

Why every American Christian home should have the Noah Webster 1828 Dictionary

In Christian homes the Bible is central, forming the basis of living. It defines the marriage, guides the nurture and growth of the children, and educates every member of the family in the knowledge of God.

In homes that value education, the dictionary has an important role in the intellectual growth of the family. Does your dictionary reinforce and support Bible study for your family, or does it introduce a conflicting set of values and worldview? More than any other book in the home besides the Bible, the dictionary has a profound impact.

Importance of the 1828 Dictionary

The dictionary inculcates either a secular or a Christian worldview through definitions establishing the system of values by which the family will live. Consider the contrast of the definitions of the word marriage taken from a modern dictionary and from the *1828 Noah Webster Dictionary*:

Defining Marriage

MODERN DICTIONARY (2020): The state of being united as spouses in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law. The mutual relation of married persons; the institution whereby individuals are joined in a marriage.

WEBSTER DICTIONARY (1828): The act of uniting a man and a woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of a man and a woman for life. Marriage is a contract both civil and religious by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God Himself for the purpose of preventing the promiscuous intercourse of sexes, for promoting domestic felicity, and for securing the maintenance and education of children. "Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled." Hebrews 13.

The dictionary imparts either a secular or a Christian framework that will form the attitudes and values concerning education. Consider the definitions of the word education:

Defining Education

MODERN DICTIONARY (2020): The action or process of educating or of being educated; a stage of such a process; the knowledge and development resulting from an educational process; the field of study that deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning in schools.

WEBSTER DICTIONARY (1828): The bringing up, as of a child; instruction; formation of manners. Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. To give children a good education in manners, arts and science, is important; to give them a religious education is indispensable; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties.

The dictionary defines the words that expound a theology and the vocabulary with which to describe the knowledge of God. Consider the definitions of the word sin:

Defining Sin

MODERN DICTIONARY (2020): An offense against religious or moral law; an action that is or is felt to be highly reprehensible; an often serious shortcoming.

WEBSTER DICTIONARY (1828): The voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule or rectitude or duty, prescribed by God; any voluntary transgression of the divine law, or violation of a divine command; a wicked act; iniquity. Sin is either a positive act in which a known divine law is violated, or it is the voluntary neglect to obey a positive divine command, or a rule of duty clearly implied in such command. Sin comprehends not actions only, but whatever is contrary to God's commands or law. I John 3; Matthew 15; James 4. (The definition goes on for another column in the *1828 Dictionary*.)

The dictionary imparts a philosophy of government either secular or Christian that will form the basis for how individuals in the family will govern themselves and expect to be governed. Consider the definitions of law:

Defining Law

MODERN DICTIONARY (2020): A binding custom or practice of a community; a rule of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognized as binding or enforced by a controlling authority. (This definition continues for two inches of one column.)

WEBSTER DICTIONARY (1828): A rule, particularly an established or permanent rule, prescribed by the supreme power of a state to its subjects, for regulating their actions, particularly their social actions. Laws are imperative or mandatory, commanding what shall be done; prohibitory, restraining from what is to be forborne; or permissive, declaring what may be done without incurring a penalty. The laws which enjoin the duties of piety and morality, are prescribed by God and found in the Scriptures. (This definition continues for twenty-one inches of three columns.)

Count the Cost: Presuppositions in Word Definitions

Consider the definitions given above. What difference will the definitions of law make to our student today? How will he learn law from the modern definition? What is the implication of "custom" in the first dictionary versus "rule" in the second one? What is the implication of law being defined as "prescribed" or "recognized" rather than "mandatory," "commanding," "prohibitory," or "permissive?"

What will be his view of authority and enforcement based on the two definitions? What will be his sense of responsibility for law? Does the second definition establish a different source and authority for law? What philosophical position will be inculcated by it? What theology?

Home Education: Christian or Secular?

The dictionary shapes thinking and reasoning as words are given precise meanings, as new words are learned by growing children, and as studies are done in the Bible and in every other subject. The author of the dictionary determines the worldview that undergirds it. There is one dictionary available today that defines every word both in the original language and from its Biblical usage—the original *1828 Noah Webster American Dictionary of the English Language*. Every modern dictionary reflects the current cultural corruptions and erosion of vocabulary by godless philosophies. *The 1828 Dictionary* is the gold standard of language for the American Christian.

The 1828 Noah Webster Dictionary shows the Biblical worldview and vocabulary of the founding generation. This generation practiced Biblical reasoning by default, and prized Christian character and virtue above all else. Noah Webster was a Christian whose Biblical knowledge and research are seen in his definitions. He researched every word through his studies of twenty-six original languages to provide the root meanings. Both his scholarship and productivity are without equal in America, earning him the title, "Father of American Christian Education and Scholarship."

