospel of the passage for your life.¹

12. How does the note above from John 12 speak about your life?

Application notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible* also end with a prayer or praise starter to guide you into devotional reflection about how the words apply to your life and how you may respond to the Lord, whose living Word has touched your life.

Deepening Insights

The meaning (interpretation) of a Bible passage does not change because of when it is read or who reads it. However, the application of a passage may vary depending on the needs and experiences of the reader. Consider the following true story:

A pastor was leading a couple through a study of Bible texts about the death of Christ. He paused to say, “Christ died for your sins. Is that the proclamation of the Law or of the Gospel?”

The young man, raised in the church, said, “That’s the Gospel because Christ loved me so much He died to take away my sins.”

The young woman, not raised in the church, said, “I didn’t think of it that way. I thought it was proclamation of the Law because Jesus had to die for *my sins*. My sins were the reason for His death.”

13. Reflect on the different responses to the same words: Christ died for your sins. How did the same words draw very different applications from the two persons?

Mature students of the Bible often have “Aha!” experiences when they re-read passages of the Scripture they have studied before. You will often hear them say, “I’ve never noticed that about this passage!” Often what has happened is that their personal growth and development as a believer has caused them to notice a different application of a passage that they have known and read for years. The text has not changed and its meaning has not changed. But the reader has changed and so the text speaks to him in a surprisingly new way.

An application note in *The Lutheran Study Bible* usually presents *one way* of applying the biblical text. But the application notes cannot encompass all possible applications. That would take a far larger book than a Study Bible!

¹ Not every Bible passage includes both Law and Gospel. In such cases, the application note is fleshed out from the broader context.

For Next Time

To begin learning more about the meaning and application of the Bible, read the introduction to the article “How to Read and Study the Holy Bible,” page xxvi.

As in most large books, the front matter for *The Lutheran Study Bible* is numbered with Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.). The main part of the book—the text of the Bible—is numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.). Keep this in mind as you read page references.

In Closing

Find the following prayer on the inside front cover of *The Lutheran Study Bible* and read it aloud together:

The Prayer to See God’s Ways

Close by singing or reading in unison “The Law of God Is Good and Wise” (*LSB* 579; see also 580; *ELH* 492; *CW* 287; *LW* 329; *TLH* 295).

The Law of God is good and wise
And sets His will before our eyes,
Shows us the way of righteousness,
And dooms to death when we transgress.

Its light of holiness imparts
The knowledge of our sinful hearts
That we may see our lost estate
And turn from sin before too late.

But those who scornfully disdain
God’s Law shall then in sin remain;
Its terror in their ear resounds
And keeps their wickedness in bounds.

The Law is good; but since the fall
Its holiness condemns us all;
It dooms us for our sin to die
And has no pow’r to justify.

To Jesus we for refuge flee,
Who from the curse has set us free,
And humbly worship at His throne,
Saved by His grace through faith alone.

✠ Session 3 ✠

Basic Tools in *The Lutheran Study Bible*

Our Goals for This Session

- To learn the basic parts of a Bible
- To learn the major divisions of the Bible
- To explore the introductions to books of the Bible

Getting Started

Now that you have learned more about interpretation and application, and how important context is for understanding the Bible (or any communication), you can dig into the many features of the Study Bible. The following exercises will give you experience with a variety of tools, beginning with the basics of using book, chapter, and verse references in the Bible. Use only exercises the members of your group need, based on their level of experience with Bible study.

The Parts of the Bible

Behold, the days are coming declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant.

Jeremiah 31:31

The Table of Contents. The Bible isn't just one book but a collection of many books written by many authors under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit. For this reason, the Bible is divided up into various parts. A Study Bible also includes numerous tools for studying the Bible. The table of contents lists the major divisions of the Bible, the books of the Bible, and the many tools for studying the Bible.

Turn to the Table of Contents on pages v–vi in the front of your Bible. There you will see a list of “Front Matter,” which includes various tools for studying the Bible. Then you will see three main divisions of the Bible printed in heavier letters. Lastly, you will see the “End Matter,” which includes a few more tools.

14. Write below the titles of the three main divisions of the Bible (not the front matter or end matter):

Within the main divisions of the Bible appear names for various books of the Bible as God's people arranged them many centuries ago (e.g., Genesis, Exodus). The leaders also divided the books into collections based on the authors and contents of the books. In *The Lutheran Study Bible*, each of these collections of books has an introduction that describes the literature in that part of the Bible (e.g., the first five books are "The Books of Moses," named for their author).

15. Write below the names of three other collections of biblical "Books":

16. Turn to page 1 at the beginning of the Old Testament. Read the quotations. What is the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament?

