

Dear Amy,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You asked us which concordance we would recommend, Strong's, Young's or another.

Both Strong's and Young's are good concordances. It is important to remember that the definition of the word being researched in Strong's is always in italics. Other words are used for embellishment or to enhance understanding.

We personally use both Strong's and Young's concordances when researching. Below are some citations that illustrate the pros and cons of each.

"The key difference between *Young's* and *Strong's* is the layout of the passages of scripture. Where a Hebrew or Greek word is translated differently in the KJV (both concordances use this version as their bedrock translation), in *Young's* when you look up the word you're after you will find all the various uses of that English word listed together analytically. So, if it's the word "love" (to make things easy), the entry will list all the references in order under the subheadings of the Hebrew words that are so translated (*ahabah, ahabim, ohabim* and *dod*). It then does the same thing with the Greek words (in this case just *agapē*). Then there is another listing headed "Love, to –", then "Love, in –" and so on. Go to the back of the concordance and you find the original word (e.g. *agapē*) and it will tell you that it's translated as "charity" 27 times and "love" 86 times. Such statistical information gives you an idea about the most likely rendering, or another possible way of translating the same word in the passage you are studying.

"*Strong's* is less welcoming; for your first examination of the word will provide a list of all occurrences in the order in which they appear in the Bible together with a string of numbers (157, 160, 2836, etc). To follow up each number you have to refer to the back of the concordance where a concise dictionary (separately for Hebrew and Greek words) provides a brief definition. At first no statistical information was provided about word usage, but more recent versions have an expanded set of definitions and these are usually incorporated in Bible software packages (though there are different definitions in different places, which can be a bit confusing)."

"Although Strong's is more popular and has its strengths, Young's is better for word studies due in part to the way it analyzes English words. For example, several different Greek or Hebrew words can be translated by one English word. Young shows this by analyzing the English word showing all of the Greek or Hebrew words it translates and then lists the verses containing each occurrence of the various Greek or Hebrew words. This can make for more accurate word studies.

“Unlike Strong's, which is widely available in electronic formats for use with various Bible study software applications, Young's has not yet been converted to an electronic format.”

In addition to using a concordance, it would also be helpful if you had a Greek English lexicon at your disposal.

“Bible lexicons provide definitions and meaning of Biblical words found in the original New Testament Greek and Old Testament Hebrew languages of the Holy Bible. This study resource helps in understanding the origins and root meaning of the ancient language. Additionally, lexicons give the context and cultural meaning intended by the authors. Using the online King James Version or New American Standard lexicon with Strong's Concordance numbers provides a detailed understanding of the Hebrew and Greek language used in the Bible.”

We hope we have given you some information that will assist you when choosing a concordance. To further help you with your Bible studies, we would like to send you the free booklet, “How to Study the Bible and Have it Make Sense” along with a Christian Questions mug. If you would like these items, please e-mail us your home address. We noticed that you live in New London, CT. There is a Bible Class in New London. Jonathan from Christian Questions attends that class. If you would like more information regarding attending Bible class, please let us know. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio