

CHAPTER FIVE

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this chapter you will be able to:

- C Write the Key Verses from memory.
- C Explain three uses of a concordance.
- C Use a concordance.
- C Use a Bible dictionary.
- C Use a Bible word study book.
- C Use a topical textbook.
- C Use a Bible encyclopedia.
- C Use a Bible commentary.
- C Use a Bible atlas.
- C Use a Bible handbook.

KEY VERSES:

Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies:
for they are ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my
meditation.

I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.
(Psalm 119:98-100)

INTRODUCTION

Bible scholars have written special books that are helpful in studying the Bible. This chapter explains how to use these Bible study tools. It is not necessary to have these special books in order to study the Bible. Do not be concerned if you cannot afford or do not have access to them. This course teaches you how to study the Bible yourself. All that is necessary for you to have is a Bible.

If you do not have these tools at the present time, it is still important for you to know what study aids exist. This is why we have included this chapter on Bible study tools. If you do have access to Bible study tools, we want you to know how to use them because

they will be helpful to you. There are several ways you might gain access to such books. Perhaps you can obtain them by purchasing them at a Christian bookstore or from the publisher. If you cannot afford to purchase these books, perhaps you can borrow them. If you live near a Christian Bible college, you might be able to use their library. Perhaps a minister or Christian friend living near you has some of these books and will let you use them.

Bible study tools are important, but they cannot substitute for studying the Bible itself. You should use these tools only after you have done your own study of the Word. Consulting a Bible study book before studying the Bible itself influences your mind with the comments of man before you have studied the words of God. Those who wrote Bible commentaries and other study tools obtained their material the way any student can get it: From the Bible itself.

It is not necessary to depend on the research of others. If Bible study tools are not available to you, do not despair. Within you dwells the creative power of the Holy Spirit. He is the special teacher sent by God who will guide you into all truth. That is better than all the Bible study tools provided by men. If these tools are available, learn to use them to supplement your own study of God's Word, but do not depend on them. Depend on the creative revelation of the Holy Spirit.

BIBLE CONCORDANCE

A Bible concordance provides an alphabetical listing of the main words in the Bible with the immediate context of each word. If you have limited funds with which to purchase materials, this is the most important tool for Bible study and should be your first choice.

Two good concordances are:

The Analytical Concordance to the Bible by Robert Young published by Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible by James Strong published by Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A. (Strong's is used for the following study explaining the use of a concordance.)

A concordance is helpful in three ways:

1. To Locate All The References To A Word:

For example, if you want to study about angels you can look up the words "angel" and "angels" in a concordance. You will find a complete listing of each place these words are used in the Bible. This will enable you to look up each reference on the subject. You can also look up names of Bible characters and do biographical studies using the

concordance. For example, if you look up the name "Moses" it lists all of the Bible references to him.

Each reference to a word is represented by the first letter of the word. For example, look at the listing for the word "begotten":

BEGOTTEN		
b Seth were eight hundred years	Gen 5:4	3205
b of thy father, she is thy	Lev 18:11	4138
have I b them that thou	Num 11:12	3205
The children that are b of them	Deut 23 8	3205
and then sons of his body b	Judg 8:30	3318
or who hath b the drops of dew	Job 38:28	3205
this day have I b thee	Ps 2:7	3205
thine heart, Who hath b me these	Is 49:21	3205
for they have b strange children	Hos 5:7	3205
as of the only b of the Father	Jn 1:13	3439
the only b Son, which is in the	Jn 1:18	3439
that he gave his only b Son	Jn 3:16	3439
the name of the only b Son of God	Jn 3:18	3439
my Son, this day have I b thee	Acts 13:33	1080

The word "begotten" is indicated by the initial "b" in each reference listed. Abbreviations are used for the books of the Bible rather than spelling out the name of each book.

