

Word Study

Rick Warren

I. Introduction.

- A. A word study is a microscopic look at the origin, definition, occurrences and use of a word as it relates to the context of a passage.
- B. The purpose is to learn as precisely and comprehensively as possible what the Biblical writer meant by the word he used.
- C. The important theological ideas often hinge on the smallest words.
- D. God's Word is perfectly pure—if one is going to know the Word of God, he has to understand His words. (Proverbs 30:5, Psalm 12:6)

II. Word studies must be based on the original word not the English word.

III. Context must always be allowed to determine the ultimate meaning of the word.

IV. Tools.

- A. Several modern translations.
- B. Young's Concordance.
- C. Bullinger's Lexicon.
- D. A good Bible dictionary.
- E. Any word study set like the International Dictionary on New Testament Theology.
- F. An English dictionary.

V. Steps.

- A. Choose your word.
- B. Go to an English Dictionary and write down the definition for the English word. List any synonyms or antonyms that relate to the word.
- C. Compare translations of the Bible to write down as many renderings as possible.
- D. Find out the original word, and write it down with the definition.
- E. Check the word's occurrences by using a concordance to see how many times it is used. Write down how many times it occurs, in what books it occurs, what writer uses it the most, where the word is used first in the Bible, etc.

F. Find out the root meaning and origin through a Bible dictionary or a word study set.

G. Find out how the word was used at the time.

1. How was the word used during the time the word was written in other writings?
2. How was the word used in the Bible using a concordance to see how the word is used every time it is given? How did the author use the word in the book and other books he wrote? Does the word have more than one use in Young's Concordance?
3. How is the word used in its context? Look for contrasts in the passage.

H. Application.

VI. Common difficulties.

- A. Sometimes several Greek or Hebrew words are translated into just one English word.
- B. Sometimes one Greek or Hebrew word is translated into several English words.
- C. Sometimes an original word is translated into a whole phrase. (II Corinthians 3:18)

VII. Suggested words to study: access, adoption, perfect, righteous, fellowship, temptation, sin, sacrifice, sanctify, grace, servant, kingdom, understand, witness, worship, hell, holy, love.

Application questions:

1. What tools are essential for a Word Study? Why are they essential?

2. Summarize the steps. Which step do you find most valuable?

3. Why is application important to keep in mind with regard to word studies? Explain.
