

## How to study the Bible: Search and Other Tools

Many of us like study Bibles and there many available; your favorite translation may even offer multiple editions with various types of study aids included. These can be very helpful, but again keep in mind that the footnotes, maps, margin references, and explanatory articles are not the inspired word of God. Like commentaries and other study aids it pays to compare the material your study Bible provides with other reliable tools -- the study Bible might be your quick first resource, but for non-trivial questions you'll need other resources as well. *CEB example, page 28.*

In the Classic NET Bible website (at <<http://classic.net.bible.org/>>) all of these related resources are linked to from each scripture passage: hymns, maps, Bible dictionary/encyclopedia, word analysis, articles and commentary. Sadly, this site seems to be gradually dying.

We're probably all familiar with web search tools like those provided by Google, Bing, and DuckDuckGo. We may also have a concordance in the back of our Bible, which is like a print version of a search tool. The search tools at Bible Gateway and Classic NET Bible are similar. Let's look at some of the search features that may not be obvious but can be very useful. Search terms we'll look at and discuss: *convene, convent, taste, taste and see, Joshua's triumph, "God Most High"*

In preparation for next week's session on “synthesis” here is a somewhat more advanced question that we can begin looking at now, and will be your homework assignment for our next meeting: **In the Beatitudes is Jesus teaching us that the Kingdom of Heaven will include some of each kind of person He describes (poor in spirit, those who mourn, etc.), **OR** is He teaching, rather, that every citizen of the Kingdom of heaven will have each (all) of those characteristics? Another way to ask this question is whether Jesus is describing the variety of individuals who are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, or is He describing the personal traits and characteristics of (each of) the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven?**

This question arose from last week's look at commentaries when I came across this statement at <[https://www.preceptaustin.org/matthew\\_53](https://www.preceptaustin.org/matthew_53)>: *The Beatitudes are a package deal, not something to pick and choose from. Along with the Fruit of*

*the Spirit that is to ripen in every believer, a Christian should, and must, display each of these character traits. They are not just for the “spiritual elite,” but are for every believer. In addition, these are not eight separate groups of disciples, some who are meek and others who hunger for God. It’s easy to make the mistake of saying, “I’m just not merciful” or “I’m just not a peacemaker.”*

We want to see if those claims are consistent with the text of the scripture passage. We'll need to use the methods we've already learned: examine the context, compare different translations to resolve uncertainties, perhaps do word studies for key words and phrases, consult commentaries to see how various other scholars have interpreted the passage. And, since this week is about search, we'll use a search to help answer some parts of the question.

First, context: what is the context of the passage. Who was Jesus talking to? The Beatitudes are the beginning of a longer passage often called the Sermon on the Mount that ends at Matthew 7:29. To what extent is that longer passage about the Kingdom of God?

Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach this message: “Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is near.”

Matthew 4:23 Jesus went throughout all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all kinds of disease and sickness among the people.

Matthew 4:25 And large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan River. <sup>5:1</sup> When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain. After he sat down his disciples came to him. <sup>5:2</sup> Then he began to teach them by saying:

### ***The Sermon On The Mount***

Matthew 7:28 When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed by his teaching, <sup>7:29</sup> because he taught them like one who had authority, not like their experts in the law. <sup>8:1</sup> After he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him.

If Jesus is describing (in the Beatitudes) the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven does He actually say that each of them will (or should) have each of these “blessed attitudes”? That is the question I'll leave you to explore for next week, when we'll work together to find the answer(s).

**Next week:** Synthesis