

## Share Your Thoughts and Research

Regarding the video: ***Keep “a Tight Grip”—Through Effective Personal Study***

Link to the video:

[https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/VODBiblePrinciples/pub-jwb\\_201807\\_6\\_VIDEO](https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/VODBiblePrinciples/pub-jwb_201807_6_VIDEO)

If you have not watched that video yet i recommend you do. It has some very good advice on personal study. Here are some quotes from the video:

"So if we want to understand Jehovah's thinking better, we need to dig deep in our study, and then share those thoughts with others."

"You have to get behind the information, not just focus on one verse, or one chapter. See who's involved, the time, the conditions, how many people are there, and then you'll get the true meaning of the verse."

"Analyze a certain Bible account from different perspectives. We can't see the whole picture from one angle."

"I share my research results with Bible students, and that helps them to know Jehovah better, and it helps them to see that what they are studying is of practical value."

"Every session of study that is properly done with good meditation adds a new pillar to the strength of our faith."

"I look forward to those times when I can, you know, run up stairs by myself and just shut everything off, and it's just me and Jehovah."

I shared those quotes with a friend and this is what she said about them:

"These are some great quotes. Could it be that they are acknowledging that many do not do research or deep study and maybe they also don't have scriptural discussions very often outside of their family worship times? That's what I observe. I think you need to highlight this on your site as a priority item. Like, "Look, friends, the GB is directing and instructing you to do deep study and talk about it! You are disrespecting NO ONE by doing this! You NEED to do this!" And, as we have found, it does not throw you out of the truth or dishonor Jehovah. It strengthens your faith and your relationship with Jehovah!"

(The full transcript of the video is in my Transcripts folder.)

## my advice

If you have not read the first item in my Ramblings folder: "- *About These Files (read me first)*" or don't remember what it says, you should read that before continuing. I refer here to some things mentioned there but don't provide the references since they are listed there. So a refresher read would not be a bad idea either. :^)

For those interested in hearing it, here is my advice about deep research and sharing your findings.

First of all, what does it mean to have new thoughts or research findings? If you opened a Watchtower and read that Jesus died on a stake and not on a cross, did you discover anything new? No. That is the standing belief plainly described in JW publications. And if you share that, you are not sharing "your" thoughts, you are just sharing what a Watchtower says. The video discusses digging deep into the Bible, finding new thoughts that you hadn't considered before, and then sharing those new thoughts with others.

Even though it is a directive from the GB, i recommend that you be very selective with whom you share your research findings. Don't assume that everyone will be amenable to it. There are many who seem to value the words in JW publications above the words in the Bible. (Ac 4:19)

Which box will you check (choose to believe) when there is a contradiction between the two?

☐ Watchtower

☐ Bible

Many pay no attention to how the Governing Body (GB) describe themselves: as imperfect men who are just doing their best even though "*they do not claim to have special knowledge*" and "*are not inspired.*" Instead they imagine them to be perfect servants of the Most High who Jehovah speaks through and should never be questioned or contradicted. And that they should be the only source of our scriptural understanding because it is not our place to read the Bible and form an understanding about what it means on our own. They do not recognize that the Bible was written for all of us to read and acquire new knowledge and understanding from, not just those taking the lead. (2Ti 3:16, 17) Even JW publications often have quotes from outside sources regarding scriptural reasoning showing that even the GB acknowledge that they are not the only ones who can read the Bible and gain new understandings. Anyone can.

Jehovah ensured our access to the Bible so that we, His congregation, can learn on our own and can "*make sure*" that those taking the lead are leading properly and teaching correctly, as we see from such verses as Acts 17:11; Romans 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; and Philippians 1:10, along with the many scriptures that promote our personal quest for "*accurate knowledge*". Those who put the words of the GB over God's words in the Bible, in effect, add the GB to Paul and Apollos, over God and Christ. (1Co 3:4, 10, 11) Though the spiritual food the GB provide has great value, it is merely the foundation that we build upon. So feel-out the person you are thinking of sharing your findings with before you do. You may be surprised with a response like: "*If the GB wanted us to think that, they*

would have told us!" (I think such ones are why many in the world accuse us of being "brain-washed".)

A spiritual child consumes only what is fed to it. The Watchtower is the main source of the spiritual food that is fed to us by the GB. It contains the milk that is the *"primary doctrine"*, the *"elementary things."* (He 5:12; 6:1) When one has matured spiritually he moves beyond the milk provided by his mother, and plants his own crops, raises his own livestock, and hunts for wild game (to continue with the metaphor). But many, when they learned the truth, were satisfied with the milk they were fed and have never moved beyond it to mature spiritually. Or they have slipped back from their endeavor to grow spiritually to their former ways of only drinking the milk provided to them.

**(Hebrews 5:11-6:2)** We have much to say about him, and it is difficult to explain, because you have become dull in your hearing. <sup>12</sup> For although by now you should be teachers, you again need someone to teach you from the beginning the elementary things of the sacred pronouncements of God, and you have gone back to needing milk, not solid food. <sup>13</sup> For everyone who continues to feed on milk is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, for he is a young child. <sup>14</sup> But solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their powers of discernment trained to distinguish both right and wrong. **6** Therefore, now that we have moved beyond the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying a foundation again, namely, repentance from dead works and faith in God, <sup>2</sup> the teaching on baptisms and the laying on of the hands, the resurrection of the dead and everlasting judgment.

