Students in the Counseling 501 introductory graduate course in counseling are required to do a Biblical word study about words dealing with counseling and then comparing and contrasting what they find to secular views. Students ask if we have an online Bible concordance, which is a list of all the times a word is used in the Bible. We do have a Bible dictionary in our Oxford Reference Online collection, but not a concordance. However, there is a good, publicly available source at www.blueletterbible.org. (I will use the initials BLB to refer to it.) Here is a general page of introductions and tutorials to this resource.

http://www.blueletterbible.org/help.html#1. Here is a listing of other resources available at this site: http://www.blueletterbible.org/study/

If you put a word, such as “counsel” in the LexiConc (which stands for Lexicon/Concordance) it will bring up the Greek and Hebrew words translated using the English word “counsel” in the Old Testament and New Testament. They should do that with the other words in their assignment. For instance, here is the list for the word “counsel.”

http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/lexiconc.cfm?Criteria=counsel&st=any&x=6&y=4

Unlike abbreviated concordances in the back of a Bible, an “exhaustive” concordance like Strong’s lists every word in the Bible, every time it is used. Every Hebrew word in the Old Testament and every Greek word in the New Testament is assigned a number according to its alphabetical order. (If you do not know Hebrew or Greek, there are some original language dictionaries and lexicons that you will not be able to use. For instance, if you don’t know Hebrew characters, you couldn’t use a Hebrew dictionary that is arranged in alphabetical order by the Hebrew alphabet.)

However, there are several Hebrew and Greek resources for English-speaking people that are keyed to the Strong’s Concordance numbers. If you looked up every instance of the English word “love” in the New Testament, you would see that some of the instances translated “love” come from the word “agapē” (Strong’s Greek word 26 or G26 in the BLB) and some come from the word “phileō” (Strong’s Greek word 5368 or G5368). There are also some less frequently used words translated “love.” These numbers come from their alphabetical order out of all of the words found in the Bible in that language. H157 (‘ahab) is a common Old Testament word for “love.” I just mention that to show there is no correlation between G26 (“agapē”) and the Hebrew word H26 (actually the name Abigail, the 26th Hebrew word listed alphabetically). By clicking on the different Strong’s number links you can find the number of times that word is used in the King James Version.

Going the other way, the Greek word “agapē” is translated into a few different English words in the King James Version. (It is translated as love 86 times, charity 27 times, dear 1 time, etc.)

Here is a tutorial from the Blue Letter Bible that shows the various things available in Strongs for a particular Greek word (in this case G26 (“agapē”). Roll your cursor over the various elements in this example to see what is available: http://www.blueletterbible.org/help/strong.html. There is a considerable amount of material available at the Blue Letter Bible site, but it only includes things that are copyright free. But they should apply these elements to their “counseling” words.

If you want to do more extensive word study, however, it does show the page number for the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (abbreviated TWOT) and the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT). These reference books aren’t available free online but for TWOT go to this site http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/7172186&tab=holdings and enter your zip code to find it in a library near you and for TDNT go here http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/612601&tab=holdings. Note that for TDNT,
there is a 10 volume set and a one volume abridged edition available. Page references in the BLB refer to the 10 volume unabridged set.

Sometimes what you really desire to search is a “topic” search rather than a specific “word” search. For instance, on the topic of “prayer” you might want to include a verse like Psalm 18:3 (I will call upon the LORD, [who is worthy] to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.) This verse, although it is about prayer, does not contain the word “prayer” so it wouldn’t have been found by merely doing a word search. There are other words like “supplication,” etc. that also are about the broader topic of prayer. So to find topics rather than just the occurrence of individual words, use a topical Bible dictionary, like Naves Topical Bible. To find Naves in a library near you, check http://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1952509 The Blue Letter Bible includes a topical search on this page http://www.blueletterbible.org/search1.html and Naves is one of the resources it checks and reproduces. The Blue Letter Bible does give citation suggestions to allow you to cite the information you find but you may need to modify the information to fit the specific citation format (ALA, MLA, Turabian, etc.) you use.