The Text of the Bible. Turn to page 1806 of *The Lutheran Study Bible*. The two larger columns of text toward the top of most pages in *The Lutheran Study Bible* are the actual text of the Holy Bible. Be careful not to confuse the text of the Bible with the various helps provided by modern editors (e.g., the two columns of notes at the bottom of a page, below the rule line).

17. Write here the first words (part of a sentence) of the actual Bible text from page 1806.

Biblical Book Headings, Chapters, Verses. Within the text of the Bible, you will also see headings, numbers, and letters provided as tools for those wishing to read and study the Bible. These tools are described below. One of the first things you will notice at the top of most pages in your Study Bible is an entry such as "John 12:12" at the top of page 1806. The heading includes the following parts:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Verse</u>
John	12	:12

The heading at the top of the left page (p. 1806) refers to the first numbered passage of the actual Bible text you will find on the two pages before you. The heading at the top of the right hand page (p. 1807) is the last numbered passage you will find for the two pages before you. Bible editors added these "running headers" at the top of the pages so that readers can navigate from passage to passage more easily. The headings are not part of the original biblical text written by the apostle John and others.

As you look at the biblical text on the page, you will also see large numbers, which mark the beginning of chapters (e.g., "12" on p. 1805), and smaller numbers, which mark the beginning of verses. (There are still more tiny letters and numbers on the page and in the narrow center-column, but we will explore those tools later.)

18. Using the book, chapter, and verse reference system, look up the following Bible passages from the Old Testament (the first three examples) and the New Testament (the last three examples). Write the correct page number beside each reference. Read aloud each passage in your group.

Genesis 1:1

Joshua 24:14

Isaiah 53:11

Matthew 1:18

Acts 16:31

Hebrews 11:1–3

The chapter and verse numbers in *The Lutheran Study Bible* are standard for English Bibles. However, readers should know that chapter divisions and verse divisions have changed over the centuries. If you become involved in detailed study of the Bible, such as referring to the ancient editions or translations of the Bible (e.g., the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, or the German Luther Bible), you will encounter differences in the chapter and verse numbers.

ESV Subheadings. Also appearing on most *The Lutheran Study Bible* pages are subheadings provided by the ESV editors. Note well: these subheadings are not part of the actual biblical text. Modern Bible editors provide them for the convenience of their readers.

The subheadings summarize portions of a biblical book so that you can easily see what the contents are. For example, on page 1806, the subheading “The Triumphal Entry” shows that John 12:12–19 encompasses one major section or thought from the author, the apostle John.

The subheadings often correspond with parts of an outline for a book of the Bible. You can find an outline for each biblical book in its introduction (e.g., for John, the outline is on p. 1776).

19. Find where John 12:12–19 lies within the Gospel of John. According to the outline, what preceded and what followed “The Triumphal Entry”?

20. Turn to the following passages of the Bible and write below the subheadings you find.
Isaiah 52:13–53:12

2 Chronicles 35

Psalms 118

Zechariah 9

Biblical Book Introductions. Each book of the Bible has its own introduction, which includes a standard set of features as follows:

- Chronology (top bar of the first page)
- Overview (side bar of the first page)
- Engraving (picture on the first page)
- Opener (on the first page)
- Luther's preface to the book
- Challenges for Readers
- Blessings for Readers
- Outline

Sometimes other features are included, such as articles on topics raised or addressed by the book. The notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible* often refer to the features in these book introductions.

21. Turn to page xiii and read about the artist whose illustrations appear in *The Lutheran Study Bible*. In your own words, describe why the artist produced these monumental illustrations.

For Next Time

For the next session, read "I. The Lord Works through His Word," pages xxvii–xxviii.

In Closing

Find the following prayer on the inside front cover of *The Lutheran Study Bible* and read it aloud together:

Lead Us to Your Word

Close by singing or reading in unison "The Gospel Shows the Father's Grace" (*LSB* 580; see also 579; *ELH* 492; *CW* 287; *LW* 329; *TLH* 295).

The Gospel shows the Father's grace,
Who sent His Son to save our race,
Proclaims how Jesus lived and died
That we might thus be justified.

It sets the Lamb before our eyes,
Who made the atoning sacrifice,
And calls the souls with guilt oppressed
To come and find eternal rest.

It brings the Savior's righteousness
To robe our souls in royal dress;
From all our guilt it brings release
And gives the troubled conscience peace.

It is the pow'r of God to save
From sin and Satan and the grave;
It works the faith which firmly clings
To all the treasures which it brings.

It bears to all the tidings glad
And bids their hearts no more be sad;
The weary, burdened souls it cheers
And banishes their guilty fears.