At Hebrews 5:14 Paul tells us that only spiritually *"mature people"* can *"distinguish both right and wrong,"* and that they can only do so because they *"have their powers of discernment trained."* Do you think Paul is talking about knowing whether it is right or wrong to do such things as steal or murder? No. If Paul is saying that only spiritually *"mature people"* who *"have their powers of discernment trained"* can understand whether they are sinning or not, then the vast majority of the people on earth could not be held responsible for their actions. (Jn 9:41a) No, but even a child who does not have its *"powers of discernment trained"* understands that sort of *"right and wrong."* It is a natural understanding. (Ro 2:14, 15) So given that the context of those verses is *"solid food"* and the *"doctrine about the Christ"*, what do you think Paul is referring to when he speaks of the *"right and wrong"* that only mature discerning ones can distinguish? If you say *"accuracy in the scriptures"*, i agree since Paul is not talking about sinning in the surrounding verses, but is talking about accurately understanding the *"solid food"* of deeper learning *"beyond the primary doctrine."*

Let's consider the topics Paul mentions at Hebrews 6:1, 2.

**(Hebrews 6:1b, 2)** repentance from dead works and faith in God, <sup>2</sup> the teaching on baptisms and the laying on of the hands, the resurrection of the dead and everlasting judgment.

- What are dead works, and since they are not sinning why do they merit repentance?
- How is faith in God different from belief in God?
- Why does Paul pair *"repentance from dead works"* with *"faith in God"* ?

- What is the purpose for each of the 5 different kinds of baptisms mentioned in the Greek Scriptures?
- What was the purpose of the laying on of the hands?
- Why does Paul pair *"the teaching on baptisms"* with *"the laying on of the hands"* ?
- What is the nature of the resurrection?
- Since there is no unending torment in a fiery Hell, what is everlasting judgment?
- Why does Paul pair *"the resurrection of the dead"* with *"everlasting judgment"* ?

Can you easily answer all of those questions and show the scriptures to back it up? Do you think those topics are beyond the *"milk"* for new ones and are *"solid food"*? Paul does not. He considers them to be milk for young children. Paul says that only when you move beyond primary doctrines such as those can you begin to press on to spiritual maturity. (He 6:1a) How do we do that? Through personal in-depth study of the Bible.

The Introduction of the 1984 NWT concludes with this paragraph:

The wealth of cross-references and technical information in this 1984 revised edition of the *New World Translation* helps one to see how the 66 books of the Bible form one interrelated, inspired whole, producing the fabric of the "pure language" of truth. (Zephaniah 3:9) By means of this in-depth study, new vistas of Bible understanding can be opened up for those who truly are "trembling" at Jehovah's Holy Word. (Isaiah 66:2, 5) It is our desire that by the full use of the several features of this edition of the Holy Scriptures, each reader will be helped to gain an accurate knowledge of truth and will appreciate more fully that "the word of God is alive and exerts power." (Hebrews 4:12) Truly, happy are those who continually feast at Jehovah's rich spiritual table by means of his living Word, the Bible.—Matthew 5:3.

The video encourages us to do our own research by digging deep into what the Bible says, and then to share what we have found with others. If you keep it to yourself you may find that you are fostering inaccurate ideas. So sharing is a very important step in gaining *"accurate knowledge"*. (Mt 18:20) That is why i have this Ramblings folder. To share what i have found in the hopes that any inaccuracies in my research will be brought to my attention.

When you share your research findings don't expect to be right every time. Use that sharing and the other person's perspective into your thoughts as a way to help you better understand what you have read. And when someone shares their findings with you, don't be too quick to disregard what they say if it contradicts what you think. The two of you should look into the related scriptures together and see what the Bible actually has to say on the matter. If you objectively use your *"powers of discernment"* you may find that they are right and that you are wrong. (He 5:14) If your findings are unclear, or don't add-up, further research is needed.

Don't let a negative comment (that has no scriptural basis) about your thoughts stop you from doing research. You are following the directions found in the Bible. Perhaps you just need to find a different friend to share with, one who is more aligned with Bible principles. If you can find no one locally to share with, feel free to share with me. :^)

Of course a well-studied spiritually mature friend is the best person to share with because they will have extensive Bible knowledge and can help determine if your findings are scripturally accurate. (1Co 3:1, 2) Unfortunately many of us tend to respond with dogma instead of looking at the scriptures themselves and seeing what they actually say. (That is a bad habit i still have to be careful of falling back into.) So make sure that is not what they (or you) are doing. If their response is publication based and has no scriptural backing, then that is what they are doing. They may not even be aware they are doing it, so politely redirect the conversation back to what the scriptures say.