The Blue Letter Bible, like Strong’s Concordance, is correlated with the King James Bible. There are some words and concepts that are just not found in the Bible. For instance, the words “addict” or “addiction” are not found in the King James Bible (the word “addicted” is found in I Corinthians 16:15 but it has nothing to do with drugs or alcohol). I Corinthians 6:12 addresses addiction although it does not use the term (All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.)

The Greek word “pharmakeia” (G5331) which talks about the use or administering of drugs (and from which we get our English word “pharmacy”) is translated twice as sorcery, and once as “witchcraft” in the King James Version.

Besides defining Biblical words, and showing instances where in Scripture they are used, lexicons also can show the etymology of a word and how it was used in other classical Greek literature. Just like in English, you can have a root word with a variety of forms and tenses (love, loves, loved, loving, beloved, etc.) and some words can serve as nouns or verbs or other parts of speech.

If you do not understand the original language, be careful about how much you “read into” these sources. It is easy to draw incorrect conclusions about a particular word. If a word has several definitions, it rarely means more than one of the definitions. For instance, our English word “bowl” can mean a dish, a game played with a ball and ten pins, a particular football game, etc. In this case, you need to know the context in which it is used to determine which of several definitions is appropriate.

Bible commentaries are arranged in Biblical book order. For instance, there are commentaries on the entire book of I Corinthians. If you were doing a study on “love” in the New Testament, a commentary that included I Corinthians 13 (the “love chapter”) would likely have some helpful information. There actually are some entire commentaries devoted to just that one chapter.

Commentaries can be found in LUCAS (to find things on Liberty’s shelves that can be shipped to DLP students or used by those who live nearby). There are also some commentaries in NetLibrary that are available to distant learners. Or, if a distant student has a library nearby, they can find commentaries in WorldCat at www.worldcat.org. Commentaries specifically on I Corinthians 13 may be found by searching in LUCAS for “Bible. N.T. Corinthians, 1st, XIII—Commentaries” and “Bible. N.T. Corinthians,
1st, XIII--Criticism, interpretation, etc.” Leave off the Roman number XIII for commentaries on the entire book of I Corinthians.

The professional journal articles part of the assignment
Next, let’s talk about the articles part of the assignment. The students are to compare what they find in the Bible with current recent professional counseling practices. Sometimes students try to do their word study by looking in the journal databases and that doesn’t really provide good results. They should do the word study using the resources above and then use the journal databases to find articles.

When I talk about this assignment with students, I tell them that there is not a perfect Christian counseling database. We have secular counseling and psychology databases (like PsycInfo) that have some articles on the religious aspects of counseling. And then we have religion databases that are primarily for Biblical or theological (doctrinal) issues but do have some counseling articles. So I suggest that they go to www.liberty.edu, choose Quicklinks, then Library. From the main library page choose Library Research Portal. If they are off-campus they need to log in to EZProxy to give them access to our subscription databases. If they have already logged into Blackboard they might already be authenticated by EZProxy and clicking on that link will just take them right back to the Research Portal page. (But if they look at the address bar, they will see the phrase “ezproxy” as part of the URL. Note: They have to log in each time they go online. They can’t bookmark this “proxied” URL and then be authenticated. They have to log in either through Blackboard or EZProxy.)

Then I suggest they go to Academic Search Complete. Right beside the database name, there is a link for “Choose Databases.” Articles are found in journals. Journals are indexed in databases. Our largest multidisciplinary database is Academic Search Complete. It does have some counseling and some religious journals, but we are going to have some additional, subject specific databases and search them all simultaneously. Here are the databases I suggest they choose for this assignment:

**Academic Search Complete** - large multidisciplinary database

**ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials** – This is our largest religious database. All of the journals it indexes are not from a conservative, evangelical viewpoint. There are Catholic, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, etc., journals indexed in it.

**Christian Periodical Index** – this is the index of the Association of Christian Librarians. They attempt to index some of the popular Christian journals not indexed in ATLA.

