Tools

Concordance
What?
- It provides references to other verses that use the same word;
- Some give definitions of word + references

Where?
- In the back of your Bible
- Special ones (whole book, *e.g.* Strong's Concordance; Young's)

Dictionary
What? – defines words that you're not sure of the meaning

Where?
- In the back of your Bible
- Special Bible dictionaries (Vine's, etc.)
- Regular dictionary (some modern definitions will not be the same as the Biblical definition; but they may provide some help)

Maps, Outlines, Charts, etc. in back of your Bible
These can be of great help in understanding how people and places named in the Bible "fit together." Some charts show prophecies and their fulfillment; others show similarities between books, etc.

Study Bibles
What?
They provide background information and outlines on each book
They have notes of explanation on many verses and passages

Beware that the notes are not inspired; they are simply man's interpretations and opinions. Some are good and true, but some are false and dangerous. Ask your pastor or other godly, mature Christian to evaluate one before you use it.

Bible Study Software
These programs usually combine all of the above items for easy use.

Guiding Principles

Pray for God's help. *-- verses from Psalm 119 --*
Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. (18)

Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works. (vs. 27, 33-34)

Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. (Psalm 86:5)

Depend On and Yield To the Holy Spirit.
I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.
~ John 16:12-15 ~

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This statement is made seven times in Revelation 2 & 3.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
~ James 1:22 ~

Ask and Answer Questions as you read or memorize the Word.
Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

1. What does it say? – *summarize*
2. What lessons are taught? – *analyze*

✓ A truth to rejoice in? ✓ A promise to claim
✓ An example (person) to follow? ✓ A sin or bad example to avoid?

3. What does God want me to do? – *personalize*

Consider the Context *to decide what something means, based on . . .*
- The surrounding verses (before, after, whole chapter)
- The rest of the book (overall purpose and theme; it's literature type)
- The whole of Scripture (consider *the unclear* in light of *the clear*)