When your personal research takes you to a publication don't automatically assume the article is correct just because it has scriptures listed as reference. For instance, the self protection QFR i made an article about lists many scriptures throughout it and even has partial verse quotes, but when you take a serious look at those scriptures you find that not a single one backs up the premise of the article, and in fact most are contrary to it. Though i am sure the article was written in good faith, it seems to have been based on emotion and dogma rather than what the Bible says. Perhaps the GB are swayed by a bit of veneration and devotion for their predecessors and are hesitant to contradict what they taught. Perhaps questioning the teachings of their predecessors evokes feelings of heresy and guilt so they think it is somehow wrong and avoid it. Perhaps their view is: "Who are we to correct them?" I don't know. I'm just trying to come up with a working theory here. If you have a better one, please share it with me! :^)

Do you say? "But what about Matthew 24:45?"

**(Matthew 24:45)** "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?"

Yes, the GB are tasked with providing "*food at the proper time.*" But what is that "*proper time*" that they are to feed the domestics? Referring back to Hebrews, when is the proper time for a parent to feed their child? When they are young and growing. When the child reaches maturity the adult son or daughter then feed themselves. And what is the video prompting us to do? To step-up and begin to feed ourselves from the Bible! The spiritual food the GB provide is not abandoned. It is the "*foundation*" (He 6:1) we build our maturity upon. The child would not have grown strong and reached adulthood without the food his parents gave him. And a wise adult son or daughter will still ask their parents for advice on matters.

Now don't expect to gain deep understanding over night. These things take time and effort. You have to build up to it and train your thinking to be able to perceive the deeper things. (He 5:14) My article *Time of Arrival* touches on this subject:

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(quote)

Even the writings of the former prophets could not be taken at face value and needed to be interpreted:

**(Luke 24:25-27)** So he said to them: “O senseless ones and slow of heart to believe all the things the prophets have spoken!” <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?” <sup>27</sup> And starting with Moses and all the Prophets, **he interpreted** to them things pertaining to himself in all **the Scriptures**.

He calls them “*senseless*” (foolish) to believe everything the prophets said. Why is that? Should we not believe the Bible? Of course we should. But just reading the scriptures does not mean we truly understand their meaning. We have to examine the context and related scriptures before the true meaning will open up to us. And we are categorically instructed not to rely on someone else to do that for us.—Php 1:10; Ro 12:2

**(Luke 24:32)** And they said to each other: “Were not our hearts burning within us as he was speaking to us on the road, as he was fully opening up the Scriptures to us?”

**(Luke 24:45)** Then he opened up their minds fully to grasp the meaning of the Scriptures,

Yes, their hearts were no longer “*slow*”, but were burning within them as he revealed to them what was truly meant by the many prophets writings. (Hearing the truth of a matter often has that same effect on us.)

His disciples no doubt were very familiar with the writings of the prophets, otherwise they could not “*believe all the things the prophets have spoken.*” (Lu 24:25) They could probably even quote them from memory. But they did not see beyond the surface of what was written. Was the underlying meaning something that was beyond their ability to deduce? No, since he blamed their lack of understanding on their own senselessness. Just like most people today, they probably just read the scrolls, listened to what their religious leaders told them it meant, and never questioned it or did their own research to see if what they were taught was scripturally accurate or had a deeper understanding.—Acts 17:11

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Should you look down on or criticize those who don't dig into the deeper things of the Bible? No. Some just don't have the mental capacity for it. Or maybe Satan has overwhelmed their lives with so much misery and hardship that they just can't focus on any in-depth research. Such ones may not be good candidates for you to share your deeper research findings with.

Someone who can't swim could drown if they jumped into deep water, and a baby who doesn't have teeth yet could choke if given a piece of meat. Likewise, someone who is spiritually weak or is new to the truth could be stumbled if confronted with deeper thoughts that they are not spiritually mature enough to contemplate or understand. (1Co 3:1, 2) That is why a couple of my articles have sections which are redacted. Only the truly spiritually mature should read the full un-redacted one. And if your spiritual understanding comes entirely from what you are fed, then you have not dug into the deeper things of the Bible on your own and therefore have not reached the level of maturity needed to comprehend that article. Consequently, you may incorrectly think that it is in opposition to our

scriptural foundation, when conversely it helps those who are genuinely mature spiritually 'tighten their grip' on that scriptural foundation provided to us by the GB. (He 6:1, 2)

What does it NOT say? If you have ever read mystery novels or watched detective shows then you are familiar with the technique that writers sometimes use where the detective solves the case by noticing what is missing from a crime scene. Mystery writers use that tactic because they know it impresses their audience since most people tend to only look at the clues that are there to try and solve the case and don't look for what is missing. The video is a good example of this because it does not say to go to a publication for a topic you are researching so you can find out what the official JW understanding of it is. The video is encouraging you to do your own research in the Bible itself so you can find out for yourself what the Bible tells you it means. That is how you feed yourself "*solid food*", instead of just drinking the milk that is fed to you. The same technique of looking for what is not there is also very useful in understanding scripture.

Of course you have to use your "*powers of discernment*" regarding what is not stated. There are many who hold a belief because they made an assumption about something that was not explicitly stated. The Bible even gives us an example of this happening:

**(John 21:22, 23)** Jesus said to him: "If it is my will for him to remain until I come, of what concern is that to you? You continue following me." <sup>23</sup> So the saying went out among the brothers that this disciple would not die. However, Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but he said: "If it is my will for him to remain until I come, of what concern is that to you?"

