

**GRACE BIBLE TRAINING CENTRE (GBTC)**  
**SCHOOL OF MINISTRY**  
**ARUSHA - TANZANIA**

**SUBJECT: BIBLE STUDY METHODS**

**LESSON 3: BIBLE STUDY AIDS**

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There are things that help with better understanding and ease of navigation through the Bible. The Bible is a big book and also a library of books. To make the best use of the Bible and to enjoy its contents will require the use of the following aids:

### **3.1 The Bible Structure**

Bible Survey as a subject provides a detailed understanding of the structure and classification of the Bible. Key points will not be repeated here but a few references or summary will be made.

At the front of the Bible is a list of the books of the Old and New Testaments. This list also gives the page numbers where each book begins. The Old Testament is listed first.

The Old Testament was given to the Jews, who were also called Hebrews or Israelites. God chose them to receive His truths, write them, and teach them to others. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew because it was the language of the Jews.

The Old Testament covers the history and terms of God's relationship with humanity, from Creation to the coming of the Saviour who would establish a new covenant.

The New Testament gives the history and the conditions of the new covenant, or pact, that God made with all who accept His Son Jesus Christ as their Saviour. The New Testament tells the story of the life of Jesus Christ, and also what He taught.

When the New Testament was written, Greek was a commonly known language. Since this new pact was for all people – not for the Jews alone – the New Testament was written in Greek, thus making it possible for most people to read it.

The Old Testament is very important because it reveals God's plan for humanity. But the Old Testament was a temporary pact until Jesus Christ would come to establish the permanent pact. We are now living under the new pact – the New Testament.

The New Testament is based upon the Old Testament. It not only explains the relationship between the two pacts, but it relates the fulfilment of many Old Testament prophecies. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew for the Jews, and the New Testament was written in Greek for the larger world population.

Order and structure are necessary for the working of any system, whether household, literary, or otherwise. Thus, the Bible is arranged systematically so that one can more easily find its treasures and understand them. Regardless of the translation, our Bibles hold to the same chapters and verses so people do not get lost.

Indexes and the table of contents help direct readers to specific places in the Bible.

### **3.2 The Bible Reference**

To help in reading and studying, every book of the Bible is divided into chapters. Each chapter is also divided into smaller sections that are numbered on the left side. These are called *verses* or *Bible texts*. Reference to any Bible text is made by saying the name of the book, then the number of the chapter and the number of the verse. All of these together can be called the Bible *reference*.

The best way to find Bible references is to memorize the books of the Bible in their proper order. These are covered under Bible Survey.

### **3.3 The Study Reference**

Some Bibles (especially English Bibles) have study references down the centre, in side margins, at the bottom of each page, or after each verse. These are sometimes called cross references or marginal references, and they help to find other related verses.

A tiny letter by certain words in a Bible verse refers one to look for the same letter in the reference area. By that letter one will find a Scripture reference which will lead to a related verse.

It's recommended to invest in a good Study Bible, as one can use this system to develop interesting studies on the topics one is reading.

The references and other comments as found in some Bibles are helpful, but they are not divinely inspired. They were given by Bible teachers and scholars to help in the use and understanding of the Bible more easily.

### **3.4 The Bible Concordance**

A concordance is an alphabetical index of some principal words in the Bible. This index gives the references in the Bible where a particular word is used.

There are several instances when one may wish to use a concordance. For example, if one wishes to read several verses that contain the word *love*. One will need to look up the word in the concordance. The references are listed, together with a few words from each Bible verse that uses the word *love*.

A concordance can also be of help when one wishes to know where in the Bible to find a particular verse. Perhaps you know all of the verse, or only a part of it, but you do not know the reference.

Choose a key word from the words you remember of the verse, and look up that word. It is possible that you will find among the references listed one with a phrase from the verse you are seeking.

For example, suppose you want to find in the Bible the verse that says "*The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.*" Perhaps the only words of the verse you remember are "*money is the root of all evil.*" Notice that there are three key words that you can look up: **money**, **root**, and **evil**. The key word is usually identified in the concordance by only the first letter of the word.

If you do not find in the concordance the Bible reference you are looking for, by looking under the word **money**, proceed to look up the other key words. The reference will eventually bring up 1Timothy 6:10.

Does your Bible have marginal references and a concordance? These are important helps for teachers, ministers, preachers, and others who want to work for God. Perhaps you do not intend to be a minister, preacher or teacher; you can still learn many new things if you will use your study references and a concordance.