

How to Do a Word Study

...Without Knowing Hebrew or Greek

Word studies are a good way to gain a deeper understanding of Scripture. By looking at a particular word in its original context(s) and language, one can see the various nuances and meaning that aren't necessarily apparent in a given English translation. In the Stamps Theological Library, there are specific tools to use for word studies.

Many of the dictionaries and wordbooks that are used for word studies are arranged alphabetically by either Hebrew or Greek, which obviously is only useful to those who have studied those languages. However, there are resources that are arranged alphabetically by English words (or contain English glossaries), and/or by a numbering system. There are two major numbering systems currently in use: 1) Strong's numbers, and 2) G/K numbers ("G/K" stands for the two creators of this system, E.W. Goodrick / J.R. Kohlenberger). When used in coordination with concordances, in-depth word studies are possible for those who don't know the Biblical languages.

Step One: Choose A Concordance

A Bible concordance is an alphabetical list of the principal words used in a particular translation of Scripture, along with their immediate contexts (i.e. the passages in which they appear). Those using a numbering system will also include a number that coordinates with a Hebrew-to-English or Greek-to-English dictionary in the back of the concordance. The dictionaries in the back include brief definitions of Hebrew and Greek words, but there are other reference tools that will provide much more information for each term.

Use the list below to find an appropriate concordance (or more than one). All of the ones listed include either Strong's numbers or G/K numbers, and have dictionaries in the back.

Bible Translation	Title/Author	Call Number	Numbering System
AEV / REV	Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible / J. Strong	Theo Ref BS 425 S8 1890	Strong's
KJV	Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible / J. Strong	Theo Ref BS 425 S8 1975	Strong's

KJV	Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible / J. Strong	Theo Ref BS 425 S8 1980	Strong's
KJV	Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible / J. Strong	Theo Ref BS 425 S8 2001	Strong's
NASV	New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible / R.L. Thomas	Theo Ref BS 425 N385	Strong's
NASV	Zondervan NASB Exhaustive Concordance	Theo Ref BS 425 N27 2000	Strong's
NIV	Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance / E.W. Goodrick & J.R. Kohlenberger	Theo Ref BS 425 G62 1999	G/K*

* This concordance has a conversion chart in the back that allows you to look up Strong's numbers in order to find the corresponding G/K number --- it also goes the other way, and lets you look up G/K numbers in order to find the corresponding Strong's numbers.

Step Two: Find All Relevant Terms & Corresponding Numbers

- **Look Up Terms & Synonyms**

Once you have your concordance (or concordances), look up the term of interest (i.e. "compassion"). Be sure to also look up any synonyms you can think of (i.e. "mercy"), as well as any word variations (i.e. "compassionate," "merciful," etc.).

- **Find the Most Appropriate Strong's & G/K Numbers**

In the concordance, you will see a list of Scripture passages, beginning with the Old Testament, which contains the term (usually bolded). You should also see a number to the right of each passage. You will use this number to find the Hebrew or Greek word that is used in the particular verse. For the more common terms, you will notice that there isn't just one Hebrew or Greek term used. You should look up all the numbers listed in the concordance glossary to be thorough – many of the terms will be similar, but will perhaps have different nuances or emphases. You may not need to consider every single word that's used – look for those terms that are used most frequently and correspond most closely to your concept. Make a list of all the different numbers given for the Old Testament passages, and another list of all the different numbers given for the New Testament passages. Use the conversion table in the *Zondervan NIV Exhaustive Concordance* (see list above) to get both the Strong's and the G/K number for each term.

- **Find the Transliteration for Each Hebrew and Greek Word**

Look up the numbers in the Hebrew-to-English (Old Testament passages) and Greek-to-English (New Testament passages) glossaries/dictionaries in the back of the concordance. If there is an English transliteration listed, write this down next to the corresponding number (i.e. χάρις would be transliterated as “charis”). You might want to create a table like the one below:

Concept	Terms/Synonyms	Strong's #	G/K #	Transliteration(s)
Grace	Grace	OT: 2580 NT: 5485	OT: 2834 NT: 5921	OT: (c)hen NT: charis
	Kindness	OT: 2617a NT: 5360, 5363, 5543, 5544	OT: 2876 NT: 5789, 5792, 5982, 5983	OT: (c)hesed NT: philadelphia, philanthropia, chrestos, chrestotes

- **Select the Most Representative Scripture Passages**

While you look up your terms in the concordance, write down the scripture citations that are most representative of your concept.

