



# GRASPING GOD'S WORD

A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible

# Grasping God's Word

- Repetition of words
- Contrasts
- Comparisons
- Lists
- Cause and effect
- Figures of speech
- Conjunctions
- Verbs
- Pronouns
- Questions and answers
- Dialogue
- Means
- Purpose/result statements
- General to specific and specific to general
- Conditional clauses
- Actions/roles of God
- Actions/roles of people
- Emotional terms
- Tone of the passage
- Connections between Paragraphs and Episodes
- Story Shifts: Major Breaks and Pivots
- Interchange
- Chiasm
- Inclusio

# Grasping God's Word

- **Historical-Cultural Context**
- **Pre-Understanding**
- **Foundation Beliefs**
- **Literary Genre**
- **Surrounding Text**

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- **Words are like pieces of a puzzle. They fit to form a story or a paragraph in a letter.**
  - **Aim of Word Study**
    - **Is to try to understand as precisely as possible what the author was trying to convey by his use of this word in this context. Gordon Fee**
    - **Discover the meaning, don't determine the meaning**
    - **Being able to read the ancient scriptures but not all can, but that isn't an excuse**
      - **There are interpretive tools galore**

# Grasping God's Word

- **Common Word-Study Fallacies**
  - **English-Only Fallacy**
    - A word in Hebrew or Greek is often translated into English by a number of different English words
    - Example – *paraklesis* is translated in the English words: “comfort, encouragement, appeal, be encouraged, consolation, encourage, encouraged, encouraging message, exhortation, greatly encouraged, preaching, urgently.”
    - depending on the context comfort and exhortation can mean different things

# Grasping God's Word

- **Common Word-Study Fallacies**
  - **English-Only Fallacy**
    - A word in Hebrew or Greek is often translated into English by a number of different English words
    - Different words in Hebrew or Greek can be translated into English using the same English word
    - **Examples**
      - love – *eros, storge, phila, agape*
      - comfort – *parakaleo, paraklesis, paramytheomai, paramythia, paramythion, paregoria*

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- **Common Word-Study Fallacies**
  - **Root Fallacy**
    - Common mistake is believing that the real meaning of a word is found in its original root
      - Butterfly, pineapple, sawhorse
  - Discover the real meaning, give context priority over etymology. One can spout off Greek component parts but still miss the context.
    - **Etymology** - the history of a [linguistic form](#) (such as a word) shown by tracing its development since its earliest recorded occurrence in the language where it is found, by tracing its transmission from one language to another, by analyzing it into its component parts, by identifying its cognates in other languages, or by tracing it and its cognates to a common ancestral form in an ancestral language

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- **Common Word-Study Fallacies**
  - **Time-Frame Fallacy** – occurs when we latch onto a late word meaning and read it back into the Bible, or when we insist that an early word meaning still holds when in fact it has since become obsolete.
    - **Example** – Romans 1:16, Acts 1:8
  - **Overload Fallacy** – the idea that a word will include all of those senses every time it is used.
    - **Example** – English word spring could mean...



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- **Common Word Fallacies**
  - **Word-Count Fallacy** – the mistake made that a word must have the same meaning every time it occurs.
    - “word meanings are determined by context, not word counts”
      - Example – Galatians 3:4 – suffers means?
  - **Word-Concept Fallacy** – happens when we assume that once we have studied one word, we have studied an entire concept.
    - A concept is bigger than any word.
      - Example – church
        - Body of Christ, temple of the Holy Spirit, household of faith

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- **Common Word Fallacies**
  - **Selective-Evidence Fallacy** – when we cite or use the evidence that supports our favored interpretation
    - Before we begin our studies of a word in the Bible, make up your mind to accept all the evidence

# Grasping God's Word

- **Choose Your Words Carefully**
  - **Three steps to doing a proper Word Study**
    - **Step 1 – choosing your words**
    - **Step 2 – determine what the words could mean**
    - **Step 3 – determine what the word does mean in context**

# Grasping God's Word

- **Choose Your Words Carefully**
  - **Three steps to doing a proper Word Study**
    - **Step 1 – Look for words that crucial to the passage**
      - **Loaded with historical and theological significance**
      - **Bear weight in the passage**
      - **Many times they are the key nouns and/or verbs**
    - **Step 2 – Look for repeated words**
      - **Author will signal theme words by repeating them**
        - **Comfort – 2 Corinthians 1:3-7**
        - **Blessed – Matt 5:1-12**
        - **Remain – John 15:1-11**

# Grasping God's Word

- **Choose Your Words Carefully**
  - **Three steps to doing a proper Word Study**
    - **Step 1 – Look for words that crucial to the passage**
    - **Step 2 – Look for repeated words**
    - **Step 3 – Look for figures of speech**
      - **Word pictures or images**
      - **John 10:9, Isa 55:12 the of courses**
      - **Revelation 5:5 and 1 Peter 5:8 may need a word study**
    - **Step 4 – Look for words that are unclear, puzzling, or difficult**
      - **“the most important words are those that give you trouble”, if a word gives you trouble study it**

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- **Determine what the Word Could Mean**
  - **Determine what the word could mean before we decide what it does mean**
    - **Semantic Range – range of meaning**
      - **Example English word Hand**
        - **Next slide**

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the terminal part of a vertebrate forelimb (my right hand)

a personal possession (it fell into the hands of the enemy)

a side (on the one hand... on the other hand)

a pledge (I give you my hand in marriage)

a style of penmanship (this letter was written in my own hand)

a skill or ability (she tried her hand at sailing)

a unit of measure (the horse is fifteen hands high)

aid or assistance (please lend me a hand)

cards in a card game (I was dealt a bad hand)

one who performs a particular work (they employ over fifty hands)

workmanship or handiwork (the work of the master's hand)