May we in faith its message learn
Nor thanklessly its blessings spurn;
May we in faith its truth confess
And praise the Lord, our righteousness.

✂ Session 4 ✂

Beyond the Basics

Our Goals for This Session

- To find dates for persons, events, and texts in the Bible
- To understand the distinctive features of the ESV translation
- To appreciate the Bible as literature
- To study the Bible topically using *The Lutheran Study Bible* Reference Guide and the Concordance

Getting Started

22. To get the most and the best use out of a new toolbox, you need experience with the various tools. Review each feature presented on pages xx–xxiii with the group by inviting participants to read the explanations aloud. Below, write the names of tools you need to learn more about.

After reviewing the various features on a typical page of *The Lutheran Study Bible*, you may explore the following intermediate tools.

Intermediate Tools

They received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Acts 17:11

Running Chronology. The shaded box at the top of the center column of each Bible page includes information about (a) the dating of events on that page of the Bible or about (b) when that text of the Bible was written. The purpose of this information is to give you a sense of where you are in history as you read and study the Bible.

23. Look up Romans 6. According to the Running Chronology, when was this part of the Bible written?

24. Look up Exodus 12:33. According to the Running Chronology, when did the Israelites leave Egypt?

To learn more about the dating of biblical events and writings, consult the introduction for the book you are studying or turn to the master chronology on pages xcii–cix at the front of the book.

25. According to the first two paragraphs of “Biblical Chronology and World History” (p. xcii), who is the first person in the Bible whose life and death can be dated?

26. According to “Calculating Dates” (p. xcii), how do historians figure out when the events of the Bible took place?

ESV Translation Notes. Running across a page of Bible text you will see a rule line below the columns of biblical text. On many pages, just above this rule line, you will also see notes printed in small script at the end of the right-hand column. Editors of the ESV translation prepared these notes to explain various features of the biblical text and why they translated it as they did.

27. Turn to John 12:5, 7. Notice the small superscript numbers ³ and ⁴ at the end of “denarii” and “keep it.” Locate the ESV Translation Notes for these two passages and write them below.

You can read more about the ESV Translation Notes under “Footnotes,” on page xix.

28. According to the section “Footnotes,” what are the four basic types of footnotes for the ESV text?

29. Choose one type of footnote and discuss its significance in your group—how does it enhance your understanding of the story?

30. Turn to page xv. According to the “Translation Legacy,” what was the “fountainhead” for the ESV translation?

31. According to “Translation Philosophy,” how is the ESV translation different from some other Bible translations?

To learn more about the ESV translation, continue reading pages xvi–xvii. You can also learn more about the differences between Bible translations by consulting the following articles on The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Web site: “Comparative Study of Bible Translations” (2002), “Language Guidelines and Principles for Translation” (1999), and “All Those Translations” (1998). The current URL is <http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=2778>.

Bible Literature Introductions. Turn to the Table of Contents on page v. There you will see listed the books of the Old Testament. You will also see introductions to collections of books in the Old Testament, which we mentioned in the previous session of this study (pp. 14–15). These introductions describe distinctive features of these books of the Bible.

32. List three examples of literary introductions to books of the Old Testament.

33. List two examples of literary introductions to books of the New Testament (p. vi).

At the end of the Introduction to the Books of Moses (pp. 5–7) appears a list of key terms and phrases for Moses’ books. This is because biblical writers or writers of a certain era often repeat words or phrases that were of special interest to them and their readers.

34. According to page 5, what other lists of key terms and phrases appear in *The Lutheran Study Bible*?

35. Choose a key term or phrase from the Books of Moses and read the explanation aloud in your group. How does the explanation strengthen or clarify your understanding of the term or phrase?

You will learn more about studying key terms or phrases in the following sections on the Reference Guide and the Concordance.

The Reference Guide

Accessing the Bible Topically. Most studies on the Bible focus on a particular book of the Bible. However, groups and individuals may wish to study a topic that the Bible addresses throughout various books. To study the Bible topically, begin by consulting the topical portion of the Reference

Guide on pages lxxix–xci (notice the grey banding on the edge of the pages, which distinguishes the Reference Guide from the rest of the book).

36. Turn to page xci of the Reference Guide and find the entry on “ZION.” List below three types of resources provided on the topic.

The Reference Guide is the place to turn when searching for answers on modern issues too, which the Bible addresses by its teachings.

37. Find the entry on “ABORTION.” What types of resources could you consult on this topic?

38. Turn to page lxv and read the note about the content and use of the Reference Guide. Then spend a few minutes paging through the Reference Guide. What other resources are available to you in the Reference Guide? List a few examples.

