

## SUGGESTIONS FOR LEARNING VOCABULARY

Memorizing vocabulary is among the significant challenges facing the student. **First, here are some principles for study.**

- ➔ work with terms until you learn them
- ➔ review the words ten minutes after initial learning
- ➔ review again twenty-four hours later
- ➔ review every forty-eight hours until automatic recall is attained

These principles based on Bruce K. Waltke, “How I Changed My Mind About Teaching Hebrew (or Retained it),” *Cruz* (Dec 1993): 14 [10-15].

**Second, develop a system of vocabulary learning.** The student may wish to think in terms of a multifaceted approach to increase retention. Making vocabulary cards is a long tradition. Look at them several times each day during down times. Work it out so you never have too many cards at once. One way to reduce the number of cards needed is to put five to seven new terms on each card—if this is combined with smallish cards, like cutting in half 3”X5” cards, the student can have a compact, portable., and efficient device. Although many students use pre-made published cards, making one’s own cards still seems part of a more effective path to learning vocabulary. Vocabulary building booklets, with Hebrew terms and their English glosses on facing pages are even more effective than cards. Other useful tools include audio-files and digital flash-cards.

**Third, be careful when using word associations** and mnemonic devices for vocabulary memorization. Many terms undergo significant change in how they sound when used in context. Thus, focus your memory on the three root letters of words, and be prepared for changes when translating scripture.

**Fourth, beware of common obstacles** to effective vocabulary building. When a student “crams” for a quiz or two the challenges of learning biblical Hebrew grow rapidly. This is often the first step in dropping a course or giving up altogether. Also, avoid making your studies too hard. Many defeat themselves by being too idealistic and setting their short-term goals too high. If today’s goals are unreasonable the student may not want to do them. A little bit every day for a long time is much better than big blocks of time occasionally.

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