Step Three: Look Up Terms & Numbers In Appropriate Resources

By now, you have a list of Strong's and/or G/K numbers that represent the various Hebrew and Greek words used for your term (and possibly some transliterated terms). You have also gotten at least a basic understanding of the word definitions. Use the following resources to research your term(s) in more depth:

Old Testament Resources

Title/Author	Call Number	Arrangement & Usage
New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis (NIDOTTE) / W.A. VanGemeren	Theo Ref BS 440 N438 1997 vs. 1-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hebrew terms are listed in alphabetical order with their corresponding G/K numbers • Simply look up your G/K number --- the numerical order of the G/K numbers roughly corresponds to the alphabetical order of the Hebrew terms; other access points are the English word, and the Old Testament passage. • Articles have bibliographies
Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT) / G.J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren	Theo Ref BS 440 B5713 vs. 1-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hebrew terms are listed in alphabetical order along with the transliterations • The only way to find your term is by looking for the transliteration in the 'Contents' section at the beginning of each volume. This can be tricky since there is significantly more variance in Hebrew transliterations than those in Greek. Ask a theological librarian for help if you can't find your particular Hebrew transliteration. • Articles have footnotes

Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament / E. Jenni & C. Westermann	Theo Ref BS 440 T4813 1997 vs. 1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hebrew terms are listed in alphabetical order with their corresponding Strong's numbers (indicated below the Hebrew term --- for example, "S 127") • Simply look up your Strong's number --- the numerical order of the Strong's numbers, as with G/K numbers, roughly corresponds to the alphabetical order of the Hebrew terms • You may want to scan the "Table of Words" found at the beginning of each volume --- although listed in order by Hebrew word, you may be able to pick out your term by looking at the English translation in bold • This resource also conveniently lists references to the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB), the Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT), the Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT), the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT), and the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDOTTE)
Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT) / R.L. Harris, G.L. Archer, B.K. Waltke	Theo Ref BS 440 T49 vs. 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hebrew terms are listed in alphabetical order • Look up your Strong's number in the index, then look up the term by the TWOT number • Articles have bibliographies

New Testament Resources

Title/Author	Call Number	Arrangement & Usage
New International Dictionary of new Testament Theology / C. Brown	Theo Ref BS 2312 N48 1986 vs. 1-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms are listed alphabetically in English • Try to find your term by using the English page headings, and if it's not listed, try using one of the indexes in volume 4 (entries will refer you to articles in vs. 1-3) --- you can look up scripture passages and transliterations of Hebrew and Greek words, as well as using the general index at the very end (English) • Articles have footnotes

New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament / C.L. Rogers, Jr. & C.L. Rogers, III	Theo Ref BS 1965.2 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This resource is arranged in order by New Testament book and verse If you are interested in your term as it appears in a particular New Testament passage, look up the passage --- terms found in the passage are listed in bold, and will have the G/K number in parentheses
NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words / V. Verbrugge	Theo Ref BS 2312 N482 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greek terms are listed in alphabetical order with their corresponding G/K numbers Simply look up your G/K number --- the numerical order of the G/K numbers roughly corresponds to the alphabetical order of the Greek terms
Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT) / G. Kittel, G. Friedrich, G.W. Bromiley	<p>Theo Ref BS 2312 K58213 1985 (this is the abridged volume)</p> <p>Theo Ref BS 2312 K5813 1964 (unabridged 10-volume set)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greek terms are listed in alphabetical order in the unabridged set (vs. 1-9) The unabridged set (vs. 1-9) has bibliographies throughout the articles <u>Abridged Volume:</u> Use either the Table of Greek Keywords (for any transliterated words you have), or the Table of English Keywords – both tables are at the beginning of the volume After finding an article that discusses your term, look through the article to find references that look like this: [R. Bultmann, VI, 174-82] --- this is a reference (author, volume, page number) to a much lengthier article on the same term in the unabridged Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Theo Ref BS 2312 K5813 1964, vs. 1-10), which will give you more information <u>Volume 10 (unabridged set)</u> Volume 10 (X) has an extensive list of English words in its 'Index of English Keywords' section at the beginning. You can also find your word by looking up the Strong's number in the 'Index of Greek Keywords.' Once you find your word in the index, use the information to the right of the word to locate the volume that has the complete article. 'II:284-317' refers to volume 2, pages 284-317.

Other Helpful Resources:

NIV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words: An Abridgment of New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology
 Verlyn Verbrugge, ed.
 Theology Ref BS2312 .N482 2000

Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greek Texts
 Stephen D. Renn, ed.
 Theology Ref BS440 .E97 2005