Christian Scholarship

The home is the primary classroom for every child, and according to Noah Webster, "Education is useless without the Bible." When working with young impressionable minds, it is essential for the parent or educator to establish the habit of beginning the search for principles, answers, and solutions in the Word of God. It is the divine Word that consecrates and inspires the mind and builds intellectual virtue.

This is why Noah Webster, Father of American Christian Education, wrote the first American dictionary and established a system of rules to govern spelling, grammar, and reading. This master linguist understood the power of words, their definitions, and the need for precise word usage in communication to maintain a distinct national identity. Eager for Americans to be free from the bondage of old world ideas which were being disseminated through our young nation's educational system, Dr. Webster laid the foundation for a uniquely American education and the American usage of English words in his dictionary, which defined each word in light of its meanings and usage in the Bible and in the new Christian constitutional republic.

Each learner develops the habit of research by beginning with God's Word through the word study, the tool in which words are defined in light of how they are used in Scripture. This process gives pre-eminence to the Word of God by deducing the Biblical principles of the subject and clothes the learner's ideas with truth. This is the foundation upon which the pathway of logical thinking and just reasoning is established. It produces the acquired habits of Biblical scholarship, reasoning cause (internal) to effect (external), and the precise, lucid communication of ideas to others.

The Word Study: Defining a Biblical Worldview

The Word Study involves more than going to a dictionary and defining a word. It is the method of scholarship that puts the student on the pathway of developing the habits of reflective thinking and deductive reasoning from Scripture. The word study places the truths of God's Word at the center of all learning, which illuminates the understanding and consecrates the mind. Every home should have a *Webster's 1828 Dictionary* for student homework and adult Bible study.

The Word Study:

1. Builds vocabulary
2. Increases reading comprehension and verbal scores
3. Establishes precise word usage in written and oral communication
4. Cultivates the habit of critical thinking
5. Produces deductive reasoning skills—cause (internal) to effect (external)
6. Sharpens discernment of truth from error
7. Inculcates lifetime habits of scholarship and aids in establishing a Biblical worldview

The word study reveals the Biblical meanings of words and God's principles of knowledge and wisdom for application in every aspect of life through the four steps of learning:

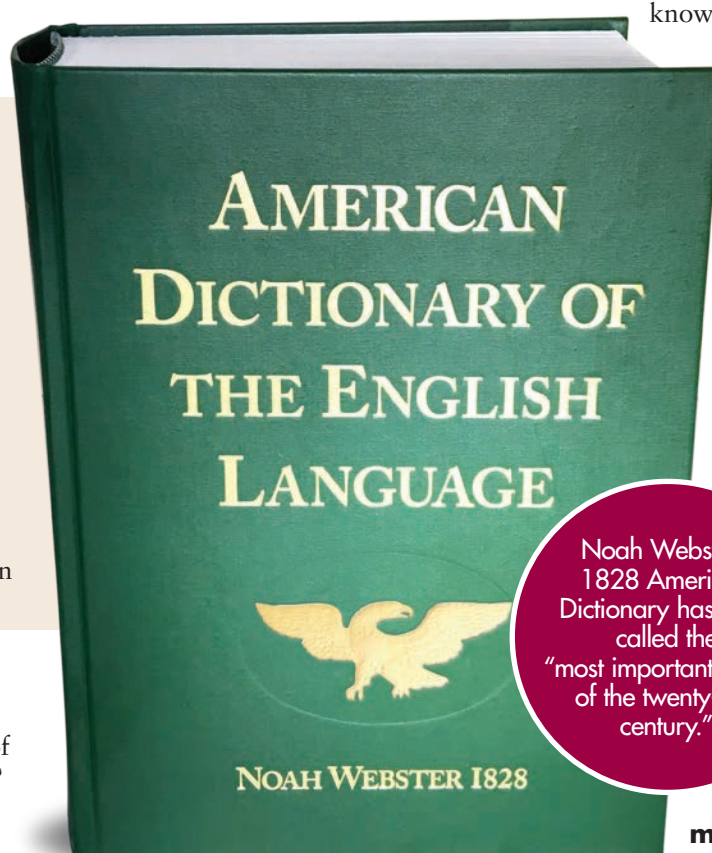
Research: The word is defined and recorded from *Webster's 1828 Dictionary*. Key words within the definition are underlined and defined. Each word is researched in a concordance of the Bible and the references relevant to the definition are written out.

Reason: A definition of the word is written by the student in his own words. Biblical principles are then deduced and recorded from the study.

Relate: The student writes out the application of the definition and deduced principles as they relate to the study purpose and to his own life.

Record: The student's written work, filed in his notebook, is a permanent record of learning and is easily appropriated for future study.

Find sample word studies and more at FACE.net/1828.



Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary has been called the "most important reprint of the twenty-first century."