As humans we tend to fill in the gaps with our own ideas, or connect things that are unrelated. That is a natural human response, but it can lead to inaccurate ideas. Jesus took advantage of that human tendency when he didn't want to answer certain questions. For instance at Luke 20:27-33 the Sadducees asked Jesus about the resurrection. Clearly they were asking about earthly things since their questioning was not about going to heaven. Jesus knew this, but knowing that mankind was not (is not) ready for the truth about the earthly resurrection, he told them about the resurrection to heaven instead. He knew that they would assume that his response was regarding the earthly resurrection. (Jews did not have the belief of going to heaven after death.)

Another example is Matthew 22:16-22 where the Pharisees asked Jesus if it was lawful to pay the head tax. Jesus' response was "*Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God.*" Jesus responded in a way knowing that they would assume a certain thing, but without him actually saying it. To know Jesus' true feelings about paying taxes you need but read Matthew 17:24-27. I'm not into fishing, but if it got me out of paying taxes i would surely take it up. :^)

The GB often use those same techniques of misdirection and taking advantage of the reader's natural inclination to make assumptions, but remember that they are following Jesus' lead, so don't hold it against them. As with a child, you don't always tell them everything until you know that they are mature enough to be able to handle it.

So when reading articles, be careful not to make assumptions about something not specifically stated. And don't assume that a particular scripture means a certain thing either. Do your research to "*make sure*" of what it means. Some words cannot be taken at face value. Consider Luke 14:26.

**(Luke 14:26)** "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

That scripture is not saying that we should "*hate*" our family and our self. Well, ok, it does say that, but what it really means is that we should put Jehovah above everything else. If you only look at the words and take them at face-value you may not truly understand a verse. You have to use "*your powers of discernment*" to see the true meaning.

Since it is only "*through use*" that your "*powers of discernment*" are "*trained*", you need to start exercising your discernment. (Mt 7:7-11) And discernment is not about merely understanding what you are told something means. It is about 'distinguishing' whether what you are told is right or wrong. (He 5:14) When you read an article check the referenced scriptures, and especially their context, to "*make sure*" that they back up the statement in the paragraph. (Php 1:9, 10) Don't rely on your own memory as to what those scriptures say and mean. Confirm it. And when there are no scriptures referenced for a given statement take that as a cue to do your own research to see if the statement is scripturally based. If there is no scriptural basis for the statement that does not mean that it is inaccurate. It just means that it is the opinion of the writer. There is nothing wrong with that, as long as the opinion does not contradict scriptural ideals. Paul himself gave us his uninspired opinions at 1st Corinthians chapter 7 verses 25 and 40, and 2nd Corinthians 8:10. Sometimes the publication identifies opinion with words like: "it seems likely", "no doubt", or "must mean." But other times the only clue that it is just opinion is the absence of referenced scriptures that back up the statement.

Sometimes the statement is written with the spiritually immature in mind and is tempered for them knowing that they will fill in the blanks with assumptions and be satisfied. If deceit was their intention they would outrightly lie, as the leaders in Christendom do. No, but they write it in such a manner that the spiritually mature can recognize it for what it is and understand while the spiritual young are not overwhelmed. Like a parent talking to their child in a manner that does not disclose what their child is not ready to hear.

So like those in Berea, we should all be "*carefully examining the scriptures*".

**(Acts 17:11)** Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thes·sa·lo·ni'ca, for they accepted the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

Why did Luke call those in Berea "*noble-minded*"? What does "*noble-minded*" mean? The original Greek word "eugenes" has two meanings. The first refers to having a noble or high ranking birth. But that is not what Luke was talking about. He was using eugenes for its second meaning, which means ingenuous, or generous; of a more excellent disposition, more open to conviction, as being less blinded by prejudice.



Why did Luke describe them as such? Because they did not reject his message outrightly, nor did they accept it without question. No, but they *"carefully examin(ed) the Scriptures... to see whether these things were so."* And they did not check once and then believe, but they continued to check *"daily"* for scriptural accuracy. Why? Were the scriptures going to change? No, but they were *"noble-minded"* and therefore knew that they themselves were imperfect and could have gotten it wrong so they continued to check their own understanding for flaws. (Ac 17:11) And when we mature spiritually, the scriptures reveal more to us. So continued examination is enlightening.

**(Acts 17:11)** Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thes·sa·lo·ni'ca, for they accepted the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

Is it wrong to question the GB, after all, they are tasked with providing us with food?

**(Matthew 24:45)** "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?"

No. You are not doubting, you are verifying, as the Bible commands you to do. It is the job of the faithful slave to provide food, but it is our responsibility to *'carefully examine the Scriptures'* to *"make sure"* that food is accurate. If you do not, you are rejecting that God-given responsibility. By making sure, you are not being disloyal or betraying the GB, you are obeying Jehovah! Just as Thomas was kindly provided the proof he was looking for (Jn 20:27), the GB do not oppose us checking the accuracy of what they teach. In fact they promote it. Only those guilty of fraud oppose being checked for accuracy. And only those in the congregation who have inappropriately put the GB on a pedestal oppose their teachings being scrutinized.

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Are you spiritually mature enough to move on to solid food and learn the deeper things of the Bible? If so, first you may wish to pray and ask Jehovah for a better understanding of scripture.