2. To Locate A Specific Text:

Perhaps you remember just a word or two from a Bible verse and you want to find the verse in the Bible. Use the words you remember to locate the text. For example, if you remember the word "begotten" from the verse "For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son," you can look up the word "begotten" in the concordance. There you will find all the references to "begotten" listed. Go down the list until you find the verse you are looking for . . . "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." By using the concordance you discovered that this verse is located in John 3:16. Now you can find the verse in your Bible.

3. To Find The Meaning Of A Word:

At the end of each listing under a word in the concordance you will find a number. In the back of the concordance there are two dictionaries. One dictionary is in Hebrew, the language in which the Old Testament was written. The other dictionary is in Greek, the

language in which the New Testament was written. You do not need to know Hebrew or Greek to use these dictionaries. Use the number which is at the end of the listing in the concordance:

Jo 3:16 that he gave his only b son. . . 3439

Look up the number in the Hebrew dictionary if it is a word used in the Old Testament. Look up the number in the Greek dictionary if it is a word used in the New Testament. We are studying the word "begotten" as it is used in John 3:16. Since it is a New Testament word we will look up number 3439 in the Greek dictionary. This is how the listing in the Greek dictionary looks:

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
3439	Hoyoyevhs	monogenes,	mon-og-en-ace’;
(5)		(6)	
from 3441 and 1096;	only-born,	i.e.,	sole-only begotten
child.			

The numbers in brackets () do not appear in the dictionary. These are coded to the following explanations:

- (1) This is the number by which you find the Greek word.
- (2) This is the word written in Greek.
- (3) This shows how the word is pronounced in Greek.
- (4) This shows the division of the word into syllables (parts) and where the accent (emphasis) is placed when you say the word in Greek.
- (5) This provides the numbers of the "root" words for the word "begotten." These are the original words from which the word "begotten" came. (You can look these up in the Greek dictionary too if you desire. Look them up by their numbers).
- (6) This gives the meaning of the word "begotten."

When you do not understand the meaning of a word in the Bible this method of word study will help you. You will learn more about word study later in this course.

BIBLE DICTIONARY

A Bible dictionary lists words of the Bible in alphabetical order and explains the meaning of each word. A Bible dictionary is not the same as a regular word dictionary. A regular dictionary gives the meanings of words as they are now used. A Bible dictionary gives the definitions of Bible words as they were used in the original context of Scripture. Here is a sample listing from a Bible dictionary:

BEARD (berd), with Asiatics a badge of manly dignity in contrast to the Egyptians, who usually shaved the head and the face. As a sign of mourning, it was the custom to pluck it out or cut it off. The Israelites were forbidden to shave off the corners of the beards, probably because it was regarded as a heathenish sign (Lev. 19:27). To compel a man to cut off his beard was to inflict upon him a shameful disgrace (II Sam. 10:4)

The following are recommended Bible dictionaries:

Unger's Bible Dictionary by Merrill Unger. Published by Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary by Merrill C. Tenney published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

WORD STUDY BOOKS

Word study books go beyond the basic Bible dictionary in defining words used in the Bible. They provide the Greek or Hebrew word and various meanings given to the same word. A word study book also provides the references in which word is used. Here is an example from a word study book:

AXE: From AXINE, an axe, kin to agumi, to break,
is found in Matthew 3:10 and Luke 3:9

This listing shows the Greek Word, tells it is related to another word ("agumi"), explains the meaning of the word, and tells where the word is used in the Bible.

The following word study books are suggested:

An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words and An Expository Dictionary of Old Testament words, both by W.E. Vine published by Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan, New Jersey, U.S.A.

BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA

A Bible encyclopedia also lists various Bible subjects and words in alphabetical order and defines them. But it provides a more extensive discussion than a dictionary.

Here is an example from a Bible encyclopedia:

BEGOTTEN Heb. Yalad (Lev. 18:11; Job 38:28; Psalm 2:7; etc.); Gk. Yennao (Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5).; NEB also “sired), “become your father”, etc. In the RSV the term occurs mainly of God’s act in making Christ His Son: “You are my son; today I have begotten you” (Psalm 2:7), quoted in Acts 13:33 in reference to His resurrection (Rom 1:4). The same passage is cited in Heb 1:5 as proving Christ’s filial dignity, transcending the angels in that “the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs,” i.e., the name of son; and again (5:5) of God’s conferring upon Christ the glory of the priestly office.

