WORD STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever tried to put together one of those thousand-piece puzzles? The box cover features a majestic mountain scene or a picture of three cute kittens in a basket. Then you dump out all one thousand pieces and start to reconstruct the picture. Again and again you pick up a puzzle piece, look at its shape and its colors, and try to fit it into the larger scheme of things. Every piece contributes something to the picture even as the larger picture gives definition to each individual piece.

Words are like pieces of a puzzle. They fit together to form a story or a paragraph (i.e., the big picture). Until you know the meaning of certain words, you will not be able to grasp the meaning of the whole passage. Not knowing the meaning of certain words in a passage of Scripture can be compared to the frustrating discovery that you don't have all the pieces to your puzzle. Like individual pieces of a puzzle, words bring the larger picture to life. Words are worth studying!

New Testament scholar Gordon Fee says that the aim of word study "is to try to understand as precisely as possible what the author was trying to convey

> "[The 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."
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> —*Gordon Fee*

by his use of *this* word in this context."[1] As readers we do not determine the meaning of biblical words; rather, we try to discover what the biblical writer meant when he used a particular word. We should always keep in mind this distinction between *determining* meaning and *discovering* meaning. In addition to serving as a purpose statement, Fee's definition also highlights the importance of context.

This chapter is all about studying the words of Scripture. Even if you don't know the original biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek, you can still learn to use interpretive tools to do a word study properly, and we will show you how. We start the chapter by warning you of common mistakes people make when studying words of Scripture. Then we will explain how to identify words in a passage that need further study, how to determine what a word could mean, and finally how to decide what a word does mean in context. In each phase we ask you to interact with us and practice the necessary steps. Since most people learn a great deal by having a model to imitate, we will close the chapter with a full example of how to do a word study. Again, you don't have to know Greek or Hebrew to do a word study properly. You can do this, but you need to know the proper procedure. Your reward for studying words carefully will often be a breathtaking view of a majestic biblical scene.

COMMON WORD-STUDY FALLACIES[2]

Before we show you how to do a word study properly, we want to point out a few of the more common mistakes interpreters make when studying words. The list could be much longer, but this should give you some idea of what to avoid when studying words.

English-Only Fallacy

Because the Bible was not originally written in English, it must be translated into English from the original biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek. This fact can complicate word studies for students who do not know the original languages. Here are two examples of problems that may develop. (1) You may not realize that a *word in Hebrew or Greek is often translated into English by a number of different English words*. For example, the Greek word *paraklēsis* is translated in the NIV with the following English words: "comfort, encouragement, appeal, be encouraged, consolation,

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1. Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 79.

2. For more on word-study fallacies, see the thorough treatment by D. A. Carson in *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 27–64, along with the brief survey by Darrell Bock in "Lexical Analysis: Studies in Words," in *Interpreting the New Testament Text*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Buist M. Fanning (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 149–52.

encourage, encouraged, encouraging message, exhortation, greatly encouraged, preaching, urgently." You will immediately notice that English words like "comfort" and "exhortation" can mean different things depending on the context.

(2) English-language students may not be aware that *different words in Hebrew or Greek can be translated into English using the same English word*. For instance, the NIV translates these different Greek words—*parakaleō, paraklēsis, paramytheomai, paramythia, paramythion*, and *parēgoria*—as "comfort."

The English-only fallacy occurs when you base your word study on the English word rather than the underlying Greek or Hebrew word and, as a result, draw unreliable or misleading conclusions. This chapter teaches you how to study words so that you don't make this mistake.

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Root Fallacy

One of the more common fallacies is the notion that the real meaning of a word is found in its original root (i.e., in the etymology of the word). Think about how silly this can be even in English. Is a *butterfly* actually a *fly* that has lost control and crash-landed into a tub of *butter*? Is a *pineapple* a certain kind of *apple* that grows only on *pine* trees? What in the world is a *sawhorse*?

Switching from English to a biblical language doesn't automatically change things. Just because someone can spout off the component parts of a Greek word doesn't mean that he or she has discovered the "real meaning" of the word. For example, the verb *ginōskō* means "to know, understand, or recognize" (e.g., Eph. 6:22), while the verb *anaginōskō* means "to read or read aloud" (e.g., Luke 4:16).[3] It is true that a word's individual parts *may* accurately portray its meaning, but only if the context supports such a meaning.[4] Give context priority over etymology, and you will be on solid ground.

Time-Frame Fallacy

The time-frame fallacy occurs when we latch onto a late word meaning (usually a meaning popular in our own time) 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.

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3. William D. Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 560–61.

4. Etymology becomes more important when we are trying to understand the meaning of words that are used only once in Scripture (we refer to such words as *hapax legomena*). You will find this to be the case more in the Hebrew Old Testament than in the Greek New Testament.

You will encounter the first instance of this fallacy far more than the second. D. A. Carson uses the English word *dynamite* and the Greek word *dynamis* (sometimes translated "power") to illustrate a particular form of the time-frame fallacy:

> I do not know how many times I have heard preachers offer some such rendering of Romans 1:16 as this: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the *dynamite* of God unto salvation for everyone who believes"—often with a knowing tilt of the head, as if something profound or even esoteric has been uttered. . . . Did Paul think of dynamite when he penned this word?[5]

Most certainly Paul was not thinking of the English word *dynamite* when he wrote the Greek word *dynamis*, since the English word originated centuries later. The two words may sound alike (a temptation many preachers find irresistible), but they are two words with very different meanings. Confusing the meaning of two words like this is misleading and dangerous. Do we really want to read this late word meaning back into the New Testament and conclude that God's power destroys like a devastating bomb when Paul himself says in this verse that God's power leads to salvation for everyone who believes? Carson concludes, "Of course, what preachers are trying to do when they talk about dynamite is give some indication of the greatness of the power involved. Even so, Paul's measure is not dynamite, but the empty tomb."[6]

Overload Fallacy

Most words can mean several different things. The overload fallacy is the idea that a word will include all of those meanings every time it is used. For example, the English word *spring* can refer to a season, a metal coil, an act of jumping, or a source of water. You would be overloading *spring* (pun intended . . . perhaps) to assume that in every passage in which it occurs, the word carries not just one, but *all*, of those senses. Which meaning for *spring* does the context demand in the sentence "Spring is my favorite season of the year"? If you said "all of the above," or even if you chose any meaning except a season of the year, you would be guilty of the overload fallacy.