**(Philippians 4:6)** Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God.

Have faith that Jehovah will open your mind to the deeper things in His word. (Lu 11:9)

**(Matthew 21:22)** And all the things you ask in prayer, having faith, you will receive."

Don't try and remember what you were told a verse means. Allow Jehovah to reveal to you what a scripture means. (2Ti 3:16, 17)

Let the Bible explain itself.

**(Acts 17:2, 3)** So according to Paul's custom he went inside to them, and for three sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> explaining and proving by references that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, saying: "This is the Christ, this Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you."

Ask yourself questions.

**[be p. 231 par. 3]** As you examine the material, stimulate your own thinking by asking such questions as *what? why? when? where? who?* and *how?* For example: Why is this true? How can I prove it?

Jehovah will provide the answers you are looking for. When read *very* carefully, you may see that a verse actually means something different than what you think it does. Or you may discover that it has a deeper meaning.

For instance, at Hebrews 6:2 Paul pairs "*the teaching on baptisms*" with "*the laying on of the hands*."

**(Hebrews 6:2a)** the teaching on baptisms and the laying on of the hands,

*Why* did he pair those two? *How* are they connected? *What* does their connection teach us? *Who* does this apply to?

Looking in the Insight book under "Hand" you read the information there about "*the laying on of the hands*", but it does not compare it to baptisms, or explain how the two relate.

What are "*the teaching on baptisms*"?

Now if you examined Hebrews 6:2 carefully, you will note that Paul did not compare the laying on of the hands with baptisms, but he compared it to "the teaching" on baptisms. Baptism is the act of water submersion, but the teaching on baptisms involves the reasons why someone decides to get baptized.

**(Matthew 28:19)** Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit,

**(Acts 2:38)** Peter said to them: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit.

**(Acts 8:12)** But when they believed Philip, who was declaring the good news of the Kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were getting baptized.

A disciple is one that has chosen to believe and follow Christ's teachings. These get baptized to show their commitment and promise to be a Christian. The one doing the baptizing is not the one who decided that this person was to be a disciple. It was the person being baptized who made the decision to become a disciple and get baptized.

So Paul is not comparing the laying on of the hands to the act of baptizing someone. He is comparing it to the decision and commitment that the one being baptized makes.

So how does that relate to *"the laying on of the hands"*? How do you find out?

One technique i use for in-depth study is i do a search in the Watchtower Library (WtLib) for a word, and then look at every instance of that word in the entire Bible and examine the context of each time that word is used. Yes, it may be used many times, but that is good. The more times the word is used, the better understanding you have of that word. In this way you learn what that word means from the Bible, and not from some supposed scholar.

But it is not that simple. Due to translation choices, the original Hebrew or Greek word is not always translated into English using the same word in every instance. So what i have found to be very helpful is this website: <https://biblehub.com>

I use that site to see the text from the original manuscripts and scrolls, the definition of the words used, and where else that word was used in the Bible. Here is an example of how i do it: At that website i enter the scripture i am interested in researching into the search bar near the top of the web page and click the search icon to the right. On the page that opens, two lines below the search bar, i click the language.

For example, if the scripture i am researching is Philippians 2:7 i click "Greek". That opens a page showing four columns, one being the original text in Greek. Looking down the "English" column you can identify which word you want to investigate. Then in the "Greek" column i click the Greek corresponding word (in blue). (I like to right-click and open the link in a new tab, that way the original page remains easily accessible in a tab of its own.)

Note: The number in the far left column (Strong's) shows you the family of the word. Example: ran, run, runner, running. So that is not always helpful when you are trying to find the meaning of a specific scripture.

For Philippians 2:7, if you click the Greek word "labōn", which is translated in the NWT as *"took"*, you will see that there are 41 occurrences of labōn in the Greek scriptures.

I highlight the entire left column, which contains all 41 instances, and then hit Ctrl+C on my keyboard to copy it. Then with focus moved to the WtLib on my computer i use the keyboard shortcut Ctrl+Alt+C, which extracts all of the scriptures in the highlighted and copied text in WtLib.

Referencing that column with the 41 instances will help you identify which word the NWT translated labōn into since the same word or phrase is not always used. As i point out in my article "Time of Arrival", these♦ are the scriptures where labōn was translated with English words other than *"took"* or its family. (take, taken)

♦The Greek word "labōn" translated as *"took"* at Philippians 2:7 is translated as *"received"* at Mt 25:16, 18, 20; Lu 6:4; Jn13:30; Ac 2:33; Ac 26:10; 1Co 4:7; and 2Pe 1:17. It is translated as *"accepted"* at Jn3:33, as *"got"* at Ac 16:24, and as *"accepting"* at 2Co 11:8.

If you did a search in the WtLib for the word "took", you would get over 700 results in the NWT, but you would not get anywhere near a complete picture of what the original Greek word "labōn" means since all of the examples listed in the previous paragraph would not even be shown to you. You would also get hundreds of examples of how other Greek words were translated into English using "took", rendering your research into Philippians 2:7 completely useless.

Why was "labōn" translated into English using different words in the NWT? Well there are two basic components to translating. One is understanding the rules and sentence structure of the original language and then converting it to fit the language you are translating into. That way the sentence, like Yoda, sounds like, does not. And the other component is making sure that the meaning in the original language is accurately conveyed. And there-in lies the problem.