**E-Journals** – I included this database in our search since Liberty subscribes to some unique individual counseling journals that are not indexed in any of our other databases.

**Education Research Complete** – at many universities, the counseling department is a branch of the School of Education. There are counseling journals in this database as well as the next one.

**ERIC** – another educational database

**New Testament Abstracts** – this database and the next one are more Biblical studies databases, but could have some applicable articles

**Old Testament Abstracts**

**PsycARTICLES** – PsycArticles provides full-text articles about counseling and psychology from the American Psychological Association.

**Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection** – this is an EbscoHost index of full-text psychology articles

**PsycINFO** – another APA Psychology collection of journal articles

**Religion and Philosophy Collection** – as the name implies, Religion and Philosophy articles

**SociINDEX with Full Text** – this is Sociology Index and has some counseling journals within it.
There are some other databases (like PsycBooks or PsycExtra) that I didn’t check for this assignment because we are looking for journal databases, not E-books or “extra” literature.

Once they have chosen all of these databases, they should click on OK. They could see all of the databases they have chosen by clicking on “show more” after the Academic Search Complete name. It should look like this:


Okay, now we are ready to enter some search terms. I suggest the following terms. They should be seeing three search boxes. On the first box put the word [counseling]. (No brackets or quotation marks.) On the second line, put the word [Biblical]. If they put [Biblical counseling] on one line it would look for that as a phrase, rather than bringing up all of the articles that mention the word [biblical] and [counseling] even if the terms are separated. Right after the blank box is a box that says “Select a field (optional).” Don’t do anything with that. By just leaving it, you are looking for KEYWORDS in the article title, author, abstract, and assigned subject headings. If you click on SEARCH, you will bring up over 1400 articles.

Some of these, however, are not available in full-text. For some, you will see the symbol. That means they are either available in another database, or perhaps we have the journal in print, but not available online, or we have to order it from another library. Let’s eliminate these non-full-text articles. As of this writing, that brought the total down to only 183 full-text articles. If you click on the “scholarly (peer-reviewed) journals” button, you will eliminate some of the popular journals and have even fewer results.

Now, browse through the results. Their professor doesn’t want the articles to be too old. But that shouldn’t be a problem since the MOST RECENT articles are displayed first. I find that only one or two articles per page of ten articles are really applicable to talk about what the Bible says about counseling compared to secular theories. So they may have to browse several groups of ten to find enough applicable articles. Once you find an article, you can print out the PDF, email the article to yourself, or save it to your computer to read later and go on to select other articles. One of the icons you can select is to “cite this item.” It will give a machine-generated APA citation that you can cut and paste.

A frequent problem with these citations is that the capitalization is wrong. In APA, for the article name you should only capitalize the first word (like you would in a sentence), any words after a colon (this is the start of a subtitle) and proper nouns (like Christian or Bible). Sometimes the articles you will find will have ALL of the words capitalized and this is incorrect. (In Microsoft Word, you can highlight the text and choose “Change Case” to change them to “Sentence case.”)

So here is one of the articles I found:
http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu:2048
Note that the name of the journal is capitalized (since it is a proper noun) and italicized. The volume number (28 in this case) is italicized, but the issue number is in parentheses and not italicized. I made this a “hanging indent” by highlighting the citation, right-clicking on it, choosing “paragraph” and then under indentation choosing “hanging.” You notice this is properly capitalized. If it was capitalized as “'Jesus Didn't Need A Shrink': A Critique Of Anti-Psychological Biblical Sufficiency,” you would have to change the case to the APA required “sentence case.”

Once you go through several screens of the most recent articles, you can try some different search term combinations. Leave [counseling] in the first box. But remove [biblical] and try [scriptural] instead. Then try the combinations of [counseling] and [pastoral] OR [counseling] and [faith] OR [counseling] and [Christian] OR [counseling] and [integration]. When integration is used regarding counseling, it often (but not always) refers to the integration of Christian concepts with secular ones. You may have to read through several pages of abstracts to find applicable articles, but you should find some excellent ones.