**Step 4. Conduct a Word Study**

A word study helps you understand the meaning of a word in the Bible as used by your author in your particular book. The meaning of words is contextual, so a word study gives you a practical way to understand how that word is used in a particular context by looking at its meaning in various contexts.

In order to do this phase, the assumption is you picked 1-3 verses you're interested in. Then you can move forward. If you’re not sure what to choose, pick Romans 3:21–24 and study the word “righteousness.”

1. Pick a word from your verses that is prominent, interesting, or rare from the one to three verses you focused on from your chosen subsection.

2. Take a word you're interested in and look it up on biblegateway.com in five different translations to see how each of them translate it.

What are your 1–3 verses? This should match what you picked in the last part of Step 3.

How is your word translated in five translations?

1.
2.
3.
4.

3. Pick the most common translation of your word among those five. Which is the most common translation of that word among the five?

4. Then do an English-only word study using the steps in the guide, "How to Do a Book Study" (Step 4). Choose an English translation from among the Bibles that have the most common translation of your selected word. Which Bible translation is that?

5. Use Bible Gateway (biblegateway.com), select your translation, and type in your word in the search bar so you can see all the occurrences of your word in your chosen translation Bible. Once you have pulled up all the verses in the Bible, read them through in one sitting to get the general sense of how the word is used and take notes as you go. The goal here is to form categories of how various biblical writers use this word in context.

As you read, take note of 1) what you’re observing about that word, 2) what categories of meaning exist in the Bible outside your particular book, and 3) anything else important to you.

Summarize your conclusions in one paragraph.

6. Write another paragraph to apply your general conclusions about this word to your particular passage of 1–3 verses, using the immediate context to discern how it’s being used in that instance.

7. Do a "concept study" just using Romans as a whole if possible (or perhaps just the major section in which your word lies). That is, take your word study findings, and decide on the concept. Then, read your document again looking not for that word but for that concept. Write your conclusions in at least one paragraph, making a note at the first whether you are using the whole book or just the major section (in which case name also the section of verses you did your concept study in).