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- **Determine what the Word Could Mean**

- **Example – Entrust**

"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them" (Matt. 25:14; cf, also 25:20, 22). If you look up the word "entrust" in your English dictionary, you will find a fairly narrow range of meaning:

- to confer a trust on; to deliver something in trust to
- to commit to another with confidence

You may be surprised to learn that the Greek word *paradidomi*, the word the KJV translates "delivered," has a much broader range of meaning:

- to hand over something to someone
- to deliver someone into the control of someone else; to betray
- to commend or commit
- to pass on traditional instruction
- to grant someone the opportunity to do something; to allow or permit



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- **Example – Confidence**

The word "**confidence**" in Hebrews 4:16: Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." If you go to the English dictionary, you will find a range of meaning for the word "confidence" similar to this:

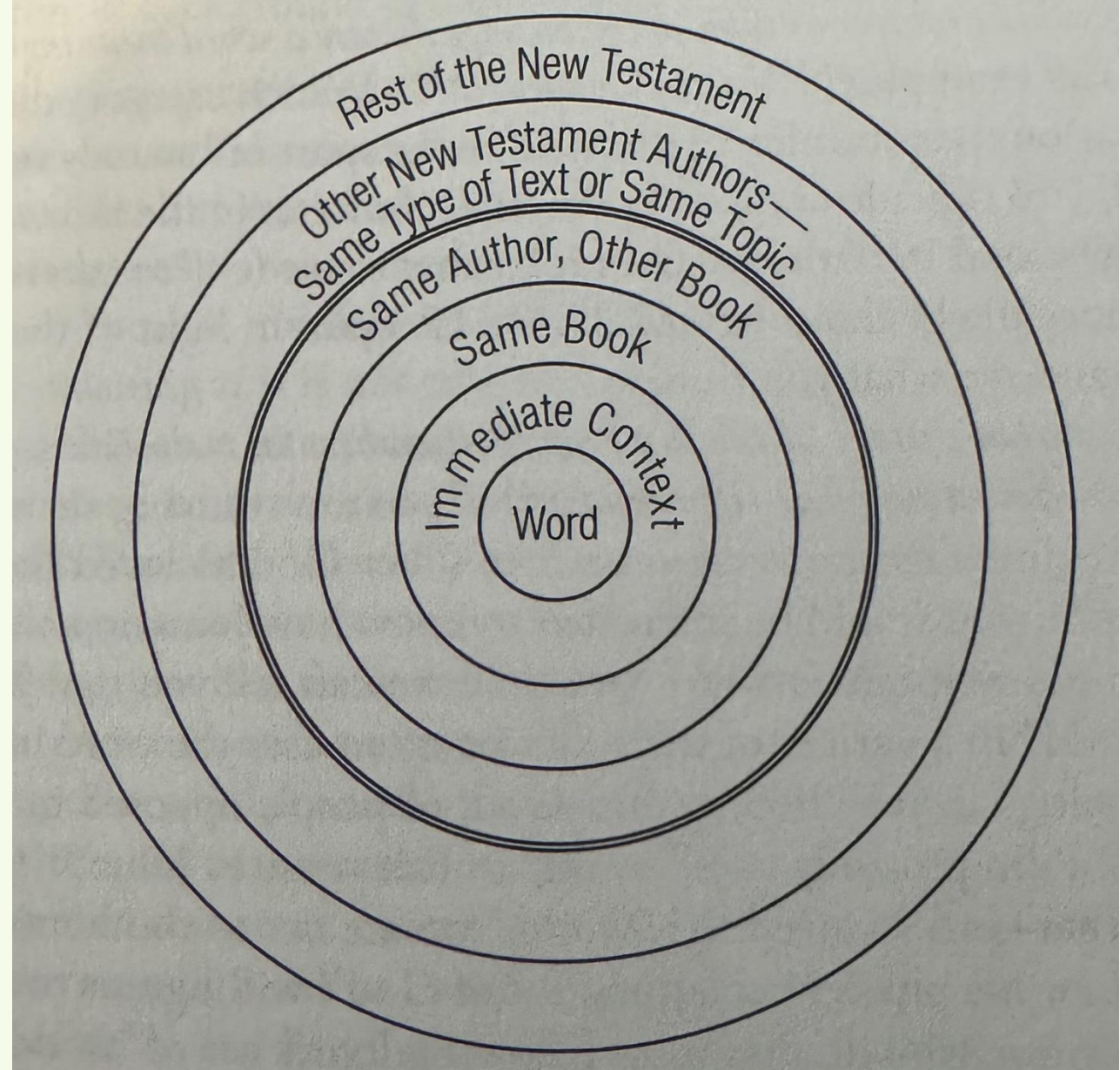
- a feeling of one's ability or power
- a belief that a person will act in a proper or effective way
- being certain about something
- a relation of trust or intimacy (i.e., to take someone into confidence)
- a secret (i.e., a communication made in confidence)

The KJV selects the word "boldly" in Hebrew 4:16 to translate the underlying Greek word *parrêsia*. Have a look at the range of meaning for *parrêsia*:

- plainness, frankness (e.g., Jesus told his disciples "plainly" [John 11:14])
- openness to the public (e.g., Jesus speaks "publicly" to the crowds in the temple courts John 7:26])
- boldness, courage, confidence approaching the throne of grace with "confidence" [Heb. 4:16])

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- **Decide What the Word Does Mean in Context**
  - Is there a contrast or comparison that seems to define the word
  - Does the subject matter or topic of the passage dictate a word meaning
  - Does the authors use of the word elsewhere help
  - Authors argument in the book suggest a meaning
  - Historical situation tilt the evidence in a certain direction



**NEXT WEEK  
MEANING AND APPLICATION**