Word-Count Fallacy

The word-count fallacy is a mistake we make when we insist that a word must have the same meaning every time it occurs. For example, if we are confident that a word carries a certain meaning in seven of its eight occurrences in Scripture, we might

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be tempted to conclude that it must have that same meaning in its eighth occurrence. Yet, as Darrell Bock maintains, "word meanings are determined by context, not word counts."[7]

Later in this chapter we will use the example of a word translated "suffer," which seems to carry the sense of negative experience every time it is used in Paul's letters, with one possible exception. In Galatians 3:4 the context suggests that the word refers to a positive rather than a negative experience and should be translated "experience" (rather than "suffer"). All this is to say that the word's immediate context should take priority over secondary contexts in determining the meaning of the word.

> "Word meanings are determined by context, not word counts."
> —Darrell Bock

Word-as-Concept Fallacy

We fall prey to the word-concept fallacy when we assume that once we have studied one word, we have studied an entire concept. If, for example, you want to discover what the New Testament says about the church, you should certainly study the word translated "church" (*ekklēsia*). Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that once you have studied *ekklēsia*, you will know all that the New Testament teaches about church. A concept is bigger than any one word. To see what the New Testament says about the church, you need to broaden your study to include ideas like "body of Christ," "temple of the Holy Spirit," and "household of faith." The concept of church is much broader than the one word *ekklēsia*.

Selective-Evidence Fallacy

When we cite just the evidence that supports our favored interpretation or when we dismiss evidence that seems to argue against our view, we commit the selective-evidence fallacy. This error is particularly dangerous because here we are intentionally tampering with the biblical evidence, whereas in other fallacies the mistakes may be unintentional. Although we want the Bible to support our convictions in every case, there will be times when its message confronts us for our own good. When that happens, we should change our view rather than twist Scripture to advance our own agenda. Before you begin studying a word in the Bible, make up your mind to accept all the evidence.

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7. Bock, "Lexical Analysis," 151.

We have discussed seven common word-study fallacies. These mistakes are easy to make, but being aware of them will help you to avoid them. Now it is time to learn how to do a word study. The process consists of three steps: (1) choosing your words, (2) determining what the word *could* mean, and (3) determining what the word *does* mean in context.

CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

Doing a word study properly takes time. Be realistic and admit that you cannot possibly study every word in your passage and still have any time for your friends. In fact, you don't need to study every word. Most biblical passages are filled with words whose meanings are clear and plain to the average reader. But some words do demand more in-depth study, and you need wisdom to know which ones. What should you do at this point? Use the following guidelines to help you choose the words you need to study.

1. Look for *words that are important or crucial to the passage*. Everything in the passage depends on the meaning of these words. They are loaded with historical or theological significance. They bear the weight of the passage. Often the crucial words in a passage will be the key nouns and/or verbs.

2. Look for *repeated words*. Usually the author will signal theme words by repeating them, so pay close attention to words that are repeated (e.g., "comfort" in 2 Cor. 1:3–7, "blessed" in Matt. 5:1–12, or "remain" in John 15:1–11). Study these words for sure.

3. Look for *figures of speech*. Here words are used not in a literal sense but as word pictures or images. When you read Jesus' statement "I am the gate" (John 10:9) or read about trees clapping their hands (Isa. 55:12), you are looking at figures of speech. Since the intended meaning of many figures or images is not automatically obvious, you may need to study them further. For example, the image of a lion refers to Jesus Christ in Revelation 5:5 and to Satan in 1 Peter 5:8.[8]

4. Look for *words that are unclear, puzzling, or difficult*. Perhaps you don't understand the English definition of a word. Or you may find that English translations differ widely when it comes to this particular word. Or a writer may be using a word in a technical or specialized sense. A good rule of thumb here is that "the most important words are those that give you trouble," and if a word gives you trouble, study it some more.[9]

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8. See Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), for help with figures of speech.

9. Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren, *How to Read a Book*, rev. ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 102.

Now you give it a try. Photocopy this page and circle the words in Romans 12:1–2 and Matthew 28:18–20 (below) that you think merit further study. In the margin explain why you chose each word. Remember, look for crucial words, repeated words, images, and difficult words.
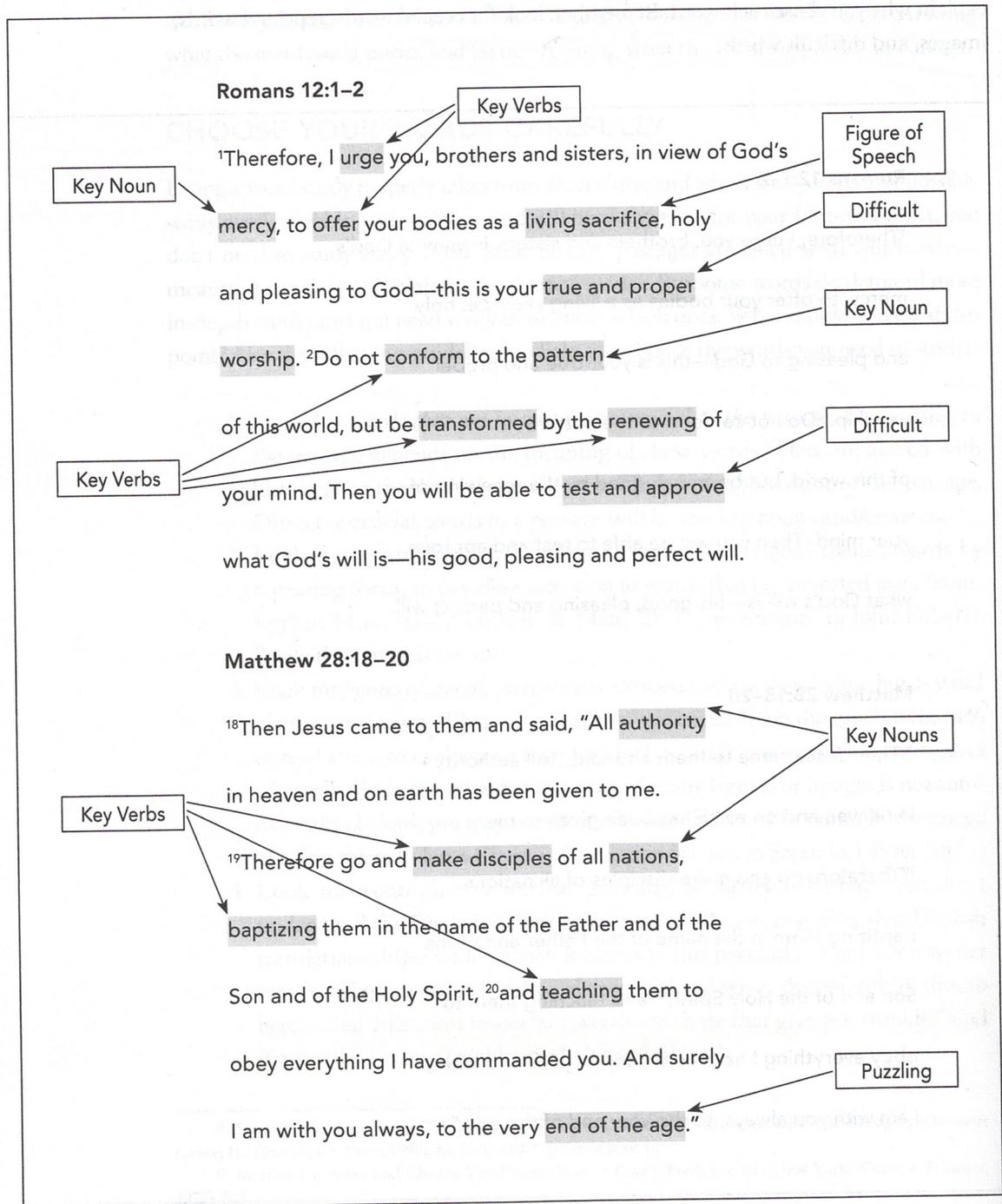

