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REFERENCE HELPS – LESSON 2

CONCORDANCES

Have you ever had a particular verse or bible passage that you wanted to look up or read, but you didn't know exactly where to find it? That is when you need a concordance. A bible concordance gives an alphabetical listing of words found in the bible and gives reference to the book, chapter, and verse where you can find it. Some concordances give additional information such as the original Greek or Hebrew word and the defined meaning of the original word.

We have three different concordances each with their peculiar differences or advantages. They are Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible by Robert Young, and Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments. They all use the King James version so owning a KJV is a must for your study of the bible. I know of no concordance keyed to any other version.

The one that is by far the most popular is the Strong's Concordance due to its numbering system. Each key word in the original language is assigned a number. When you look up the number, a full and exhaustive definition of the Hebrew or Greek word is given. You get the primary definition along with some inferred meanings as well. It is important to look up these words because what we may think the word means according to our English might not necessarily be the more accurate meaning. Strong's not only tells you where to find the English word in your bible, but it also gives you the defined meaning of the original word.

Understanding the true meaning of the original word is crucial to your understanding of that scripture.

An example is the English word "love." The original Hebrew (Old Testament) has eight different words for "love" and the Greek (New Testament) has at least nine different words for "love" in the KJV, each with its own different meaning or nuances. You cannot distinguish the precise meaning of "love" in a verse without a concordance, or perhaps a bible dictionary.

Because Strong's assigns a number to each of these words, anyone writing on a bible passage can simply cite Strong's number so that you can easily look it up for the definition. You look up the English word in alphabetical order, find where it is located in the bible, and find the exact meaning of it. It is a great study tool.

Young's Analytical Concordance is very similar to Strong's Concordance in giving the original Hebrew and Greek words with their meaning. They also tell you where the English word for it is found. The difference between these two concordances is that the English word listed in Strong's is listed in the exact order it is found in scripture from Genesis to Revelation with all its various original words. It does not group the original Hebrew or Greek words together with its like kind. The Young's Concordance groups the original words together, separate from the other original words. This way you can find other passages where the word has the same

definition. For myself, I can also more easily find the particular verse I am seeking because of the ease in the way they are grouped. I use my Young's concordance more than my Strong's.

Cruden's Complete Concordance is another one. Its unique usefulness is that it will give a complete phrase using the key word. For example, the word "end" will give the scripture verse, but it will also give phrases such "at the end" or "but the end," "last end," or "made an end" and so forth. It is the only one of these concordances that does this. The disadvantage is that it does not give the original Hebrew or Greek word nor their meanings. Yet, it is very useful in finding your desired verse or phrase.