For the meaning of a scripture to be accurately translated, the translator has to have an accurate understanding of the scripture. He may be able to read the original text, but that doesn't mean he understands its true meaning. Christ even had to explain to his disciples what the scrolls meant, and they spoke the language natively. (Lu 24:32, 45)

At Philippians 2:7, the translators did not translate labōn into *received*, *accepted*, or *got*, because those words do not fit with what they thought the verse meant. Choosing "took" had nothing to do with sentence structure, or linguistic rules, but was guided by personal opinion and belief.

The translators of the NWT were apparently of the opinion that Michael "took" the form of a slave the same way that angels in the past took the form of men when they materialized on earth. (Ge 19:1, 8) So they chose the word "took" to express that belief. (See my article "Time of Arrival" as to why i think *accepted* or *received* better fits the true meaning of that verse.)

So if you want to find out what a particular verse in the Bible means, and not rely on what someone else thinks it means, you have to do your own research. And while looking up the definition of a Greek or Hebrew word is helpful, reading how it is used throughout the Bible and examining the context of each use gives you a better understanding of its meaning.

If you think that is too much work and takes too long, then perhaps you are not ready to delve into the deeper things of the Bible.

**(Mark 8:30)** At that he strictly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

**[ct p. 151]** Why would he say that? (Mr 8:30) Jesus was available in their midst, so he did not want people to reach conclusions based on mere hearsay. That is logical, is it not? (John 10:24-26) The point is, our Creator likewise wants us to find out about him through our own investigation of solid evidence. He expects us to have convictions based on facts.—Acts 17:27.

Yes, having convictions based on what others say means your beliefs are based on "hearsay", even if what they say is true. Your beliefs should be based on your own thorough investigation of what the Bible means, not the words of others. (Jn 4:42)

Who can uncover the deeper things? Anyone. Even the "*uneducated and ordinary*." (Acts 4:13; Mt 11:25; 1Co 1:27)

Once you begin to see into the deeper things you will slowly see more and more. The layers will start to open up to you the more you dig and do research. (Mt 7:8; 16:6, 17; Lu 24:32, 45)

**(Matthew 13:12a)** For whoever has, more will be given him, and he will be made to abound.

### **Fear**

Do you hesitate because of fear? Fear of it being discovered that you are doing research beyond what you are told things mean? Fear of speaking about the deeper things of the Bible that you have discovered? That, unfortunately, is the reality for many, and it is nothing new. (1Pe 2:19-21)

**(John 9:34)** In answer they said to him: "You were altogether born in sin, and yet are you teaching us?" And they threw him out!

**(John 9:22)** His parents said these things because they were in fear of the Jews, for the Jews had already come to an agreement that if anyone acknowledged him as Christ, that person should be expelled from the synagogue.

**(John 12:42)** All the same, many even of the rulers actually put faith in him, but they would not acknowledge him because of the Pharisees, so that they would not be expelled from the synagogue;

There is a certain fear of those in charge of the congregations today. Fear that you will be expelled (disfellowshipped) for speaking of Bible truths that did not come from the Governing Body (GB).

Are those elders wicked for doing so? No. Perhaps they mistakenly think that those searching for deeper meaning are somehow rejecting the GB. Or are somehow opposing them. Whatever the case, they think they are doing the right thing.

**(John 16:2)** Men will expel you from the synagogue. In fact, the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he has offered a sacred service to God.

But is it true? Are we to feed only on the food provided by the Faithful Slave? According to their own directions found in JW publications and the video which prompted this article, that answer is no.

Unfortunately many who are taking the lead in the congregations have put the GB on such a high pedestal that they think that any knowledge not gained through the GB is inaccurate at best, and apostate at worst, and is not to be tolerated in *their* congregation. (Jn11:48) So most wisely keep their new found knowledge to themselves.

**(Galatians 2:12)** For before certain men from James arrived, he used to eat with people of the nations; but when they arrived, he stopped doing this and separated himself, **fearing** those of the circumcised class.

## Feed Them

We covered this a bit already, but let's consider these verses as well:

**(Matthew 24:45)** “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?

**(Luke 17:7-10)** “Which one of you who has a slave plowing or shepherding would say to him when he comes in from the field, ‘Come here at once and dine at the table’? <sup>8</sup> Rather, will he not say to him, ‘Get something ready for me to have my evening meal, and put on an apron and serve me until I finish eating and drinking, and afterward you can eat and drink’? <sup>9</sup> He will not feel gratitude to the slave because he did what was assigned, will he? <sup>10</sup> Likewise, when you have done all the things assigned to you, say: ‘We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done.’”

Although those verses in Luke are speaking of a master/slave relationship, a low ranking slave would also be tasked with providing services such as cooking and delivering food, for higher ranking servants. (Ge 9:25; 24:2) Being told to provide food for others is not being told to be their superior. On the contrary, it is a subservient position to the other slaves.

**(Luke 22:27)** For which one is greater, the one dining or the one serving? Is it not the one dining?

Are the GB spiritual leaders?

**(Matthew 23:10)** Neither be called leaders, for your Leader is one, the Christ.

Then what is their role?

What were Christ's instructions?