Romans 12:1–2

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's

mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy

and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper

worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern

of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of

your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve

what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Matthew 28:18–20

¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority

in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the

Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to

obey everything I have commanded you. And surely

I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Now take a look at how we dealt with these same passages.

Romans 12:1–2

Key Verbs

Key Noun

Figure of Speech

Difficult

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's

mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy

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Key Noun

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¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,

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Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to

obey everything I have commanded you. And surely

Puzzling

I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Don't be surprised if you didn't pick the same words we picked, and don't be alarmed if you picked fewer. We intentionally selected a lot of words to illustrate why a reader might choose to study them. What's most important is that you think through *why* you would want to study certain words.

DETERMINE WHAT THE WORD COULD MEAN

Why do we need to determine what the word *could* mean before we decide what it *does* mean? Because most words can mean several different things (e.g., spring), but will usually carry only *one* of those meanings in a particular context.[10] By clarifying what a word could mean, we will not confuse the various meanings of a word when interpreting a particular passage of Scripture.

Consider this scenario. If, in the dead of winter, your friend says, "It's so cold, I can't wait until spring gets here," he would be referring to the arrival of the much warmer season that immediately follows winter, not the arrival of a metal coil or an improved jumping ability. Imagine the absurdity of the statement, "It's so cold, I can't wait until my jumping ability improves." You might begin to wonder if the cold had made your friend a little too sleepy.

IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT

Semantic Range

Once we see all the possible meanings of a word—what we refer to as a word's *range of meaning* or *semantic range*—we will be in a better position to decide what the word actually does mean in a specific context. For example, let's look at the semantic range of the English word *hand*. To find the range of meaning for an English word, just look it up in a standard English dictionary (also called a lexicon). A glance at the dictionary entry for *hand* reveals a range of meaning that looks something like this:

- 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.)

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10. The exception is when the biblical author intentionally makes a play on words. You see this occasionally in John's gospel. When Jesus tells Nicodemus that he "must be born again" (John 3:7 NIV), the expression could also mean "born from above" (NRSV). Is Jesus telling this Pharisee that he must be born a second time (i.e., experience a spiritual birth) or that he must be born from above (i.e., from God), or perhaps both? We could be looking at a wordplay here since the semantic range of the underlying Greek word *anōthen* includes both senses.

- 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 more than fifty *hands*.)
- workmanship or handiwork (the work of the master's *hand*)

A word's range of meaning (or semantic range) is a list of all the possible meanings of a word—that is, a list of what the word *could* mean. Some of these meanings may be very closely related.

You might be thinking, *Okay. All I need to do to find my word's range of meaning is look it up in an English dictionary, right?* No, not really. You see, your word is an English translation of a Hebrew or Greek word, and that fact changes things. Since the Bible was not originally written in English, you are really trying to find the range of meaning for a Greek or Hebrew word, not the English word used in translation. You should use an English dictionary to find the meaning of an English word, but going straight to your English dictionary to find the range of meaning for a Greek or Hebrew word is a potentially big mistake.

Both the original-language word (Hebrew or Greek) and the English word used to translate it will have a semantic range. There will be some overlap between the semantic ranges of the two words; that's what makes translation possible. But the ranges will not be identical. We must remember that they are different words and will almost always have different (but overlapping) ranges of meaning.

As an example, let's look at a word Jesus uses in the parable of the talents: "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:

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

You may be surprised to learn that the Greek word *paradidōmi*, the word the NIV translates "entrust," has a much broader range of meaning:

a. to hand over something to someone
b. to deliver someone into the control of someone else; to betray
c. to commend or commit
d. to pass on traditional instruction
e. to grant someone the opportunity to do something; to allow or permit

The NIV can translate the Greek word *paradidōmi* as "entrust" because the semantic ranges of the two words overlap. In Jesus' parable the master is "entrusting" in the sense of (A) in both lists above—he is handing over (or entrusting) his property to the servants while he is away on a journey. In spite of this essential overlap between the two words, they are different words with different ranges of meaning.

Here things get tricky. We could get into interpretive trouble if we were to say, for example, that the English word *entrust* could mean "betray" (which it cannot) or that the Greek word *paradidōmi* could never mean "betray" (which it can). We don't want you to misinterpret by confusing the semantic ranges for different words. Avoid the temptation to pick just any meaning from a list of possible meanings and read that meaning back into the passage. Always keep in mind as well that the original-language word and the translation word are different words with different ranges of meaning that overlap to some degree. The overlap is what makes translation possible. Your task is to locate the point of overlap (something we will teach you how to do soon). Before that, how about one more example of a word's range of meaning?

