

The Word Study Principle

Lesson 4

Intro: There is a great need in our Bible studying for us to consider the meaning of Bible words. Words are the tools God uses express ideas of eternal and spiritual importance. They are the doors that open our mind to a deeper understanding to the things of God.

Our Goals:

1. Our first goal is to identify our need of understanding the meaning of archaic words without changing the content or meaning of the passage being studied.
2. Goal number two is to introduce the methods used in the practice of word studies.
3. Our third goal will be to introduce us to a step by step instruction for “digging” into the meaning of a term or phrase.

Definitions of Important Terms or Phrases:

Translation: That which is produced by turning into another language; “Webster’s 1828”

Transliteration: The action or process of transliterating; the rendering of the letters or characters of one alphabet in those of another; a word or character thus rendered. “Shorter Oxford English Dictionary” Vol. 2 1936

Word Picture: A picture presented in words, graphics, or vivid description. “Hermeneutics, Dr. Ronnie Simpson”

Performing a word study during our study of God’s Word will be a tremendous help to us. Word studies are an invaluable aid in helping us understand the Bible more clearly. We are not correcting the Bible by doing this, nor are we trying to change its meaning. Let us work through the examples together to see the benefits of and practice of word studies.

You will not here me say; “The Bible should have said, or this should have been translated.” The Bible is perfect and doesn’t need correction!

1. Understanding Bible Words:

A. The Changing of Meaning:

1. Many Bible words have changed in usage over a period of time>
2. Barackman lists the following examples: “How to Interpret the Bible, Floyd Barackman”
 - a. The word “let” today means “permit” or “allow”, but in 1611 it meant to “restrain”. 2 Thessalonians 2:7
 - b. The word “prevent” today means “keep from happening”, but in 1611 it meant “go before”. 1 Thessalonians 4:15
 - c. The word “conversation” today means “an informal talking together”, but in 1611 it meant “behavior”. 1 Timothy 4:12
 - d. The word “carriage” today means “a wheeled vehicle”, but in 1611 it meant “baggage”. 1 Samuel 17:22
3. These changes do not suggest a necessity to _____ the Bible, but it does suggest the need of diligent study and the importance of _____.

B. Different Words with Similar Meanings:

1. In the translation of words many times the translators used synonyms rather than the same word repeatedly. For example, various forms of the Greek verb *meno* are translated “abode” (John 1:32), “remaining” (verse 33), “dwelt” (verse 39), “continued” (John 2:12), “tarry” (John 4:40), and “endures” (John 6:27).

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2. How do I find these different words and their meaning? Following is an example.

a. John 1:32 *“And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it _____ upon him.”*

b. First, look up the word in a Strong’s Concordance under “abode” and find it under John 1:32. Get the Greek Concordance Dictionary number which is _____.

c. Using a Greek Dictionary look up the number 3306. You will find meno is a primary verb meaning “_____ (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy); other words are abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry.”

d. Look up the Greek word meno in a Young’s Analytical Concordance under the Index-Lexicon to the New Testament. You will see the following: *“meno, 3306, abide, wait for, be, be present, continue, dwell, endure, remain, stand, tarry, tarry for.”*

e. Strong’s will give you the meaning of the Greek word *meno*. Young’s will tell you what it has been translated into in the King James Version.

For a more in-depth study of a verb use the following:

f. Use the Strong’s number 3306 for *meno*. Look this number up in Thayer’s Greek Lexicon of the New Testament and you will find half a page on this one word.

g. Come full circle by comparing your findings with a good English Dictionary. I personally use the Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language and would recommend this as the dictionary of choice.

C. Similar Words with Different Meanings:

1. Barackman gives the following example with the word “flesh” .

2. The term flesh has the following different meanings throughout the Bible.

Using a Strong’s concordance look up the following meanings for the word flesh.

a. Exodus 29:14: Strong’s number: _____. Meaning: _____

b. Acts 2:17: Strong’s number: _____. Meaning: _____

c. 1 Samuel 25:11: Strong’s number: _____. Meaning: _____

d. 2 Samuel 6:19: Strong’s number: _____. Meaning: _____

e. Psalm 73:26: Strong’s number: _____. Meaning: _____

f. Daniel 2:11: Strong’s number: _____. Meaning: _____

g. Zephaniah 1:17: Strong’s number: _____. Meaning: _____

h. Romans 14:21: Strong’s number: _____. Meaning: _____

Online option: www.blueletterbible.org Search word, click; Strong’s option under search bar.

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2. The Power of Word Studies: “*Understanding and Applying the Bible*, J. Robertson McQuilkin.”

A. Word Studies Clearly Define Important Words:

1. Words often have multiple meanings and so the various definitions should be studied in order to match the meaning with its use.
2. The Greek language was a very specific language, while the English language is less specific. With that in mind, the study of the meanings of words may produce nuggets of truths and interests during our Bible study.
3. It is of the utmost importance during our study of definitions that we never base our interpretation on what we perceive as the “intentions” of the writer. If a clear determination of the words used cannot be developed, do not assume or pretend to know the correct meaning.

B. Word Studies Reveal Different meaning:

1. Often one word can have multiple meanings.
2. Never assume that a word being used automatically carries the same meaning as previously used.
3. McQuilkin gives an example of the word death which is used in four different ways in Colossians 2:12 through Colossians 3:5. Word: Death
 - a. The physical death of Christ.
 - b. The fact that people are dead before they are saved.
 - c. The dying of the saved as they become Christians.
 - d. Those who have died are to put to death the deeds of the body.
4. Such a word study as the one above is very useful during our time of Bible study.

C. Words Studies Identify Special Uses:

1. Some words like *agape*, used to describe the love of God, were used only in classic writings. The use of this word in the New Testament was to specifically describe the beauty of the love of God in a sacrificial and benevolent way.
2. Words like this were seldom used, but they carried tremendous weight and clarity.
3. Always study an unusual use of a term. Extensive study will magnify the meaning of the text.
4. Examples: propitiation, justification, redemption.

D. Words Studies Show Points of Transliteration and Translation

1. Often two different words are translated into one word.
 - a. John 21:15-19 is the most noted example of this fact.
 - b. The terms “phileao” and “agapao” are both translated in the word love.
2. Often one word is translated into several English words.
 - a. The Hebrew word *yom* is translated as time, age, and space.
 - b. Such occurrences may have major implications in doctrinal issues.
3. Some words are the product of transliteration. The word baptize is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptizo*.

Closing: My prayer is that this lesson on word studies will help us study our Bibles more clearly. Remember to never correct God’s Word. The use of word studies is for understanding and clarification only.