

Discipleship and Bible Study Part Five

Looking at Key Words

Two basic approaches to understanding a word in the Bible:

- 1) The History of a Word
- 2) The Use of a Word in a Specific Location

A Step by Step Process

1. Choose a significant word from your passage.

Tool: Bible, in various translations if available

Key Question: How do I know which word is important?

- a. Is the word theologically significant?
- b. Do different English translations translate the word differently?
- c. Are there words that are repeated?
- d. Are there words that affect the meaning of the passage?

2. Define the Word in English.

Tool: Dictionary

Key Question: What is the range of possibilities?

Purpose: to get a general idea of what the word means.

3. Look up the Word in the Original Language

Tool: Lexicon or Bible Dictionary; use Strong's Concordance numbers

4. Look up where the word occurs in other places in the Bible.

Tool: Concordance

5. Study the word in the passage

- a. Does the author give any clues or definitions to the word?
- b. Is there a phrase or comment that describes the word?
- c. Are there any contrasts (antitheses)?
- d. Does parallelism show any synonyms (same idea) or antonyms (opposite idea)?
- e. Does the context help you understand the meaning of the word?
- f. Does the word occur in another place in the passage?

6. Define the word in your own terms

7. Find the biblical principles that come from this word

How does knowing this word help you understand the message of the passage?