The following are recommended Bible Encyclopedias:

Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia by C.F. Pfeiffer, V.F. Vos, and John Rea; published by Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia, (five volumes) published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

BIBLE COMMENTARY

A commentary is a book that provides comments about Scriptures in the Bible. It comments on the Bible chapter by chapter and verse by verse. A commentary is helpful in explaining passages which are difficult to understand. But remember: This is one person's ideas as to what the Scriptures mean. Commentaries are only opinions of man. This is why it is important that you study the Bible for yourself and not depend only on the comments of others.

There are many different Bible commentaries. Some commentaries consist of one volume which covers the entire Bible. Other commentaries devote one book of comments to each

book of the Bible. Suggested commentaries:

The Wycliff Bible Commentary by Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison published in by Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

Matthew Henry's Commentary of the Whole Bible published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

BIBLE ATLAS

A Bible atlas or geography contains maps and information on the lands of the Bible. It helps you locate and understand the geographical setting in which the incidents in the Bible happened. The following atlases are recommended:

Compact Bible Atlas with Gazetter published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

Hammond's Atlas of the Bible Lands by Harry T. Frank published by Scripture Press, Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A.

Oxford Bible Atlas by Herbert G. May published by Oxford University Press, New York, New York, U.S.A.

The Macmillan Bible Atlas published by Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, New York, U.S.A.

TOPICAL TEXTBOOKS

A topical textbook is a book which organizes the Bible under major topical listings and gives the verses where these topics are discussed. Here is an example from a topical textbook:

GIDEON. Call of by an angel, Judg. 6:11,14. His excuses, Judg. 6:15. Promises of the Lord to, Judg. 6:16. Angel attests the call to, by miracle, Judg. 6:21-24. He destroys the altar of Baal, and builds one to the Lord, Judg. 6:25-27. His prayer tests, Judg. 6:36-40. Leads an army against and defeats the Midianites, Judg. 6:33-35; 7; 8:4-12. Ephriamites chide, for not inviting them to join in the campaign against Midianites, Judg. 8:1-3. Avenges himself upon the people of Succoth, Judg. 8:14-17. Israel desires to make him king, he refuses, Judg. 8:22-23. Makes an ephod which becomes a snare to the Israelites, Judg. 8:24-27. Had seventy sons, Judg. 8:30. Death of, Judg. 8:32; Faith of, Heb. 11:32

The following are recommended topical books:

Nave's Topical Bible lists 20,000 topics with 100,000 Bible references. It was written by Orville J. Nave and published by Guardian Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

Zondervan Topical Bible lists 21,000 topics with over 100,000 Scripture references published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

BIBLE HANDBOOKS

A Bible handbook is usually a one volume summary of selected information about the Bible. It contains helpful maps and charts, definitions, information on Bible times, and summaries of the books of the Bible. A Bible handbook presents a general overview of the Bible.

The following are good Bible handbooks:

Unger's Bible Handbook, Moody Press, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

Eerdmans' Handbook To The Bible, Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

INTERNET

For those who are computer literate and have access to the Internet, it is a wonderful resource for Bible study tools. Many of the study tools mentioned in this chapter can now be accessed via the Internet. Input the key words "Bible study resources" or "Bible studies." You may also input the title of the study aid you are seeking. For example, "Nave's Topical Bible" will locate this resource for you.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

If you have access to Bible study tools, complete the following exercises:

1. Use a concordance to locate the following verse. Complete the verse and record the Bible reference:

“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation

”

Reference: _____

2. Use the concordance, a Bible dictionary, and a word study book to study the word "lasciviousness." Summarize its meaning:

3. Look up Jude 1:4 in a Bible commentary and see what comments are made about this verse. Summarize what you learn:
