

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

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

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 Governing Body (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 of the GB 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 the GB when they say that "*they do not claim to have special knowledge*" [w16.01 p. 23] and "*are not inspired.*" [w22.11 p. 7; w17.02 p. 26] Instead most JW's imagine the GB to be perfect servants of the Most High who Jehovah speaks through and should never be questioned or contradicted. They believe the GB when they say that they should be the only source of your scriptural understanding because it is not your place to read the Bible and form an understanding about what it means on our own. [w16.11 p. 16 ¶ 9]

Most JW's do not recognize that the Bible was written for all of us to read and acquire new knowledge and understanding from, not just a select few. (2Ti 3:16, 17) Even JW publications often have quotes from outside sources regarding scriptural reasoning showing that even the GB know 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 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 Philipians 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) 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 JW's of being "brain-washed".)

The basic Bible truths that the GB provide should merely be the foundation that we build upon, like milk to an infant. A spiritual child consumes only what is fed to it. The spiritual food that the GB provide contains the milk that is the "*primary doctrine*", the "*elementary things.*" (He 5:12; 6:1) As one

matures spiritually he should begin to feed himself. But many, after they have learned the basic Bible truths, are satisfied with the milk they are 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ For everyone who continues to feed on milk is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, for he is a young child. ¹⁴ 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, ² 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, ² 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 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 the immature. Why? Not because they are very basic understandings, but because those were topics that they were taught. So milk and solid food is not about how basic a teaching is, but refers to whether you were taught it (milk), or you came to the conclusion from doing your own research (solid food). So you will know if your spiritual diet consists of milk or solid food by whether or not it is being fed to you, or you are consuming it directly from the Bible. Regardless of how deep the topic may be, if you have a man-in-the-middle providing you the information, then it is like a mother with a bottle feeding her infant. (see my article "Feed My Lambs")

Does that mean that any topic you hear from someone else should be rejected because it is milk? No. It is only milk if you accept it without question. But if you look into it yourself, check the context, other related scriptures, and the meaning and wording in the original language, then you have delved into the topic on your own and come to a conclusion based on your research, not on what you were told. (Jn 4:42) That makes it "*solid food*", because it gives your belief a solid foundation. You should also check all of those things that you have accepted in the past without in-depth research to make sure those things were scripturally accurate. (Ac 17:11) I did that and found many unscriptural teachings of the GB. (see my articles)

Paul says that only when you move beyond the primary doctrines that you were taught 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 mentioned at the beginning of this article 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 dig deeper into 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 Bible 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 July 2017 Study Watchtower QFR on self protection (which 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 QFR, and in fact most are contrary to it. Though i am sure the QFR 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 and 46?"

(Matthew 24:45, 46) "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so!

First: "*the faithful and discreet slave*" in that verse is not referring to a select few men in New York as the GB claim. And the verse contradicts their timing. (see my article "Faithful and Discreet Slave")

Second: That verse does not refer to an invisible return of Christ in 1914. (see my article "Presence")

Third: The "*proper time*" to provide food is not what the GB claim either. (see my article "Faithful and Discreet Slave") Referring back to Hebrews, when is the proper time for a parent to feed their child?

Answer: When they are young and growing. When the child matures the 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! Now that you are a mature Christian it is your responsibility to feed yourself.

Your entire life you have been taught that you were incapable of eating solid food, that is to say, read the Bible and learn on your own, so learning directly from the Bible is new to you. Don't expect to gain deep understanding over night. These things take time and effort. You have to build up to it and retrain your thinking to be able to perceive the deeper things. (He 5:14)

It's called "deeper understanding" because you can't always take the words in the Bible at face value. Sometimes (not always) there is a deeper meaning. My article *Time of Arrival* touches on this subject:

(begin 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!" ²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" ²⁷ 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 prophets writings. (Hearing the truth of a matter often has that same effect on us today.)

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

meaning.—Acts 17:11

(end of quote)

Another example is 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 love our Christianity even more. 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. The GB count on you not doing your own research, but instead rely on what they tell you things mean. For a good example see my article “Presence”.

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 publication. (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.

So like those in Beroea, 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 Beroea “*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 is ingenuous, 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.

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 mentioned at the beginning of this article is a good example of this because it does not say to go to a JW 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 false 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." ²³ 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 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 in order to support their teachings. Unfortunately many of their teachings are false.

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.

Is it wrong to question what you have been taught? No. You are verifying what you have been taught, as the Bible commands you to do. 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 your teacher, you are obeying Jehovah! Just as Thomas was kindly provided the proof he was looking for. (Jn 20:27) 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.

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."

Very importantly, don't assume that what you were told a verse means is accurate. Allow Jehovah to reveal to you what a scripture truly 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, ³ 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,

Ask yourself questions: *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 should not be the one who decided that this person was to be a disciple. It should be the person being baptized who makes 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 getting baptized makes.

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

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's 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, and sometimes the English word is not translated from the same Greek or Hebrew word. 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 root of that family of the words. 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 in the NWT 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 Jn 3:33, 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 in WtLib 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 a big 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 NWT translators did not translate labōn into *received*, *accepted*, or *got*, because those words do not fit with what they were told the verse meant. Choosing "*took*" had nothing to do with sentence structure, or linguistic rules, but was guided by the teachings of the GB.

The GB teach 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 tells you 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 (solid food), not the words of others (milk). (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, do research, and reread the scriptures. (Mt 7:8; 16:6, 17; Lu

24:32, 45; Ac 17:11)

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

Fear

Do you fear speaking about the deeper things of the Bible that you have discovered? Do you hesitate because of fear of it being discovered that you are doing research beyond what the GB teach, or verifying that their teachings are accurate? 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), especially if the truths you find contradict their teachings.

Even those elders who seem to be very good men will become your enemy because 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.

Should you only feed on the food provided by the GB? 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 researchers 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.

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.

For instance: 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 Bible truths 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 one of my articles has sections which are redacted. Only the truly spiritually mature should read the full un-redacted one. And if your spiritual understanding comes entirely from others, 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 my article is in opposition to our scriptural foundation, when conversely it helps those who are genuinely mature spiritually 'tighten their grip' on that scriptural foundation. (He 6:1, 2).

So do your own research, "*make sure*" of what you believe, and "*test the inspired statements to see whether they originate with God,*" so that you too can "*walk worthily of Jehovah*".

(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, ¹⁰ 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;

What do *you* think?

:^)

Dave da.getmyip@gmail.com

<http://da.getmyip.com/PDF/Ramblings> or <https://tinyurl.com/bibramz>

Last edited 08-30-2024 (Date created 05-11-2019)