Suppose you want to study 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. a feeling of one's ability or power

    b. a belief that a person will act in a proper or effective way

    c. being certain about something

    d. a relation of trust or intimacy (i.e., to take someone into confidence)

    e. a secret (i.e., a communication made in confidence)

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

    a. plainness, frankness (e.g., Jesus tells his disciples "plainly" [John 11:14])

    b. openness to the public (e.g., Jesus speaks "publicly" to the crowds in the temple courts [John 7:26])

    c. boldness, courage, confidence (when the rulers, elders, and teachers of the law saw the "courage" of Peter and John [Acts 4:13])

Most likely the English word *confidence* and the Greek word *parrēsia* overlap in the sense of (C) in both lists (it's a little harder to tell in this case). What is clear

from the context is that the author of Hebrews does not want his readers to approach the throne of grace with a feeling of their own power or a trust in their own ability (sense [A] in the English-meaning list). Such a word-study blunder would suggest a rejection of Christ's work in favor of mere human effort. No, our confidence is more of a certainty about what our High Priest has accomplished rather than a reliance on what we have done. Because of the work that Jesus, our High Priest, has performed, we may approach God's throne for help when we face temptation.

Now back to our main task: determining what the word—the Greek or Hebrew word, not the English word—*could* mean. How do we find the range of meaning for the original-language word that underlies our English translation? We suggest you do two things.

Concordance Work

The first step is to use a concordance of the Bible to locate the original Hebrew or Greek word. A concordance is a listing of all the words used in a book, often with a summary of how those words are translated into English. As you see the different ways the word has been translated into English, you will begin to get a feel for what the word could mean (i.e., its semantic range). In this section you will learn how to use an English-language resource to find the original Hebrew or Greek word. We are going to use the online resource developed by the scholars at Tyndale House, Cambridge—the STEP program (Scripture Tools for Every Person), available to use for free at www.stepbible.org.[11] The STEP program is tied to the ESV, so we will illustrate word studies below using the ESV.

Let's say you want to study the expression "press on" in Philippians 3:12, where Paul announces, "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I *press on* to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own" (ESV). Go to www.stepbible.org and you will see in the "Find" box (or search bar) at the top "ESV" and "Gen 1." Close out the Gen 1 box and type Philippians 3 beside "ESV" and hit return or click on "Find." You should be looking at the ESV text of Philippians 3 in the box below. Now, put your cursor on "press on" in verse 12 and click on it. You will see a box appear to the right with some important information. This is what you should see in the Vocab panel to the right:

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11. If you prefer the NIV translation, you could use *The Strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance*, ed. Edward W. Goodrick and John R. Kohlenberger III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999). The online STEP Bible program is tied to the ESV translation. The main thing is that you use a concordance that matches the version of the Bible you are using.

Vocab

διώκω (*diōkō*) 'to pursue' (G1377)

to pursue, persecute, to systematically oppress and harass a person or group, as an extended meaning of pursuing a person on foot in a chase; also from the image of the chase comes the meaning of striving and pressing on to a goal with intensity: to press on

Search for this word (~47 occurrences)

Meaning

to put in rapid motion; to pursue; to follow, pursue the direction of, Lk. 17:23; **to follow eagerly, endeavor earnestly to acquire,** Rom. 9:30, 31; 12:13; **to press forwards,** Phil. 3:12, 14; **to pursue** with malignity, **persecute,** Mt. 5:10, 11, 12, 44

This tells you a lot about how this word is used in the New Testament. First, the underlying Greek word is διώκω, transliterated into English as *diōkō*. The "G1377" number is the concordance number, but you don't need to worry about that for now. Second, you will see how the word is defined and what it means. The "Meaning" section is very helpful in providing a semantic range for your word. As you do your own study of the original word, you may refine its range of meaning, so don't feel bound by the "meaning" options provided here. They are simply a good place to begin. Finally, you will see how many times the word occurs in the New Testament (47).

Let's run through how to use the STEP Bible program once more, this time with an Old Testament word. Do you remember how Joseph got to Egypt? His brothers sold him to a band of Ishmaelite merchants, who took him there. In Egypt, Potiphar purchased Joseph from the Ishmaelites and eventually made Joseph his personal attendant. The story takes a sordid twist at this point. Potiphar's wife wanted Joseph to go to bed with her, but he kept refusing.

On one occasion when he was attending to his household duties and there were no other servants around, Potiphar's wife grabbed Joseph's cloak and demanded that he sleep with her. Joseph ran for his life, leaving his cloak in her hand. She then called the other servants and accused Joseph of laughing at her (Gen. 39:14–15): "She called to the men of her household and said to them, 'See, he has brought among us a Hebrew to laugh at us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. And as soon as he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried out, he left his garment beside me and fled and got out of the house'" (ESV).

To know more about the expression "laugh," go the STEP Bible program and close out the Gen 1 box up top and type "Genesis 39" and hit return or find. Click on "laugh" in verse 14 and see the Vocab panel appear to the right with more information. You will see that the Hebrew word transliterated *"tsa.chaq"* is sometimes translated "to laugh, mock, play, to jest, to sport, play, make sport, toy with, or make a toy of" and is used twelve times in the Old Testament. By using the STEP Bible program, you can discover the underlying Hebrew or Greek word, get some information about its range of meaning, and find out how many times it is used in the Old or New Testament. You now have a better idea about what the word could mean.

> Remember, however, that while a concordance will show a line of context for each occurrence, this may not be enough. You may need to open your Bible and have a look at the larger context.

Context Studies

We need to take the process one step further by looking more closely at context. The one rule in doing word studies that overrules all other rules is this: *Context determines word meaning*. If you take any word out of its context, you cannot really tell what it means. For example, what does the word *nice* mean? Something like *kind* or *considerate*? Maybe in certain contexts, such as "He is nice." But a change of context may change the meaning of the word (e.g., "He is nice and fat"). If the speaker is referring to a hog rather than a man, the meaning may be different. We cannot simply study a word by itself (e.g., *flesh*); we have to study a word in a particular context (e.g., "flesh" in Phil. 3:4).[12] Consequently, to be confident about knowing a word's range of meaning, you must see how it is used in context and not just how it has been translated into English.

To check the context, you need to know where the Greek or Hebrew word actually occurs in Scripture, and then you need to look up each occurrence. Checking the context takes time, but it is a crucial step in determining what the word *could* mean. The STEP Bible program is a huge help here. Let's look again at *diōkō*, translated "press on" in Philippians 3:12.

Using the STEP Bible program again, type in Philippians 3:12 in the search bar above. Then click on "press on" in the verse itself. Then click on "search for this word" in the Vocab panel to the right, and a list of all the occurrences of *diōkō* in the New Testament appears in a box to the left with the translations of this word highlighted. How cool! Now, take some time and check the word's range of meaning. If you need more context, you can click on the "Options" button in the bar above and expand the context by clicking on the + sign to add a verse of context.