**(Matthew 14:16)** However, Jesus said to them: “They do not have to leave; you give them something to eat.”

**(Mark 6:37)** He replied to them: “You give them something to eat.” At this they said to him: “Should we go off and buy 200 de·nar'i·i worth of bread and give it to the people to eat?”

**(Luke 9:13)** But he said to them: “You give them something to eat.” They said: “We have nothing more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we ourselves go and buy food for all these people.”

Christ told them to give the crowds food. But note that they did **not** produce food for the crowds.

**(Matthew 14:19)** And he instructed the crowds to recline on the grass. Then he took the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said a blessing, and after breaking the loaves, he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

**(Mark 8:6)** And he instructed the crowd to recline on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, gave thanks, broke them, and began giving them to his disciples to serve, and they served them to the crowd.

**(Luke 9:16)** Taking now the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed them. Then he broke them up and began giving them to the disciples to set before the crowd.

The disciples fed the crowds the food that Christ provided. They did not create the food themselves. (Mr 8:17-21; 2Co 9:10)

**(Matthew 14:20)** So they all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the leftover fragments, 12 baskets full.

**(Mark 6:42)** So they all ate and were satisfied,

**(Luke 9:17)** So they all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the leftovers, 12 baskets of fragments.

Who were those in the crowd? They were not seasoned and baptized Christians. They were new followers that were probably hearing the good news for the first time. And what were these new ones satisfied to eat? Bread and fish, the most basic of food staples at the time. Not extravagant or rich foods. (Mt 13:10-17)

Who does Christ ask Peter to feed?

**(John 21:15-17)** When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter: "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He replied to him: "Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you." He said to him: "Feed my lambs." <sup>16</sup> Again he said to him a second time: "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He replied: "Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you." He said to him: "Shepherd my little sheep." <sup>17</sup> He said to him a third time: "Simon son of John, do you have affection for me?" Peter became grieved that he asked him the third time: "Do you have affection for me?" So he said to him: "Lord, you are aware of all things; you know that I have affection for you." Jesus said to him: "Feed my little sheep."

"*Lambs*" are baby sheep. *Little sheep*" are a bit older, but are not yet adults. These new ones to the truth are fed the appropriate spiritual food for their spiritual age.

We too began with the basics (bread, fish).

**(Matthew 4:4)** But he answered: "It is written: 'Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every word that comes from Jehovah's mouth.'"

**(Luke 4:4)** But Jesus answered him: "It is written, 'Man must not live on bread alone.'"

**(Hebrews 6:1a)** Therefore, now that we have moved beyond the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity,

But to mature spiritually we must do our own research and feed ourselves the deeper things from the Bible. (Have you ever seen a child nursing on its mother when it looks far too old to be doing so?)

**(Matthew 24:45b)** to give them their food at the proper time

The original Greek says:

(ounai) to give (autois) to them (tēn) the (trophēn) food (kairō) time/season.

The Greek word, kairō, translated as *"the proper time"* in the NWT, means time or season. The translators of the NWT translated kairō as *"period of time"* in these scriptures:

**(Mark 10:30)** who will not get 100 times more now in this period of time—houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the coming system of things, everlasting life.

**(Luke 18:30)** who will not get many times more in this period of time, and in the coming system of things, everlasting life."

**(1 Peter 1:5)** who are being safeguarded by God's power through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last period of time.

So when is the *"the proper time"*, or *"period of time"*, for the Faithful Slave to provide food? Well when have they been providing food for the *"lambs"* and *"little sheep"*? All during the last days. Perhaps that is what Christ was referring to at Matthew 24:45, that they are appointed to give the domestics spiritual food from 1914 till Armageddon.

Does their assignment to provide food at *"the proper time"* mean that they are to give certain food at one time, and other food at another time? If you look through JW publications back to the beginning you will find that the GB have been providing the same food the entire time. True, there have been many minor adjustments and clarifications over time, but the basic tenets have remained the same throughout the last days.

So perhaps the last days are *"the proper time,"* the *"period of time,"* the *"season,"* for the GB to provide food for the domestics, since that is when they have been doing it. And upon his *"coming"* (Mt 24:46), not his *"presence"* (Mt 24:3), they will be appointed over all of his belongings (Mt 24:47; Re 5:10; 20:6)

Or perhaps we don't need to use human reasoning to figure out what *"the proper time"* is. Perhaps Jesus himself defined for us what he meant by *"the proper time"* when he asked Peter three times (Mt 18:16) to feed the new ones, that is to say, the *"lambs"* and *"little sheep"*. (Jn 21:15-17) Perhaps the 'time or season' of their spiritual youth is *"the proper time"* he was referring to. After all, the preaching work is the responsibility of the *"chosen ones"* (Mt 24:31; 28:19) and when they find someone with a receptive heart (Mt 13:8) what do they do? They teach those newly interested ones the truth. (Jn 10:16) Once they learn the truth, the preaching work is finished with regard to them. *"The proper*



time" to evangelize (proclaim, teach the good news) to those newly formed domestics (servants) is over.

### Other Duties

Besides feeding the lambs, what were Christ's other instructions for the apostles?

**(Matthew 10:7)** As you go, preach, saying: 'The Kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.'

What other instructions are there for those taking the lead?

