

e-Sword Is Still One of the Best Free Bible Programs

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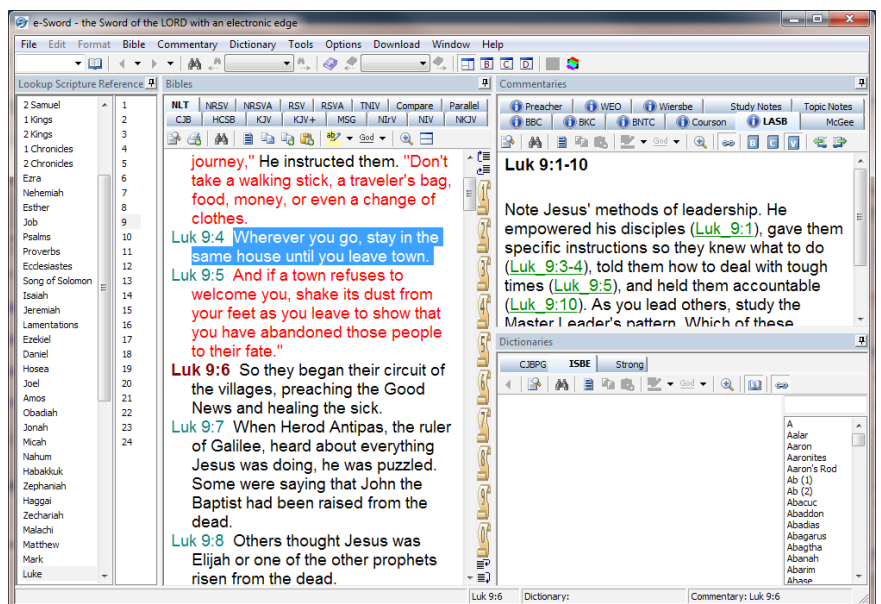


It has been some time since we have taken a look at e-Sword, now in version 9 with a whole new file format designed to take advantage of the more modern formats for files. The old e-Sword system was built on a now outdated Microsoft technology. The new file format will allow for more security meaning publishers will be more likely to grant e-Sword permission to sell their books without fear of piracy, something that is a real problem even with Bible software.

Sadly, the change has angered many long-time e-Sword users who had a lot of self-published content in e-Sword. They put a lot of time into creating their book files and they were not happy about the change. But the increase in up-to-date commentaries, translations, dictionaries and content made the switch well worth the struggle. And if you are in the situation many found themselves after the update, check out the e-Sword 9 Converter at <http://goodolclint.com/e-sword>. It is a simple utility designed to bring version 8 files into the version 9 universe.

Because of the update, sites like eStudySource.com (<http://estudysource.com>) are offering more exciting content than ever for the e-Sword engine. I was fortunate enough to test out some of their best content within the program including the following:

- Baker's NT Comm. - \$45
- Believer's Bible Comm. - \$14.99
- Jon Courson's Application Comm. - \$14.99
- Life Application Study Bible Notes - \$11.24
- Bible Knowledge Comm. - \$26.24



- Bible Teacher's Commentary - \$14.99
- Preacher's Commentary 35 vol. - \$60
- Thru the Bible, 5 vol. - \$29.99
- Wiersbe's Bible Comm. - \$18.74
- Wiersbe's Expository Outlines - \$11.24

Some of the great translations they offer are:

- HCSB - \$7.99
- NKJV - \$11.99
- NLT - \$11.99
- NRSV - \$11.99
- NIV Family Bundle - \$23.99
- Complete Jewish Bible - \$11.99
- The Message - \$7.99
- RSV - \$7.99

Of course these are all current prices and are subject to change. Not wanting to sound like a commercial, I mention this because many have the false impression of e-Sword that you cannot get good quality content for the application. Sure they

have a ton of free books, most of which are public domain works. But many are not and the above lists show that great content is available in the program.

So what makes e-Sword one of the best free Bible study programs available? First, it is simple to use. Everything you want or need is right there ready and within site on the main screen. Second, the little features like the ability to view hyperlinks as popups, something all Bible software should do, the simple to use notes feature with the ability to add hyperlinked Bible verse references, and a printing feature, something one of the biggest Bible programs didn't have until a recent beta update.

I think the most powerful feature is the ability to create your own books and share those with others. This makes e-Sword a wonderful tool for those who create content, for missionaries who are translating the Bible into new languages and want to study it in that language, or just the average user who wants to have his or her own self-published study Bible or commentary. The editor used to create these tools has spell checking, a Thesaurus, and the ability to make a hyperlink to a verse

Just how fresh is the info in your directory?

If your directory is printed (even hot off the press), the answer is, "not at all." Families in your congregation are constantly changing—changing neighborhoods, contact numbers, Internet service providers—even changing household members (as children move out, and sometimes back in).

The result? **Any printed information is out-of-date before the ink dries.** That's not to say church members don't still enjoy flipping through a printed directory, but for serious information lookup, they're used to the Internet. With the **Directory Tool**, one of the basic tools in our **Web Ministry Toolkit**, you can give members protected access to a searchable directory of names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses—live information from CDM+ Membership—right on your website.

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 with the CDM+ Directory Tool.

very quickly.

Like every Bible study app, it can search the Bible in advanced ways and display maps. It also has devotional reading and even a prayer request feature. Verses can be bookmarked or highlighted. When you open the program there are Tips displayed to help you learn the program. These can easily be turned off with a check box. The scripture memory tool can help you “hide the word in your heart” and the illustration database helps you collect illustrations for teaching and preaching.

One thing that sets it apart from others is the ability to view STEP content. If you are new to Digital Bible Study, you may not know that STEP is a Bible study format for books and translations designed to allow multiple vendors to distribute their content in a format that all could read. It was great to be able to buy a book from one vendor but use it in another application since the format was compatible. Sadly, STEP is no longer used. But many people still have hundreds of dollars of books in the format. e-Sword is just about the only tool still being developed that will display STEP files.

To help you understand the interface, I have created some videos going over the various features. They are not meant to be in depth help videos or reviews. Just demos. They can be found at: <http://www.kevinpurcell.org/bible-study/e-sword-9-demo-videos>.

Check out other Digital Bible Study content at <http://www.kevinpurcell.org> and you can follow me on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/kapurcell>.

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