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12. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis*, 79.

As you consider the uses of *diōkō* in context, you begin to see a semantic range come into view:

a. to persecute (e.g., Matt. 5:10, 11, 12)
b. to follow or pursue in a physical sense (e.g., Luke 17:23; Matt. 23:34)
c. to pursue (in a figurative sense), strive for, seek after (e.g., Rom. 9:30, 31; 1 Cor. 14:1)

Although the range of meaning you have found is very similar to the "Meaning" information provided in the Vocab panel to the right, you now have a better sense of what the word could mean by looking at the context yourself.

While we are at it, let's check the context of our Old Testament example, "laugh" ("*tsa.chaq*") in Genesis 39:14. When you type in Genesis 39:14 in the STEP Bible search bar and click on "laugh" in the verse, then "search for this word," you now see all the occurrences of "*tsa.chaq*" in the Old Testament.

As you check the context for this Hebrew word, you might come up with a semantic range similar to what you see below:

a. to express doubt and disbelief by laughing (Gen. 17:17; 18:12, 13, 15)
b. to express joy by laughing (Gen. 21:6)
c. to caress physically (Gen. 26:8; 39:14, 17?)
d. to ridicule or mock (Gen. 21:9; 39:14, 17?)
e. to revel or play, perhaps in an immoral way (Ex. 32:6)
f. to joke (Gen. 19:14)
g. to entertain (Judg. 16:25)

By looking closely at the context, you pick up on something that you might not see in the "meanings" provided. You may have noticed that we added meaning "C. to caress physically (Gen. 26:8; 39:14, 17?)" to the list. This comes from comparing translations. In the STEP Bible when you have the word "*tsa.chaq*" and the ESV in the search bar with all twelve occurrences below, you can simply type "NIV" in the search bar also, then hit return, and this translation will be added to the list below. The ESV and NIV line up pretty well until you get to Genesis 26:8, where the NIV reads, "When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelek king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah." Now, that's certainly different from "laughing with Rebekah." When you add context, you see that Abimelek realized from watching them that Rebekah really was Isaac's wife and not his sister (see 26:9). This strongly suggests they were doing more than laughing together. It also

makes you wonder, in light of the context of Genesis 39 if there is something a bit more sexual about the use of the term in 39:14, 17. Comparing translations and looking more closely at the context can add a lot to our study of a word.

In summary, before you decide what your word *does* mean, you need to determine what it *could* mean. You can use the STEP Bible program to find the original Hebrew or Greek word and see its definitions and its translations into English. Then you must use the program again to check the context surrounding your word, perhaps even comparing the ESV with other translations. Now for the final step—it's time to decide what your word actually *does* mean in the context of the passage.

DECIDE WHAT THE WORD DOES MEAN IN CONTEXT

In light of the context, the first thing you must do is to select from the possible meanings the one meaning that best fits your word. What we said earlier about the importance of context bears repeating: *context determines word meaning!* Context includes everything that surrounds your word, such as the paragraph containing the word, the subject matter, the author's argument or flow of thought, as well as external factors such as the historical situation of the author and the original audience.

One of the most reliable ways to let the context guide your decision is through a concept known as "circles of context" (the diagram below illustrates the circles of context for a New Testament word; the same principle would also apply to the study of Old Testament words).
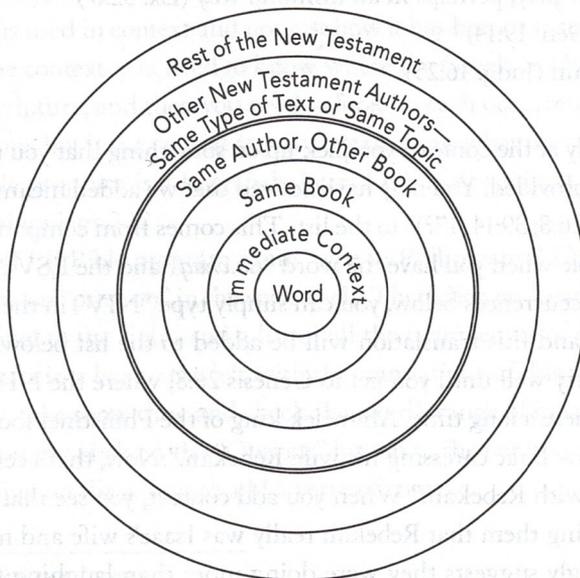
Generally speaking, the closer the circle is to the center, the greater influence it should normally have on your decision about the word's meaning. When trying to decide the meaning of a New Testament word, for example, you would usually give more weight to writings by the same author (and especially to the word's immediate context) than to other parts of the New Testament. All of this is based on the notion that we should look first and foremost to the original author to discover the meaning of the word.

Your goal when using the circles of context is to start with the immediate context and work your way out until you find your answer. Rarely will you have to move beyond the "same author" circle to answer the question about the meaning of the word. (The double lines in the diagram signal the priority you should give to everything written by the same author.)

> Start with the immediate context and work your way out until you find your answer.

You should expect to spend most of your time working in the smaller circles of context. Remember that our purpose in doing word studies is to try to understand as precisely as possible what the author meant when he used a certain word in a specific context. We cannot stop our analysis when we know the possible meanings of the word. We must go on to choose the meaning that is most likely. As you struggle to decide the most likely meaning of the word in its context, you may find the following questions helpful.

- *Is there a contrast or a comparison that seems to define the word?* For example, Ephesians 4:29 reads, "Do not let any *unwholesome* talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." The contrast in the immediate context between "unwholesome" talk and words that build up and benefit people helps us understand "unwholesome" talk as any kind of speech (not just profanity) that damages relationships.
- *Does the subject matter or topic of the passage dictate a word meaning?* Back to our Genesis 39 example (NIV "make sport of" or ESV "laugh"). Which category did you choose of the various possibilities? Although "make sport of" sounds very much like sense (D) ("to ridicule or mock"), the subject matter in the immediate context is clearly sexual in nature. Could it be that sense (C) ("to caress physically") is the more likely choice? Read 39:14–15 again in light of the topic of the passage and see what you think.
- *Does the author's usage of the same word elsewhere in a similar context help you decide which meaning best fits the word?* If you are studying the word "world" in the all-time favorite verse John 3:16 ("For God so loved the *world* . . ."),

for instance, you would be interested to know how John uses this word else-where in his writings. To save you time, we can tell you that John uses the term *world* in a variety of ways, but he often uses the word in the sense of human beings in rebellion against God, of people opposed to God and his purposes. John probably uses "world" in this sense in John 3:16 also. When we read that God so loved the "world," we are not merely to think of God's affection for his physical creation, but of God's willingness to send his Son to die for those who despise him. Knowing John's use of "world" here gives you a glimpse into the self-giving heart of God.

