*Lesson 12*

*Word Studies*

* *Word studies*: meaning of words in their context
* *Grammatical analysis*: defining the parts of the sentence
* *Syntax analysis*: relationship of the parts

Words are the smallest part of language that has meaning. Words are a combination of symbols and sounds.

Meaning is determined by roots and usage (context)

Tools = concordances, lexicons, and theological dictionaries

1. **Translation**

Option 1: translate from Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek

Option 2: use an interlinear (see www.blueletterbible.org)

Option 3: compare (English) translations

1. **Establishing the Text**
2. Textual Criticism

restore the original text as close as possible to what the ancient authors wrote

* Autograph - the original manuscript
* Manuscript – the copies of the Bible carefully hand-written
* Scrolls – rolled up
* Codex – book form
* Variants – different readings
* Reading – variant words in the manuscript

1. **The Writing Process and Tools Used**
2. Scrolls and later codices
3. Papyrus paper
4. Wood, wax, clay, pottery pieces, metal
5. Tools: stylus; reed pen; ink
6. **Determining the Original Reading**

Evidence must be weighed and not counted

**External:**

1. The quality and age of the manuscript
2. The family of manuscripts
3. Location from where the manuscript came

**Internal:**

1. The more difficult reading is preferred
2. The shorter reading is preferred
3. The authentic reading can account for all the other variant readings.
4. **The Transmission of the Text**

How the Bible went from the original manuscript to us today

Hand copied until the printing press

Errors from

* + - * + Human error or fatigue in copying
        + Visual errors
        + Stylistic changes or poor hand writing makes texts hard to read
        + Purposeful changes to clarify meaning by rearrangement, word changes, or theological intention
        + Errors in reading and writing when text read out loud to many scribes during the copying process
        + Copy procedures and problems.

1. **The Old Testament**

Oldest copies = Dead Sea Scrolls

**Masoretes** added vowel points to the Masoretic Text (MT)

1. New Testament

Small pieces up to full manuscripts

1. No textual variant changes any doctrine of the Bible
2. How to work with Textual Criticism

Look for footnotes

Consult a commentary for further information

A minor point for beginners

1. **Word Studies**

Culture influences meaning

Word study helps make application

1. Considerations about the Nature of Words
2. Our context (language and culture) is different
3. Usage determines meaning
4. Words are related to semantic fields (words related in meaning)
5. The history and the cognate family is called etymology
6. Words do not occur in isolation
7. Words have two forms of meaning:

Denotative: specific meaning

Connotative: emotional overtones

1. There are two ways to approach words studies.
2. Etymology or history of a term; gives the range of meaning
3. Context (canon, author, book, chapter, section, sentence, clause)
4. Sources to Consult when doing a word study:
5. Bible
6. Concordance
7. Original Hebrew or Greek Dictionary or Lexicon
8. Theological Word Books
9. Bible Encyclopedias
10. Monographs
11. **How to do a Word Study**
12. *Select the Word(s)*
13. words you do not understand
14. Theologically significant words
15. Rare words
16. Repeated words
17. Figures of speech
18. Words translated differently
19. Words crucial for the passage

Choose words carefully.

1. Determine the *Range of Meaning* for the word using your lexicons
2. Determine the *Range of Understandings* of the word through concordances
3. Determine the *Meaning* that best fits the context
4. First, context narrows the search
5. Second, do not neglect the small words

**Big Ideas**

1. Textual criticism is the science that studies the differences in ancient manuscripts in order to arrive at the most reliable reading of the Bible.
2. Modern translations may have footnotes for significant textual variants. Rarely will this require more follow up, but consult a good commentary if you have a question.
3. Two key ways to do a word study: look at the history and basic meaning of a word (etymology), determine the meaning of the word in its literary context (canon, author, book, chapter, section, sentence, clause).
4. Many modern study tools make it easier to do a word study. Many of these are free on the internet.
5. Steps to use: determine the word to study, its range of meanings, and what the word means in its immediate context.