

General Topics :: Bible software: Good or Bad?**Bible software: Good or Bad? - posted by tj servant (), on: 2007/1/23 21:25**

I need advice.

I first of all would like to request prayer for this issue, I really need it. Okay, on to the problem at hand.

I am debating getting some Bible software, and need some input and advice from my SI brothers and sisters. This may not seem like a big deal to some of you, but it is to me, so just bear with me. I will start by giving a little background information.

I'm "old school". I like books. I like the feel, fragrance, and functionality of them. I enjoy getting up and selecting a volume from the shelf. I have passed many a night with just me and a book. I will never abandon them completely.

Now, what concerns me is what might happen in terms of Bible study and sermon prep. Has anyone noticed any changes in their experiences? I feel that the time spent getting the books and flipping the pages add to my reflection and meditation time. Is this a legitimate concern in your opinion? Any good or bad experiences in this area?

I would like to point out that I am considering this mainly because of school, I just recently returned to college (religious studies). The work load and sheer volume of papers that will be written has me thinking about software. Does Bible software really make a big difference in this area? Are they worth the money?

Next I would like software suggestions; this should contain the good and the bad

Thank you all

God bless

TJ

Re: Bible software: Good or Bad? - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2007/1/23 21:51

In my opinion, most Bible software programs that I have see simply are not worth anything, save perhaps for the ability to have access to multiple translations, and to look at them at the same time all on the same screen.

The only program that I have seen that has really impressed me is something called "Bible Works." We use it at my seminary, and it is a superb tool when it comes to studying things in the original languages. It costs a few hundred dollars, but, considering the time you would save doing research the old fashioned way, it is a worthwhile investment. Thankfully my seminary is a little tech-savvy, and they have developed a remote access program that allows us to use the program at school from home. It's a little more sluggish, but it does save me some money in the long run.

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Outside of that, I've yet to see any real practical value in most Bible programs save for some basic search features. One's that load up on maps and classic devotional works don't impress me too much. Besides, for classic devotional works I'd rather hold the book so I can dog-ear and highlight pages for possible future reference. For academic lexicon's like B DAG, I'd rather have access to a complex search engine. I guess it depends on what you are going to use things for.

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/1/23 22:00

Brother tj, I would say that nothing beats time in a book. For me it is the danger of being on the computer when I am supposed to be studying, and before I know it I have spent an hour or so looking at many things that though not bad are a distraction.

As for decent Bible study software, I would recommend e-sword as it is free, and has a large amount of resources.

It can be found here

(<http://www.e-sword.net/>) E-sword

Many blessings to you brother

Re: Stay with the book - posted by fromtheold (), on: 2007/1/24 1:08

If you already have the disciplin to read the bible only stay with it, But bible software has helped me a lot when i did not know where to find certain scriptures. As well as the commentaries, helped me when i did not know much of the bible. Its where God leads you that is the matter. :-)

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/1/24 5:10

Quote:
-----In my opinion, most Bible software programs that I have see simply are not worth anything, save perhaps for the ability to have access to multiple translations, and to look at them at the same time all on the same screen.

Wow, Jimmy, that really surprized me! I am with the original posting in that I love the experience of a book. For meditation/reflection I don't think a screen is ever going to replace this experience. I cannot meditate from a screen. However, I have found Bible software to be a wonderful tool for Bible study.

To have various translations is a great safeguard to prevent us going off into some highly individual conclusions based on the KJV but the search facilities of Bible software are, as you Americans like to say, awesome!

Strongs Numbered Concordance provided a great key to identifying individual Hebrew or Greek words and the Baker Bible House Strongs Number-linked Concordances, Dictionaries and Lexicons were a great boon in the 1970s but the calculating power of the computer chip makes it possible to do this kind of 'word checking' with much greater facility and accuracy.

I often say that Bible words do not have definitions but that they have histories. To be able to see the first instances of a word and to then meditate on the different uses of that word are the only way to getting a real handle on Bible words. You can do this with the old concordances and lexicons but to eliminate the vagaries of the translators and to follow the word step by step through the book through the power of a computers search engines is a wonderful tool.

I will add a word of caution. I discovered some time ago that what I learn quickly, I forget quickly. The best aid to memory is a pencil. "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes," (Deut 17:18-19 NKJV) This passage tells us that God required the kings of Israel to have their own copy of the law written in their own handwriting and that they were to meditate in it daily. The way in which a printed page imprints itself on the memory (so that we know that verse is somewhere on the top left hand corner of a page!) is enhanced when it is in your own handwriting. There are all kinds of markers that the mind sets up to recall a passage in your own handwriting. Of course, you have to have a legible handwriting style, otherwise it will get a bit frustrating.

Our lifestyles now militate against the kind of scholarship that was provided by the likes of Strong and Young. Perhaps this is why most profound books are older ones. In our modern climate they would have him on the preaching circuit and with guest appearances at all the big meetings and the calm atmosphere required for contemplative thought and writing would just disappear. I don't think we shall have any great writers in our modern culture; good but not great. (just my opinion ;-))

So I would recommend quiet contemplation with good shaped book with good typefaces in a place with no clocks but for intricate Bible word study Bible programmes are a wonderful tool.

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As regards which... I have used Online Bible and E-Sword for the PC; they both have their advantages. and for the Mac, Accordance and Mac-Sword.