- *Does the author's argument in the book suggest a meaning?* At times the author's argument (or train of thought) will affect your decision about what the word means. In Galatians 3:4 Paul asks the Galatians a pointed question: "Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?" (ESV). The Greek word translated "suffer" (*paschō*) can mean (a) negative experiences (i.e., suffering) or (b) positive experiences. Most of the time in the New Testament the word carries this negative sense of suffering, as it does the other six times Paul uses the word (1 Cor. 12:26; 2 Cor. 1:6; Phil. 1:29; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:12). But his argument in Galatians seems to call for meaning (b). If you were to study Galatians thoroughly, you would see that in this section Paul recalls the Galatians' positive experience of the Spirit, speaking in the surrounding context of God's gift of his Spirit and miracles. Paul then asks them if they are giving up all their great spiritual experiences for nothing. Because of the author's argument in the immediate context, the NIV 2011 translation of *paschō* as "experience" seems preferable: "Have you experienced so much in vain . . . ?"

- *Does the historical situation tilt the evidence in a certain direction?* Occasionally the historical context will strongly favor a particular option. To the Philippian Christians, Paul writes in 1:27, "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (NIV). The key verb translated "conduct yourselves" (*politeuomai*; "let your manner of life be" in the ESV) probably carries political overtones that Paul uses to connect with the Philippians. The citizens of Philippi took great pride in their status as citizens of a Roman colony. The Christians in Philippi would likely have shared in this civic pride. Paul seems to be telling the believers there to make sure they live like citizens of heaven in Philippi and not merely like citizens of a Roman colony. After all, the real Lord is not Caesar but Jesus! Knowing the historical background can often help you discern a word's meaning.

Now, using these questions and others like them, select the meaning that best fits. Sometimes you will discover that more than one sense is possible, maybe even several are possible. But you need to decide which one *best* fits the context. Resist the temptation to select a word meaning only because it is more exciting than the other options or because it will "preach" better than the rest. What good is a captivating word meaning if it is not true to the text of Scripture? As you make your decision, remember that interpretation always involves an element of subjectivity. Therefore, we need to make our interpretive choices and hold our interpretive convictions with humility. We could be wrong. It has happened before.

Before moving on to our actual word study of "present" in Romans 12:1, there is one more thing you can do to select from the possible meanings the one that best fits—get advice from the experts. To check your own work and deepen your understanding of a word, consult the standard word-study resources as a final step in the process. We recommend the following as resources worth consulting for beginning students:

For Word Studies in the Old Testament

Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds. *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.

Holladay, William L., ed. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971.

Jenni, Ernst, and Claus Westermann, eds. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997.

Mounce, William D. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

VanGemeren, Willem, gen. ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

For Word Studies in the New Testament

Balz, Horst, and Gerhard Schneider, eds. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–93.

Brown, Colin, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–78.

Danker, Frederick W. *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, eds. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* 1 vol. Translated, edited, and abridged by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.

Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene A. Nida. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains.* 2nd ed. 2 vols. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.

Mounce, William D. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

Spicq, Ceslas, ed. *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament.* 3 vols. Translated by James D. Ernest. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995.

Verbrugge, Verlyn D., ed. *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology.* Abridged ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.

Note on Computer Tools

A variety of software packages include standard resources for studying words. The Logos Bible Software package is particularly good. Having fingertip access to these kinds of tools is a wonderful time-saver, but it will not guarantee reliable results. We strongly encourage you to follow the same method of study in any case. Choose your words carefully, determine what the underlying Greek or Hebrew word *could* mean (i.e., its semantic range), then decide what it *does* mean in its particular context. Since context rather than a dictionary definition determines the meaning of a word, we hope you will consult the standard resources only as a final step. If you have access to computer resources, the process should go much faster.

A WORD STUDY: "PRESENT" IN ROMANS 12:1

The purpose of this section is to give you a complete example of what we have just talked about doing.

1. Choose your words carefully.

As we read through Romans 12:1–2, we select the word "present" for further study because it is crucial to our understanding of the passage. In view of God's mercy, what are we supposed to do? We are to "present" our bodies to God. Knowing more about the meaning of this key verb will help us see how we are to respond to God in light of all he has done for us.

2. Determine what the word could mean.

Using the STEP Bible program, look up the word "present" used in Romans 12:1. This entry shows the variety of ways that the original Greek word παρίστημι (transliterated *paristēmi*) is used in the New Testament:

> **Meaning**
>
> pluperfect, παρειστήκειν, also formed as παριστάνω, trans. **to place beside; to have in readiness, provide, put at disposal** Acts 23:24; **to range beside, to place at the disposal of,** Mt. 26:53; Acts 9:41; **to present** to God, **dedicate, consecrate, devote,** Lk. 2:22; Rom. 6:13, 19; **to prove, demonstrate, show,** Acts 1:3; 24:13; **to commend, recommend,** 1 Cor. 8:8; intrans. perf. παρέστηκα, part. παρεστώς, pluperf. παρειστήκειν, 2 aor. παρέστην, and mid., **to stand by** or **before,** Acts 27:24; Rom. 14:10; **to stand by, to be present,** Mk. 14:47, 69, 70; **to stand in attendance, attend,** Lk. 1:19; 1:24; of time, **to be present, have come,** Mk. 4:29; **to stand by** in aid, **assist, support,** Rom. 16:2

This helps you identify the word's range of meaning:

a. to make available, to put at someone's disposal, to provide (e.g., Matt. 26:53)
b. to arrive, to come (e.g., Mark 4:29)
c. to stand by, to be present (e.g., Mark 14:47)
d. to dedicate or devote to God (e.g., Luke 2:22)
e. to stand against, to appear as an enemy (e.g., Acts 4:26)
f. to prove or demonstrate (e.g., Acts 24:13)
g. to appear before a judge (e.g., Acts 27:24)
h. to help (e.g., Rom. 16:2)
i. to bring close or near, to commend (e.g., 1 Cor. 8:8)

3. Decide the most likely meaning of the word in context.

We must look carefully at the use of *paristēmi* in Romans 12:1. Beginning in 12:1 Paul shifts his focus to how Christians should respond to the mercy of God explained in chapters 1–11. The word "therefore" signals this transition from the theological foundation in chapters 1–11 to the exhortation in chapters 12–15. We are urged to respond to God by presenting or offering our bodies as a sacrifice.