**(Acts 20:28)** Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son.

What does it mean to serve as an overseer?

**(Titus 1:9)** holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art of teaching, so that he may be able both to encourage by the teaching that is wholesome and to reprove those who contradict.

How does an overseer encourage and reprove? Through "*his art of teaching.*"

**(Matthew 20:25-28)** But Jesus called them to him and said: "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them. <sup>26</sup> This must not be the way among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, <sup>27</sup> and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. <sup>28</sup> Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many."

What does "*lord it over*" mean? The two Greek words Christ used (katakryrieuousin - lord it over, and katexousiazousin - wield authority over) merely mean to exercise authority over others, to be in charge of others. No negativity is associated with those Greek words. (Mr 10:42-45) In fact, at Luke 22:25 Christ referred to those rulers as "*Benefactors.*" The Greek word for benefactor is euergetés and means *a doer of good, a well-doer*. Other Bible translations render it *gracious lords, friends of the people, and everyone's friends*, showing the positive view of their rulership.

If Christ was pointing out how the worldly rulers were harsh in their authority and that he didn't want his apostles to rule as they did, he would have said something like: 'But you should be kind rulers and exercise gentle rulership as a Benefactor does.' No, but Christ told them to do the opposite of what those rulers were doing. And what was that? To not rule at all, but to be the servants of others instead.

Peter reiterates Christ's view on the matter:

**(1 Peter 5:2, 3)** Shepherd the flock of God under your care, serving as overseers, not under compulsion, but willingly before God; not for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; <sup>3</sup> not lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming **examples** to the flock.

So Peter (1Pe 5:2-3) is telling overseers not to be exercising authority over the flock because they are "*God's inheritance*" and do not belong to them, therefore they do not possess the authority of ownership for them to be able to exercise it. No, but they are to "shepherd the flock of God" as a shepherd of sheep does, by walking out in front of them, that is to say, by setting a good example for the flock to follow. A goat herder walks behind the flock and drives it forward against its will. But shepherds of the congregation walk in front of the herd by "*becoming examples to the flock*", and the sheep follow that example of their own accord. Jesus even gave himself as an example to make sure that what he said was understood: "Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister." (Mt 20:25-28) Rulers are ministered to. A slave ministers to others.

Peter points out that the flock are "*God's inheritance*". The flock do not belong to the shepherds and therefore they do not possess the authority of ownership for them to be able to exercise it over the flock, just as they did not exercise authority over another man's slave. (Ro 14:4) They were to shepherd, not by exercising authority, but by setting the right example. (1Pe 5:3; He 13:7; Tit 1:9)

Well if they are not to exercise authority over you, what did Paul mean at Hebrews 13:17?

**(Hebrews 13:17)** Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.

How is it that you are to be obedient and submissive to someone if they do not exercise authority over you? By following the example they set. (He 13:7) Brother Geoffrey W. Jackson expresses it well in his video: *Elders Take The Lead!* There he says:

"We're not leaders, but we set the right example." "So, obviously, to take the lead means to do the work, to be a minister, to be a servant, to serve others." "...setting the right example, and then others following." (The full transcript is in my Transcripts folder)

If a congregant does not follow their shepherd's good example, then perhaps they are a goat. He who has the right heart condition (Lu 8:15) will mimic the good behavior a fine shepherd sets. Exceptions being that a sheep may not perform the actions he/she sees the shepherd performing if he/she is unable to, or if he/she is not required to, or that he/she does not have the authority to. (Eph 4:11)

Of course if a shepherd is not shepherding well, he should not expect the sheep to follow his example. If a shepherd tries to drive the sheep from behind, the sheep will not go where he wishes. If a shepherd tries to lead a flock with aggression or indifference, the sheep will not follow. Or if a shepherd tries to lead a flock over a cliff or into a raging river, the sheep will not follow.

Hebrews 13:7 tells us that after we have contemplated how the conduct of those taking the lead turns out, that is to say, if after scrutiny their conduct is acceptable, only then should we "*imitate their faith.*"

**(Hebrews 13:7)** Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out, imitate their faith.

That verse shows that those taking the lead use the example of their own conduct to direct the congregation. It does not say that they order them around. Also note that 'those taking the lead' are described as those *"who have spoken the word of God to you."* That's another part of what it means to take the lead.

Elders *"preside"* over their own household, not over the congregation. (1Ti 3:5) Note the difference in the words used at 1 Timothy 3:5.

**(1 Timothy 3:5)** for if any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he care for the congregation of God?

To *"preside"* (prostēnai) over, means to manage, to rule. It is what a man does in his own home.

To *"care"* (epimelēsetai) for, means to take care of, to attend to. Christ used that same Greek word in his illustration of the Samaritan who *"took care of"* the man beaten by robbers. (Lu 10:34)

Though it is only by choice that the congregation follow the good example a shepherd sets, are there also rules that we must obey? Yes, there are:

**(Acts 15:28, 29)** For the holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you except these necessary things: <sup>29</sup> to keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!"

What do *you* think?

:^)

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**(Colossians 1:9, 10)** That is also why from the day we heard of it, we have never stopped praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the accurate knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual comprehension, <sup>10</sup> so as to walk worthily of Jehovah in order to please him fully as you go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God;