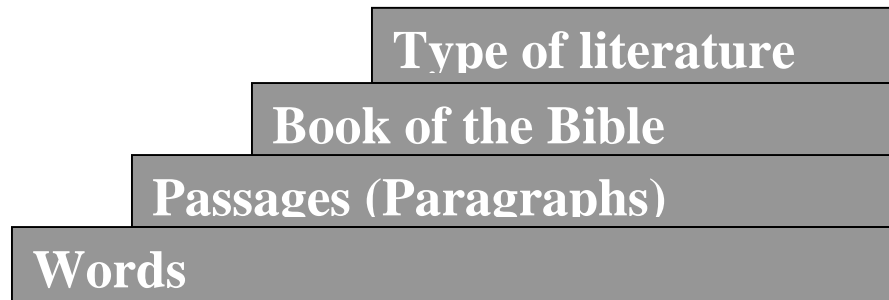


How to Study the Bible, Sept. 30 & Oct. 3

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Words: the Building Blocks of Bible Study

Words are the building blocks, the basic elements of composition. Every word means something; it communicates a message, but it rarely exists alone. Together words form sentences, then paragraphs and finally compositions (complete discourses). Every word serves a purpose, but which words are important and which merit our careful study? Nouns and verbs are usually the most important and deserve careful observation. Few of us enjoyed the hours spent on grammar and composition in elementary school and have long since forgotten the kinds and function of words. Suffer a brief reminder.



What's in a word? Words have different meanings in different contexts. For example, "drive," "hand," "trunk." The context determines meaning!

Words to look for (take note of, find the meaning) when we read the Bible.

1. First things first- biblical authors aim to reveal the truth not conceal it. The first sentence in a paragraph will usually reveal the author's subject or idea. Logically, introduction precedes explanation and exhortation. For example, "gospel" in Romans 1:1; "Now concerning" in 1 Corinthians 7:1, 28; 8:1;
2. Repetition- passages unite around a central idea and that idea or word is likely to be repeated, especially at the beginning and at the end of a passage. For example, "believe" and "life" in the Gospel of John; "better" and "faith" in Hebrews.
3. Rare, non-routine words- they are significant and merit special attention. Some are *hapax legomena*, words that occur only once in the Bible. For example, "inspired," in 2 Timothy 3:16. Others are unusual or difficult, "propitiation" in 1 John 2:2; "transfigured" in Mark 9:2.
4. Main verbs or nouns- (But, how do we know what they are?). Look for things that the author/passage emphasizes, action verbs, and things that are treated extensively. For example, "life" and "light" in John 1:2 ff., "know," "consider," and "yield" in Romans 6. It may also be a phrase like, "in Christ" or "with Christ" in Ephesians.
5. Connecting words- little words make a big difference! Some words indicate **time**, "after," "before," "now," "then," and "until." Some give a **reason**, "because," "for," and "since." Some indicate **result**, "therefore," "so," "then," or **purpose**, "in order that," "so that." Connecting words may also state a **condition**, "if," or **emphasize** an idea, "indeed" and "only." Other words make a **comparison**, "also," "just as," "likewise," or show a **contrast**, "but," "although," "much more," "otherwise."

Lessons we learned in elementary school (but have long since forgotten!)

“The Noun Family”

- 1) **Nouns**- person - *John*, place- *Patmos*, thing- *blood*, action- *ascension*, idea- *grace*.
- 2) **Pronouns**- word that substitutes for a noun- personal- *I, you, they, it, we, he, she*; relative- *who, which, that, what*, intensive- *himself*, reciprocal- *one another*.
- 3) **Adjectives**- qualify a noun or pronoun. *Faithful* God, *fervent* prayer, *devout* Greek.
- 4) **Prepositions**- a word that goes with a noun or pronoun to form a “prepositional phrase.” *For, with, by, to, in, against, into*, etc. For example, *for* His glory, *by* His blood, *into* the temple, *after* his kind.
- 5) **Articles**- particularize or qualify a word. *a* book- indefinite article, *the* book- definite article.

“The Verb family”

- 6) **Verb**- action of or what the noun or pronoun does. *Runs, walks, says, stoops*, etc. Verbs have three elements,
 - (a) Tense- past, present & future;
 - (b) Voice- active, passive or middle; and
 - (c) Mood- indicative = makes a statement, interrogative = asks a question, imperative = issues a command or optative = makes a request or expresses a wish.
- 7) **Adverbs**- modify or qualify a verb. He ran *fast*. She came *early*. He forgave *freely*.
- 8) **“Conjunctions.” Words that Connect**
Logical connectors: Reason- *because, for, since*; Result- *so, then, therefore, thus*; Purpose- *in order that, so that*; Contrast- *although, but, much more, nevertheless, otherwise*; Comparison- *also, as, as-so, just as-so, likewise, so also*; Condition-*if*; Series of facts- *and, first of all, last of all, or*. **Temporal** connectors- *after, as, before, now, then, until*; **Emphatic** connectors- *indeed, only*; **Local** connectors- *where*;

Let's practice on 1 Thessalonians 5:11-15 (NASB).

1. Circle key (important, strategic) words (action verbs, main nouns).

2. Underline words that are repeated or listed as qualifying them.

(Remember the six serving men! Who, what, where, when, how, why)

11. Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

12. But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, 13. and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.

14. We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

15. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people.

Next week, Finding and following the story line!

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. (NIV)