

# Lesson 8: Studying Biblical Words

## Effective Bible Study

2 Timothy 2:15

Read It, Explain It, Apply It

The Bible is the verbally inspired word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Spiritual life is found in the words of the Bible (Mat. 4:4; James 1:21). Therefore, it is important to study the words of Scripture.

### Three Concepts of Biblical Word Study:

#### 1. Etymology – *The origin and development of words*

Studying a word's root may help in learning the full meaning of certain passages.

Note: A helpful resource is *Vine's Expository Dictionary*.

- Greek *ekklesia* (Mat. 16:18) \_\_\_\_\_
- *apokaradokia* (Phil. 1:20) \_\_\_\_\_

It is also important to consider derivative meanings of words with the goal of learning what the word meant when it was used by the inspired writer.

- The term *psallo* denoted "plucking" in classical Greek, but in the Koine period, *psallo* was used to simply denote singing (Eph. 5:19).

#### 2. Grammatical Form – *Learn the syntax (the grammatical principles of the original language).*

What part of speech is the word with which you are dealing?

- Examples – John 1:12-13, "blood" – \_\_\_\_\_
- Eph. 2:8, "faith," "gift" – \_\_\_\_\_

The tense of Greek verbs has more to do with the type of action under consideration than with time.

- **Aorist** tense – A simple occurrence, viewed as a single, one-point-in-time action (2 Pet. 1:14)
- **Imperfect** tense – Continuous type of action, occurring in the past time (Mat. 2:4)
- **Present** tense – Action in progress (Gal. 1:6)
- **Perfect** tense – Past action with continuing results (Gal. 2:20)
- **Future** tense – Just like the English future tense (1 John 3:2)

Verbs also have voice, which indicates how the action is related to the subject of the sentence.

- The **active voice** represents the subject as acting (Mat. 16:18).
- The **passive voice** represents the subject as being acted upon (Heb. 7:26).
- The **middle voice** suggests the subject is acting in some way in reference to itself (Acts 18:5).

#### 3. Context – *The most important aspect of word studies.*

The special use of a word in a given context can overrule the etymology and grammar.

- Examples – Mat. 3:10, "cut down" • Mark 9:31, "is delivered"
- Rom. 8:16, "the Spirit itself" (neuter gender) – cf. John 15:26

Some words can have different meanings in different contexts.

- *presbuteros*, "elder" – \_\_\_\_\_
- *ekklesia*, "church" – \_\_\_\_\_
- *peirazo*, "to tempt" or "to try, test." – \_\_\_\_\_
- *nekros*, "dead" – \_\_\_\_\_
- *basileia*, "kingdom" – \_\_\_\_\_