

Using a Concordance

Knowing how to properly use a concordance is important for every Christian. A concordance allows the user to locate any passage in the Bible, provided you know at least one of the main words in that passage. It also allows you to find out the original Greek or Hebrew words behind each word in the Bible. As such, a concordance is an indispensable tool for the Christian.

Let's look at an example of how to use a concordance. The most thorough and recommended concordance, and the one recommended for this study, is Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, by James Strong, LL.D., S.T.D. This is used along with the King James Version of the Bible.

Let's say you are trying to remember a certain verse, so you can write it in a card you are sending to a friend who is going through a rough time. You know there is a certain verse in the Bible that goes something like, "cast your care on God...", but you cannot remember the exact words, and you want to include the reference also, but you have forgotten it. Take your concordance, and look up one of the main words you are sure IS in the verse. Let's use the word, "cast" (though you could also use the word, "care", or one of the other main words you are sure are in the verse). A concordance is arranged alphabetically, so if you are searching for the word, "cast", we know it comes with the other "c" words. Look up the word, "cast". What does it say? You will see a note saying, "see appendix". The appendix is located in the back of your concordance. When you look up the word, "cast", in the appendix, you will see that there are many, many references to that word in the Bible. There is simply not room in the concordance, even as large as it is, to list all of them. You could choose to look up individually each of the verses listed under the word, "cast", or you may choose to look up one of the other main words in the verse to try and narrow the listed verses down to the one you are searching for.

Let's see...we are pretty sure the word, "care", is also in the verse we are searching for. Try looking up the word, "care", in the main part of the concordance. Ahh...that's better. Here you will see about twenty verses listed in the Bible, each containing the word, "care". Each verse is listed this way - first, you will see the different *context lines*. These lines are all parts of verses that contain the word, "care". The ones in bold print are the words of Christ. In each context line, you will see that the word, "care", is listed as "*c*" - such as in the first listing, "hath left the *c* of the asses..." - The letter "*c*" here stands for the word, "care". This is simply a way for the author to conserve space.

After the context line, you will see the references of the verses listed, followed by

a number. That number is a reference to the Greek and Hebrew dictionaries in the back of your concordance. If you would like to know the original Greek or Hebrew word for the word in the verse, you can find it here. Numbers in regular print are originally from the Hebrew language, and can be found in the Hebrew dictionary. Numbers in italic are originally from the Greek, and can be found in the Greek dictionary in the back of your concordance.

So, back to our verse...read through the list of verses listed under the word, “care”, substituting the word, “care” for each “*c*” in each verse. If you find a verse that you think is the verse you are searching for, look it up in your Bible to read it in its entirety. The reference that you could not remember is listed immediately following each context line.

Which of the verses listed under the word, “care” seems to be the verse we were looking for? I’ll give you a hint - it’s the last one listed, “Casting all your care upon him...”, whose reference is 1 Peter 5:7. Of course, if you looked up the entire verse in your Bible, you would most likely want to include the whole thing in your note - “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” A beautiful verse of comfort to share with those in distress, this verse was easily found by knowing how to use your concordance.

In the following lessons, you will be asked to look up different things in your concordance, to further familiarize you with its use. Of all the resources listed in this workbook, the concordance is most important to master in its use, for while all the other resources will help you in gaining knowledge of the world we live in, only the concordance (of the resources you are being taught to use in this study) has eternal value. Work to master its use.

1. Look up the word, “glory”, in your concordance. You will see that there are many verses in the Bible that contain this word. Note that the verses listed are listed in order in which they appear in the Bible - for example, any verses with that word in the book of Genesis are listed first, continuing in order through the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible. Count how many verses in the book of James (abbreviated “Jas”) are in the Bible. How many are there?
2. How many verses in the Bible include the word, “dogs”?
3. How many of these verses containing the word, “dogs” contains the words of Jesus Christ?
4. Which of these verses about dogs, spoken by Jesus, is found in the book of Luke? Look up the verse and write it below.
5. Which of the following words is used more times in the Bible - “will” or “concerning”?
6. How many times is the word “understanding” used in the Bible?
7. What is the original Greek word for the word that is translated “understanding” in Psalm 119:34? (This can be found in the Greek dictionary in the back of your concordance - the dictionary in **bold** print). Look up the 4-digit number in **bold** that follows the reference for the verse.
8. What is the original meaning for that word?