Of the possible meanings for *paristēmi* listed above, the context suggests either sense (A) "to make available, to put at someone's disposal, to provide," or sense (D)

"to dedicate or devote to God" as the best options. These are closely related meanings, and it is difficult to determine which one is best. We turn again to the context.

This word is used elsewhere in Romans in 6:13, 16, 19; 14:10; and 16:2. The parallels between the use of the word in chapter 12 and the uses in chapter 6 are strong. In both cases people are giving their bodies in service to some power. Since "body" probably refers here to the whole person and not just to the physical body, sense (D) seems preferable: we are giving ourselves to God.

We should also pay particular attention to the imagery of sacrifice in chapter 12, imagery not present in chapter 6. In 12:1 we are exhorted to present our bodies *as a sacrifice*. Since Christ has fulfilled the Old Testament sacrificial system, Christians no longer present literal sacrifices as part of our worship. Instead, we present ourselves totally and continuously to God as a sacrifice—a living, holy, and pleasing sacrifice.

God gave himself to us through the once-for-all sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ. We worship God by giving all of ourselves (bodies included) to him. Two kinds of sacrifice are involved: he died for us, and we are to live for him! Our lives become living sacrifices of worship.

As a matter of checking our work, examine what a leading word-study resource says about the word "present" (*paristēmi*). The entry shown here is from *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology: Abridged Edition*, edited by Verlyn D. Verbrugge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 439.

CONCLUSION

Words are the building blocks of language, connecting small pieces of a puzzle to bring the larger picture to life. As we grasp the meaning of individual words, we are able to comprehend the meaning of an entire passage. Yet, as we have seen in this chapter, the meaning of a word is determined by the context surrounding that word. Context determines word meaning just as word meaning helps form the context. When doing word studies, you can clearly see the dynamic interplay between the parts and the whole.

We began the chapter by making you aware of a number of the most common word-study fallacies. We hope the information in this chapter will help you avoid such mistakes. Next, you learned how to locate words that need further study and how to study the underlying Hebrew or Greek word using the STEP Bible program. The process is simple, even though it takes time: (1) choose your words carefully, (2) determine what the word could mean, and (3) decide the most likely meaning of the word in context. Finally, we encouraged you to check your work by consulting the experts. We left you with the example of "present" in Romans 12:1. Now it's your turn to give it a try using one or more of the assignments.

whose spiritual ideals cause them to live as virgins; but since Paul describes this situation in 7:1–7 and does not use *parthenos* there, that interpretation is unlikely. In 7:25–38, the couples in question are not married. More likely Paul has in mind the relation of a man to his betrothed, who is a virgin in the ordinary sense.

(c) Where the NT speaks of Mary as a virgin, it has in mind the period up to the birth of Jesus. Statements regarding Jesus' supernatural conception are limited to the nativity narratives in Matt. 1 and Lk. 1. Jesus' divine sonship is based on a miracle that went beyond the experience of Elizabeth (Lk. 1:36). Matt. adds a quotation from Isa. 7:14 and indicates Jesus' conception as fulfilling OT prophecy. Matt.'s genealogy denotes Mary's legal relation to Joseph, since for the sake of his Davidic sonship Jesus must pass legally for a son of Joseph (1:16; cf. Lk. 3:23). In spite of its importance in Christian theology, Paul makes no explicit reference to the virgin birth (see Rom. 1:3; Gal. 4:4, for his references to the birth of Jesus).

See also *gynē*, woman (*1222*); *mētēr*, mother (*3613*); *chēra*, widow (*5939*).

4225	παρίστημι	παρίστημι (*paristēmi*), place, put at the disposal of, present (*4225*).

CL & OT The basic meaning of *paristēmi* is (trans.) place beside, (intrans.) stand beside, and (mid.) place before oneself. Various nuances developed, such as: (trans.) put down, place at someone's disposal, bring (a sacrifice); (intrans.) approach (the emperor or an enemy), help someone, wait on (as a servant), be present.

The word is used in the LXX more than 100x. It could refer to a foreigner entering God's service (Isa. 60:10), a servant standing before a master (a position of honor, cf. 1 Sam. 16:21; 2 Ki. 5:25), and angels (Job 1:6) and martyrs (4 Macc. 17:18) standing before God. The word also expresses God's standing by someone to reveal himself (Exod. 34:5), to help that person (Ps. 109:31), or to charge someone with sin (50:21).

NT 1. In the NT *paristēmi* is used intrans. of Paul's standing before Caesar (Acts 27:24) or humanity's standing before God's judgment (Rom. 14:10). God supported Paul by standing at his side (2 Tim. 4:17), an angel stood beside Paul (Acts 27:23), and Phoebe was to be supported by the local church (Rom. 16:2). Gabriel stands before God (Lk. 1:19) (note that in heaven, only God sits; all created beings must stand before him).

2. The trans. use is found primarily in Acts and Paul's letters. In Lk. 2:22 it denotes the presentation of Jesus to the Lord in the temple (cf. Exod. 13:2). Passages where *paristēmi* is used in the sense of make or present are of special importance. Col. 1:22 implies that because of Jesus' death, a new, holy community is being presented to God. Since Christ is perfect, the church can also be presented perfect to God (1:28). Just as Jesus presented himself as alive after Easter to his apostles in various appearances (Acts 1:3), so God will present believers raised to a new life with Jesus in his presence (2 Cor. 4:14). By his self-sacrifice Christ has presented the church in the splendor of a bride (Eph. 5:27; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2; Col. 1:22). Similarly, we should do our best to present ourselves as approved to God (2 Tim. 2:15).

Neither the supposed freedom of those who think themselves strong nor the scrupulous self-denial of those weak in faith will "bring us near to God" (1 Cor. 8:8). Rather, the members that were once yielded to impurity are now to be offered to God in the service of righteousness (Rom. 6:13–19). Those who have been justified by faith "offer" their bodies to God as living sacrifices (12:1). Paul may be adopting Hel. sacrificial terminology here for Christian service to Jesus as Lord.