Using the Concordance

Doing Word Studies. Another way to investigate a biblical topic is to look up the passages that mention the topic and learn what they teach.

39. Turn to page 2243 at the end of your Bible and read the introduction to the Concordance. Then look up “BLESSED” in the Concordance. How many references are there?

40. What other words might you look up to explore the topic of blessing?

The Concordance in *The Lutheran Study Bible*, though extensive, does not include every instance for all major words in the Bible. For that breadth of study, you should use *The Crossway Comprehensive Concordance of the Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002) or the ESV Bible search page at <http://www.gnpcb.org/esv/>.

The advanced search feature on the Good News Publishers’ site is a powerful tool for studying words and phrases in the ESV translation.

Finding Familiar Passages. Once you are familiar with the Bible, you can find passages you recall from memory for which you do not know the reference.

Consider the following Bible texts:

“Be holy, for I am holy.”

“Husbands, love your wives.”

“Christ, who is the image of God.”

“Christ also suffered once for sins.”

41. Look for key words (usually nouns or verbs) in the texts above. Using the Concordance in *The Lutheran Study Bible*, see whether you can discover the reference for each Bible quote. Write the references below.

For Next Time

For the next session, read “II. Scripture Interprets Scripture,” pages xxviii–xxix.

In Closing

Find the following prayer on the inside back cover of *The Lutheran Study Bible* and read it aloud together:

Prayer for Blessing on the Word

Close by singing or reading in unison “Speak, O Lord, Your Servant Listens” (*LSB* 589; *ELH* 230; *CW* 283; *LW* 339; *TLH* 296).

Speak, O Lord, Your servant listens,
Let Your Word to me come near;
Newborn life and spirit give me,
Let each promise still my fear.
Death’s dread pow’r, its inward strife,
Wars against Your Word of life;
Fill me, Lord, with love’s strong fervor
That I cling to You forever!

Oh, what blessing to be near You
And to listen to Your voice;
Let me ever love and hear You,
Let Your Word be now my choice!
Many hardened sinners, Lord,
Flee in terror at Your Word;
But to all who feel sin’s burden
You give words of peace and pardon.

Lord, Your words are waters living
When my thirsting spirit pleads.
Lord, Your words are bread life-giving;
On Your words my spirit feeds.
Lord, Your words will be my light
Through death’s cold and dreary night;
Yes, they are my sword prevailing
And my cup of joy unfailing!

As I pray, dear Jesus, hear me;
Let Your words in me take root.
May Your Spirit e’er be near me
That I bear abundant fruit.
May I daily sing Your praise,
From my heart glad anthems raise,
Till my highest praise is given
In the endless joy of heaven.

✂ Session 5 ✂

Advanced Tools

Our Goals for This Session

- To understand the various uses of the center-column references
- To use thematic articles and maps
- To recognize the abbreviations for Church Fathers
- To develop a study plan and/or a devotional plan

Deeper Content

These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

1 Corinthians 2:10

The Center Columns. Perhaps the most challenging tool to master in *The Lutheran Study Bible* is the center-column cross-reference system on Bible pages. Many students of the Bible ignore this host of references and tiny notations. However, these columns hold great value. One of the core beliefs of faithful Christian interpreters is that Scripture interprets Scripture. In other words, as you read the Bible, you should compare similar passages and topics with one another as a means of helping you understand them in light of one another. The center-column references make it possible for readers to follow a “Scripture interprets Scripture” approach to study.

42. On page xviii, read “Center-Column Cross-Reference System.” What Bible traditions were sources for the cross-reference system in *The Lutheran Study Bible*?

43. On page xviii, read “Using the ESV Cross-Reference System.” Which superscript characters are part of the cross-reference system: alphabetical or numerical?

44. According to the superscript notes for John 12:13, which other Bible passages will help you understand this verse? Write the references below. Then look them up and discuss them with your group.

45. On pages xviii–xix, read “Types of Cross-References.” What are the first three types of references included in *The Lutheran Study Bible*?

46. How is the first type of reference different from the second and third?

47. How is the fourth type of reference different from the first three?

Another unique use of the center-column references is in identifying parallel accounts in biblical history. Such references are especially important for the Gospels.

48. Turn to page 1574. Read “Cross-References in *TLSB*.” How do the center-column references identify parallel passages? Write an example below.

49. See also the center-column notes for John 12:12–19 and explore the parallel passages.

50. Turn to pages 628–29. What other biblical books include numerous parallel passages?

Cross-Reference Overflow. On many pages in *The Lutheran Study Bible*, the number of related Bible passages is so great that the cross-references cannot all fit in the narrow center column. When this happens, the rest of the references appear at the end of the right-hand column of Bible text.

