



## **BIBLE CLASS**

It happened soon after I had become a Christian. It happened in a Bible class. The teacher asked the person sitting in the front row to read Ephesians 2:1 and comment on it. Then he asked the person sitting next to him to read verse two and comment on it.

Oh, oh! I'm sitting in the second row, and it appears I'm going to be asked to read verse nine. I read and reread it trying to come up with some comment.

Then it happened. The person sitting next to me who was to read verse eight said, "I pass." So I was asked to read verse eight! My mind went blank. I had no idea what was contained in verse eight (or any of the preceding verses). I had completely block out what was being said to concentrate on verse nine. (No, I didn't "pass out" but I would have liked to have been invisible.)

## **THE MORAL OF THE STORY**

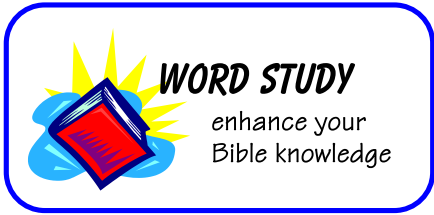
No, the moral is not about a poor method of Bible study. (That would be a good subject, but not here.) The moral—the lesson to be learned—is this: we must be careful when studying our Bible we do not isolate a verse and ignore the context. To do so invites misunderstandings and erroneous beliefs.

The Bible was not written in chapters and verses. The chapter breaks we have now were made in 1445 A.D.; verses were numbered in 1551 A.D. Sometimes a thought is split by chapter breaks. Sometimes thoughts are broken up by verse divisions. We would do well to only use chapter breaks and verse numbering for referencing, which was the original intent.

## **POSTSCRIPT**

By the way, verse eight: "*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*" is the very verse that many quote (without regard for the context) to prove that one is saved by grace only! Note verse 10: *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

**To understand the content of a verse one must understand the context.**



## BIBLE CONCORDANCES

I remember when I bought my first complete Bible concordance. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, a very large, heavy book. With it I was able to look up any word in the KJV of the Bible and find all the places where it is found. It was very handy. For example, I could find all the passages that contained, say, the word "spirit."

As I progressed in my studies of this word, I came to realize that the word was not used the same way in all passages. The meaning was varied, depending on the context.

Now, I'm not a Hebrew/Greek scholar, but it appeared to me that to lump together different verses containing the same word and conclude they all mean the same thing was inaccurate.

This should not be a surprise. We often use English words in different ways. Check out the word "get" in the dictionary. There are over twenty different meanings. The word "heart" has over ten definitions. The word "constitution" has several uses.

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The Greek word, pneuma, translated "spirit" in the New Testament.

### HOLY SPIRIT

*"The wind (pneuma) blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the **Spirit** (pneuma)."*

John 3:8

### UNCLEAN SPIRITS, DEMONS

*When evening came, they brought to Him many who were **demon**-possessed; and He cast out the **spirits** (pneuma) with a word, and healed all who were ill.*

Matthew 8:16

### ANGELS

*But to which of the **angels** has He ever said, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET"? Are they not all **ministering spirits** (pneuma), sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*

Hebrews 1:13-14

### CHARACTER

*"It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the **spirit** (pneuma) and power of **Elijah**, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

Luke 1:17

### INVISIBLE PART OF MAN

*He [Jesus], however, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Child, arise!" And her **spirit** (pneuma) returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat.*

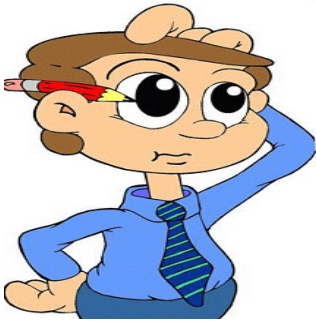
Luke 8:54-55

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This list is far from exhaustive. There are approximately **18 different uses** (148 occurrences) of the Greek word pneuma translated "spirit" in the New Testament.

### BRINGING IT HOME

Be aware. "Concordance studies" must be carefully done with consideration for the context. Failing to do so results in misconceptions and erroneous conclusions.



Ponder  
This

## Character Tests

### How One Handles Wealth

#### **To live in wanton luxury or to be rich in good works?**

*Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.*

1 Timothy 6:17

### How One Handles Poverty

#### **Learn contentment or flay out at others?**

*A poor man who oppresses the lowly is like a driving rain which leaves no food.*

Proverbs 28:3

### How One Deals with Success

#### **Give God the glory or be boastful and proud?**

*The king [Nebuchadnezzar] reflected and said, "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?"*

Daniel 4:30

### How One Deals with Failure

#### **Accept responsibly or blame others?**

*King Saul said, "I did obey the voice of the Lord . . . But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord."*

1 Samuel 15:20-21

#### **There are always two people who know your true character: you and God.**

*For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

Hebrews 4:12

## Taking a Firm Stand

*But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29*  
Standing firm for what is right in the face of opposition will probably result in persecution.

#### **However, it also produces:**

**intensified confidence – strengthened faith – satisfaction in the soul  
indefatigable spirit – joyful countenance – peace within – peace with God**

*Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.* 1 Corinthians 16:13

*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* James 1:2-4

## ❖ Tidbits ❖

### TRUTH

There is such a thing as personal belief, but there is no such thing as personal truth.

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Saying it's a Bible truth does not make it so.

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It's one thing to show a person he is in error, and it is quite another thing to put him in possession of the truth.

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The truth may hurt, but a lie is agony.

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The most dangerous lies are those that most resemble truth.

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The one seeking truth will keep an open Bible and an open mind.

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The problem with a half-truth is the other half.

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Truth angers those who refuse to be convinced.

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Words can be used as a smokescreen to obscure the truth, rather than a light to reveal it.

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### Personal Musings

*The knowledge of ignorance is the beginning of knowledge. – Greek Maxim*

It's a little disconcerting to look back on my youth and realize just how much I didn't know when I thought I knew it all.



### Pearls from Proverbs

### LYING

*Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment.*

*Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but counselors of peace have joy.*

*No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked are filled with trouble.*

*Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are His delight.*

12:19-22

*He who has a crooked mind finds no good, and he who is perverted in his language falls into evil.*

17:20

*A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who tells lies will not escape.*

19:5

*What is desirable in a man is his kindness, and it is better to be a poor man than a liar.*

19:22

*The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.*

21:6

*A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth works ruin.*

26:28

F.Y.C. is a monthly publication by Ron Adams.

Articles written by others are duly noted.

Bible quotations are from the NASB except where another translation is referenced.

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