



## STATEMENT DB155

### HOW TO USE A *STRONG'S CONCORDANCE*

Thank you for writing the Christian Research Institute. We are greatly encouraged not only by the interest you have shown in this ministry, but also by the confidence you have expressed in our ability to explain Scriptures. Hundreds of letters like yours are received here each day and serve as a constant reminder of how necessary an organization like CRI is to the body of Christ. Unfortunately, responding to such a large number of requests is an impossibility given the current size of our research staff. We have, therefore, chosen to limit ourselves to answering only those questions directly connected with, or somehow related to, our areas of expertise; those areas being: 1) cults, 2) the occult 3) aberrational and controversial Christian movements or teachings 4) general apologetics (the defense of the Christian faith).

CRI realizes that such a policy on answering questions presents a problem for many of our supporters who need information regarding Scriptures which do not fall into any of the above categories. Consequently, we have compiled the following guide that should equip individuals like yourself to answer questions to which we are not able to respond.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT *STRONG'S CONCORDANCE*

Strong's Concordance was written by Dr. James Strong, a professor of exegetical theology from Drew Theological Seminary in the late nineteenth century. A concordance is a practical tool for studying Scripture because 1) It helps the student locate any verse in Scripture if the student can remember only one or more words from that verse. 2) It helps the student understand the Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic meaning behind any word in Scripture. 3) Some in-depth word studies and lexicons are keyed to Strong's numbering system so that a student can do extensive research on any given word. Concordances, like Bibles, come in different versions (e.g., King James, New American Standard, New International Version). The student should always get the version which corresponds to the version of his own Bible.

#### FINDING A SCRIPTURE BY USING A *STRONG'S CONCORDANCE*

Suppose you want to find the passage in Scripture about putting on the armor of God. All you can remember is that it is somewhere in the New Testament. You would then consult the word "armor" in Strong's Concordance. You would skip the Old Testament listings until you reach the New Testament. Luke 11:22 is the first New Testament passage listed. The recorded phrase: "all his a (armor) on which he relied" does not sound like the passage you are looking for. The next passage is Romans 13:12, and the third passage is Ephesians 6:1. The phrase in Ephesians: "Put on the full a (armor) of God, that you" sounds like the passage you are looking for.

#### DOING A WORD STUDY THROUGH *STRONG'S CONCORDANCE*

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On the far right hand column of each entry is a number code. This code refers you to where you can find this word in the dictionary section located in the back of the concordance (in this case, the word would be "armor"). Strong's Concordance has two dictionaries— one for Hebrew and Aramaic words found in the Old Testament (written in Roman type), and one for Greek words found in the New Testament (written in italic type).

Since you are looking up the word "armor" from Ephesians 6:1 1, you will notice the code number is 3833. (If you want to know where else the same word in Greek is translated "armor," look for other entries that have the same number code.) Since the numbers are italicized, you will want to look in the Greek dictionary instead of the Hebrew-Aramaic one.

Under number 3833, you will find the Greek word *panoplia* (*panoplia*). This is the Greek word for "armor" found in Ephesians 6:11. Next you will find the phrase: "from 3956 and 3696." These other codes will lead you to other words from which the Greek word "panoplia" was derived (i.e., its root meaning). Next, you will find its meaning: "all armor (1)," "full armor (2)." The number in the parentheses indicates the number of times the word conveys that particular meaning.\* Hence, by reading Ephesians 6:11 ("Put on the full armor of God..."), you will discover that in its context the word *panoplia* means "full armor" instead of "all armor."

### DOING FURTHER STUDY THROUGH SUPPLEMENTARY SOURCES

Other works are also keyed to the number system of Strong's Concordance. For instance, if you wanted to do further study on the word "armor," you could look it up in Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old And New Testament Words for an expanded definition and relationship with other similar words. Some of the most popular works keyed to Strong's Concordance are listed below:

Green, Jay P., editor, *Pocket Interlinear New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), 1979.

*Pocket Interlinear Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), 1979.

*The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers), 1979.

*The New Thayer Greek-English Lexicon*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers), 1979.

*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary Of Old And New Testament Words*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers), 1985.

\* Please note that the context is determinative upon the meaning of a word, NOT its root meaning, or even its local or dictionary meaning. In other words, we cannot pick and choose whatever definitional meaning we want but the meaning that BEST FITS THE CONTEXT. For more information on how to interpret Scripture, we recommend: **KNOWING SCRIPTURE** (IVP) by R.C. Sproul, and **EXEGETICAL FALLACIES** (Baker) by D.A.

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