Theology Icons. Icons mark some notes with doctrinal themes of special importance to the chief doctrine of the Christian faith: justification by grace through faith in Christ alone. The icons highlight who God is (Trinity Icon ☉), the ways God works in our lives (Law and Gospel Icon ☪),

the means of grace (Word and Sacrament Icon ☞), and the spread of the Gospel (Mission Icon ☞). To review the appearance and meaning of the four theology icons, see the description of them on pages xxii–xxiii.

Cross-Reference to an Article or Map. *The Lutheran Study Bible* contains over 250 short or full-page articles on a wide variety of biblical topics. The notes frequently include page references to this material. To gain further insight, simply turn to the page indicated and read as much or as little of the article as serves your purpose. Maps are also frequently referenced in case you wish to see where the action of the biblical text is taking place.

51. On pages lxxi–lxxiii, you will find a complete list of articles for *The Lutheran Study Bible*. Look over the list and write below three articles you could explore for studying John 12:12–19. Write the names of the articles below.

On page lxxiv, you will find a list of maps. On pages lxxv–lxxviii, you will also find a list of place-names in the Bible.

52. Read the explanation on page lxxv. Why can't every place mentioned in the Bible be plotted on a map?

53. Find the map entry for "Bethany" that is mentioned in the note for John 12:1. Check the map. What region was Jesus in at the beginning of John 12?

Luther's Small Catechism. In 1529, Luther published the Small Catechism as a summary of biblical teaching. All Lutherans study this summary as a helpful means for gaining access to the clear, deep, and broad teachings of Holy Scripture. The notes often refer to passages in the catechism. You can see the catechism on pages xxxiii–xliv.

54. According to the heading on page xxxiii, what is the relationship between the Bible and the Catechism?

Church Fathers and Other Quoted Authors. Along with Martin Luther, *The Lutheran Study Bible* cites passages from 143 other Christian writers or documents. Each quotation is introduced by an abbreviation of the source. You can find a complete list of the abbreviations for Church Fathers on page lxvii. Two of the writers whose names are abbreviated were not Christians, but they wrote important historical works that help us understand the context of biblical events: the Greek historian Herodotus (c. 495–425 BC) and the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (AD 37–c. 100).

55. Read the editor's comments on quoting Church Fathers (p. xii). In your own words, how are the writings of the Church Fathers helpful in studying the Bible?

Developing a Study Plan or Devotional Plan

A special article on pages 1425–26 of *The Lutheran Study Bible* provides readers with life goals for study and a chart for considering what biblical books and topics they might study.

56. Read “Maturing in Faith and Service.” What books or topics are of greatest help and of interest to you and/or your study group?

57. Read the introduction to “The Lectionaries” (p. xlvi) and to “A Two-Year Reading Plan” (p. lix). Which devotional reading plan would best suit you?

To Complete This Study

This week read “III. The Holy Spirit Blesses the Use of God’s Word through Faith,” pages xxix–xxx. Plan to attend a Bible Study offered by your congregation.

In Closing

Find the following prayer on the inside back cover of *The Lutheran Study Bible* and read it aloud together:

Prayer to Abide by God’s Revealed Will

Close by singing or reading in unison “Lord Jesus Christ, with Us Abide” (*LSB* 585; *ELH* 511; *CW* 541; *LW* 344; *TLH* 292).

Lord Jesus Christ, with us abide,
For round us falls the eventide.
O let Your Word, that saving light,
Shine forth undimmed into the night.

In these last days of great distress
Grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness
That we keep pure till life is spent
Your holy Word and Sacrament.

To hope grown dim, to hearts turned cold
Speak tongues of fire and make us bold
To shine Your Word of saving grace
Into each dark and loveless place.

May glorious truths that we have heard,
The bright sword of Your mighty Word,
Spurn Satan that Your Church be strong,
Bold, unified in act and song.

Restrain, O Lord, the human pride
That seeks to thrust Your truth aside
Or with some man-made thoughts or things
Would dim the words Your Spirit sings.

Stay with us, Lord, and keep us true;
Preserve our faith our whole life through—
Your Word alone our heart’s defense,
The Church’s glorious confidence.

Four Ways to Show Respect for Your Bible

1. Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Bible daily (see “The Collect of the Word” on the inside cover of *The Lutheran Study Bible*).
2. Believe the Bible’s teaching (John 6:29).
3. Put the Bible’s teaching into practice, and so bear witness to God’s grace in your life (James 1:22).
4. Handle your Bible respectfully. For example, don’t place it on the floor or bury it in a stack of other books.

Hold [His Word] sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Martin Luther