
NT Word Study

New Testament Words That Impact Christian Living

Resources

1. *Words to Live By*, Bethany House Publishing, 2004
 2. Carpenter & Comfort, *Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words*, Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000
 3. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*, Zondervan Publishing, 1974
 4. *New American Standard Bible*, Foundation Press, 1973
 5. Barclay, *New Testament Words*, Westminster Press, 1964
 6. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of NT Words*, Zondervan Publishing, 1952
-

Introduction

Course Outcome Increased understanding and appreciation of NT words and their impact on our lives

Course Objectives By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Explain the importance of THE WORD
- Identify the impact of NT words on their lives
- Use a method for studying and understanding NT words

Course Agenda

- Introduction
 - Approach to and importance of the study
 - The greatest of these is love
- 1. word
- 2. godliness
- 3. effective
- 4. patience
- 5. care
- 6. boastful
- 7. comforter
- 8. ambition
- 9. compel
- 10. reconciliation
- 11. perfect
- 12. command
- 13. grace

Importance of this study

This course is based on the belief that WORDS ARE IMPORTANT. Following are 3 reasons that support this assertion.

1. The Holy Spirit's Work in Us

The Holy Spirit works in the lives of Christians to provide, among other things, spiritual life, assistance in prayer, peace, joy, and a sword (Rom. 8, Rom. 14, Gal. 5, Eph. 6). Yet, we can grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4) and quench his influence (1 Thess. 5). Therefore, we must remember how the Spirit works in us: **through God's word** (1 Cor. 2:10-13; Eph 6:17).

The more we understand the word of God and apply it to our lives, the more the Spirit thrives in us to accomplish all the things listed above. When we fail to understand and apply God's word, we quench the Spirit. This study is just one more opportunity to increase the Spirit's influence in our lives.

2. Misinterpreted research

Dr. Mehrabian, professor emeritus at UCLA, published a landmark study on communication in his book, *Silent Messages*, 1971. His findings have been the basis for at least one urban legend. The widespread myth has alleged that non-verbal communication accounts for 93% of the power of a message compared with only 7% for the words.

Actually, Dr. Mehrabian's research stated that when *conflicting signals* are given by the communicator, the listener will assess the communication according to the following weighted averages:

- Body Language: 55%
- Tonality: 38%
- Actual words: 7%

What does all of this have to do with God's word? Contrary to what you may have been told, *words are crucial* for effective communication. Of course, by faith we already knew "the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit...and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Heb. 4:12). Now that's a powerful message!

3. Flawed Postmodern Thinking

Postmodernism's denial of absolutes and objectivity has influenced theology, art, culture, architecture, society, etc. The validation of homosexuality as an equally legitimate sexual expression over and against the Judeo-Christian ethic of heterosexual monogamy is an example of postmodernism's influence. Previously forbidden practices are given equal validity to traditional values and norms often to the point of displacing the latter.

We maintain that God's word is absolute and objective authority (John 12:48), which provides eternal principles of conduct. This study is a reminder that the New Testament is not just a collection of man's thoughts, but a carefully conceived expression of God's will through Spirit-filled words (1 Cor. 2:10-13).

So, words *are* important.

Regardless of misinterpreted research and philosophical trends, God has declared that his word is eminently important in the Christian's life. This study is based on God's declaration with a view toward spiritual growth.

Beyond a one-word definition

Simply defining words is not enough. Biblical words carry so much more meaning and significance than a one-word definition can provide. Consider the following example of the word “shama” from the OT, which means “hear.”

“Shama’s real significance lies in the fact that the word is part of the great Israelite call to worship, the Shema: ‘Hear, oh Israel, the Lord our God is one...’ (Deut. 6:4-5). Hear is the constant cry of the OT prophets (cf. Isaiah 48:1; Ezekiel 18:25). And, it’s clear from the contexts where this word is used that it means much more than ‘hear.’ It embraces the ideas of understanding and obeying. A simple definition won’t suffice for a word that has such depth.” (2, vii)

This study is about taking the opportunity to go beyond the quick definition and more fully understand what the Spirit intended.

A method of studying NT words

We will use the following method for our study over the next few weeks. We will put each word through the following 4 steps, which is roughly based on Barclay’s book, *New Testament Words*.

1. Consider the word’s usage outside of the NT
 - Secular Greek; Septuagint
2. Consider its NT usage
 - Study at least 4 scriptural instances & check the contexts
3. Arrive at a working definition
4. Discuss how it applies today

Important note: Understanding the secular usage of NT words is interesting and insightful, but is not authoritative. When there is confusion or an apparent conflict, NT usage is the authority.

The greatest is love

All of the Spirit’s words are important, but do the following verses tell us something about their priority?

- I Cor. 13:1-2, 13
- Gal. 5:22-23
