

Several weeks ago I worshiped with one of our local “big-box” churches on a Saturday night. I decided to go in blue jeans, since that was convenient, and I hoped that I wouldn’t stand out too much. I was interested to note that of the several hundred people in attendance, including those on the platform, it was hard to find anyone who was not wearing blue jeans.

Before the service started, I wandered around their building, checking things out. I looked at how they had their band set up on the platform. I watched how the volunteers in the large technology control center went about their tasks.

I noted the various events being promoted on the screen as people gathered for the service. I even took a couple of pictures with my phone, which nobody seemed to notice, particularly. On the downside, the crowd was too “pale” for my liking, and not a soul spoke to me the entire time I was in the building.

I noticed that the service began with twenty minutes or so of praise music led by the band, with no introduction or welcome—that came later, in the middle of the service. And I noted that I had never heard of any of the songs we sang.

My knee-jerk response to not knowing any of the songs was momentarily negative, but I found that the tunes were engaging and the words were theologically sound. By the time we’d sung several verses of each, I actually found myself rather drawn to these newer expressions of worship.

The sermon had little PowerPoint support, but the message was quite good, and I found myself taking notes, which is not unusual when I listen to others preach. What was different this time was that I took notes on my iPhone using **Evernote**. This had several advantages.

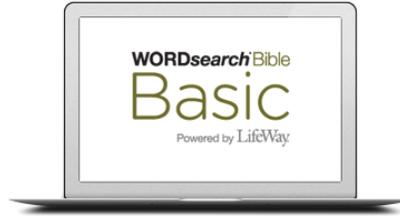
My handwriting is so awful that if I had handwritten my sermon notes, I wouldn’t have been able to read them afterward. And if I intended to keep or to make use of those notes, they’d have had to be typed into a computer later, anyway. With Evernote, not only were my notes legible, but they were instantly searchable and accessible on every electronic device in my “stable.”



I had also intentionally not brought a paper Bible to this service, so I followed the text and looked up other texts using my phone as well. In general, I much prefer to have a paper Bible in my hand so that I can mark it up and make notes in the margins; but I found it not too difficult to use an electronic Bible in that setting, as several in our Gen21 class do every Sunday morning.

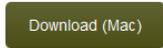
There are many excellent Bible apps for Windows, Mac, Android, and iOS these days that will work on desktops, laptops, tablets, and phones. If you haven’t begun to explore these resources, I encourage you to give one or two a try. One of the most useful capabilities of such programs is that they allow instant “concordance” searches of the entire Bible, making study and research MUCH easier than they were in pre-electronic days.

For starters, I recommend **WORDsearch Basic**, which is a program owned by the Southern Baptist Convention and available for any type of device. The Basic version is a free edition of the paid software that I use for study and preparation every week.



Free Bible Study Software

Download and enjoy within minutes.



Similar capabilities are available from the apps **YouVersion**, **Olive Tree**, **Bible.is**, **Bible Gateway**, and **GloBible**, and I have all of these on my iPhone. The advantage of checking more than one is that the free versions of the Bible available vary a bit from app to app, and in this way you can broaden your search abilities. Many of these will also read the text aloud.

Several of these apps will allow you to do what are called “Boolean” searches, which are more specific than just looking for one word. For example, you can look for verses that include “Adam AND Eve,” “Adam AND NOT Eve,” “Adam OR Eve,” etc. Such abilities take one’s Bible study quickly to a whole new level.



note-taking app that I use all the time is **OneNote**.

And **Evernote** is perhaps the most popular of a number of note-taking apps that can make your study—and maybe even larger parts of your life—more effective. The other

I encourage you to try some of these amazing new resources for digging deeper into God’s Word. You may be surprised at what you find! And you might even start “tweeting” or “Facebooking” during the service to tell all your “followers” that you’re in worship and having a wonderful experience. Let’s get the Word out!

Dave