See also *kathistēmi*, bring, appoint (*2770*); *horizō*, determine, appoint (*3988*); *procheirizō*, determine, appoint (*4741*); *tassō*, arrange, appoint (*5435*); *tithēmi*, put, place, set, appoint (*5502*); *prothesmia*, appointed

date (*4607*); *cheirotoneō*, appoint (*5936*); *lanchanō*, obtain as by lot (*3275*).

4228 (*paroikeō*, inhabit as a stranger, live beside), → *4230*.

4229 (*paroikia*, the stay of a noncitizen in a strange place), → *4230*.

4230	πάροικος	πάροικος (*paroikos*), stranger, alien (*4230*); παροικέω (*paroikeō*), inhabit as a stranger, live beside (*4228*); παροικία (*paroikia*), the stay of a noncitizen in a strange place (*4229*).

CL & OT 1. *paroikos* is a compound of *para* (by) and *oikos* (house). It was originally an adj. but was later used as a noun meaning neighbor, noncitizen, one who lives among citizens without having rights yet enjoying the protection of the community. The vb. *paroikeō* means to live beside, inhabit as a stranger. *paroikia* means sojourning.

2. In the LXX *paroikos* occurs over 30x, translating *gēr* and *tôšāb*, both words meaning an alien or stranger. *paroikeō* occurs over 60x, esp. as the equivalent of *gûr*, to sojourn. *paroikia* is found 16x. Words in this group designate non-Israelites who lived in Israel (2 Sam. 4:3; Isa. 16:4). The Israelites had definite obligations to resident aliens. For example, an adequate living should be made possible for them (Lev. 25:35–47). They were allowed to share the food of the Sabbath year (25:6), although they were prohibited from eating the Passover lamb (Exod. 12:45) or the sacrificial gift (Lev. 22:10). They had the right of asylum (Num. 35:15), and, like widows and orphans, they stood under the protection of the law (cf. Exod. 22:21). The devout, even if aliens, could live in the tent of Yahweh (Ps. 15) and so experience fellowship with him. Ezek. 47:22–23 promises the equality of Israelites and resident aliens. Still, resident aliens also had obligations. For example, they were required to keep the Sabbath (Exod. 20:10).

Repeated stress in the OT was laid on the fact that the patriarchs were aliens (Gen. 12:10; 17:8; 19:9; 20:1; 23:4; 35:27; 47:4; Exod. 6:4). Moses was an alien in Midian (2:22), as was the entire nation of Israel in Egypt. Israel's attitude toward aliens was to be motivated by this fact (cf. 22:21; 23:9). In one sense the Israelites were always aliens, even when they lived in the promised land (1 Chr. 29:15; Ps. 39:12; 119:19, 54; 120:5; 3 Macc. 7:19). The earth and soil of Palestine, as indeed the whole earth (cf. Ps. 24:1), belongs to Yahweh. For this reason the land could not be sold (Lev. 25:23).

3. For Philo, the godly man is a *paroikos*, for he lives far off from his heavenly home. Philo combined the ancient world's denial of the world with OT ideas.

NT The words of this group are found only in Lk., Acts, Eph., Heb., and 1 Pet. Each passage contains a quotation or reference to the history of Israel (cf. Acts 7:29 with Exod. 2:15; Acts 7:6 with Gen. 15:13). In Acts 13:16–17 Paul recalls Israel's *paroikia* in Egypt, while Heb. 11:9–10 stresses that Abraham lived as an alien in the promised land and as in a foreign country, since by faith he was a citizen of the heavenly city. The same thought occurs in the use of *xenos* (→ *3828*) and *parepidēmos* (→ *4215*) in 11:13. In Jesus Christ Gentile believers are no longer *xenoi* and *paroikoi*, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household. Consequently, the promises made to Israel and the call to the kingdom of God are also valid for them (Eph. 2:19).

From this point of view, Christians are also in a new sense *paroikoi* and *parepidēmoi* here on earth—hence the warning to abstain from sinful desires (1 Pet. 2:11). They are to live in their time of sojourning in the fear of God (1:17). *paroikeō* means "live" only in Lk. 24:18. Perhaps even here the thought is that the "visitor" in question is a member of the Jewish dispersion living at Jerusalem, or that he is a pilgrim temporarily staying in the city to attend the Passover.

See also *allotrios*, alien, hostile (*259*); *diaspora*, dispersion (*1402*); *xenos*, foreign; stranger, alien (*3828*); *parepidēmos*, staying for a while in a strange place; stranger, resident alien (*4215*).

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 9–1

Use the STEP Bible program as your concordance to answer the following questions:

1. Use the concordance to answer the following questions about Acts 1:8.

    a) Write out the English transliterated form of the word translated "power" in Acts 1:8:
    _____.

    b) How many times does this word occur in the New Testament? _____

    c) List the passages in Acts that translate this word as "power":

    d) List the passages in Acts that translate this word as "miracles" or "mighty works":

2. Use the concordance to answer the following questions about Exodus 4:21.

    a) Write out the English transliterated form of the word translated "power" in Exodus 4:21: _____.

    b) How many times does this word occur in the Old Testament? _____

    c) List the passages in Exodus that translate the word as "power":

3. The ESV uses the word "judge" in 1 Corinthians 4:3; 5:12; and Revelation 20:4. Are these the same Greek words? Write out the English transliteration of the three Greek words translated as "judge" in these three passages.

4. Use the concordance to answer the following questions about the word "hope":

    a) Paul uses the word "hope" in Romans 4:18. How many times total does Paul use this same Greek word in his letters? (Do not assume that Paul wrote Hebrews.) _____

    b) How many times is the word used in Matthew, Mark, and Luke? _____

    c) Is this the same word for "hope" that is used in 1 Corinthians 13:13?

Assignment 9–2

You are studying the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7) and the word "anxious" in Matthew 6:25 catches your eye. You decide to study the word "anxious" more in depth. Use the STEP Bible program as your concordance to answer the following questions:

1. What is the Greek word for "anxious" in Matthew 6:25? Write out the word in transliterated English form: _____

2. How many times is it used in the New Testament? _____

3. Now do some more concordance work to decide what the word "anxious" *could* mean in the New Testament. Make a list of the "meanings" provided in the box to the right in the STEP Bible program. This gives you a good sense of what the word could mean. But you need to look a bit more closely at the context. There is an art to identifying a word's semantic range. Don't give up. Keep working at it and you'll find that it gets easier

with practice. Answer the following questions about how the word is used in each context as a way of getting at its range of meaning:

    a) What things are we told not to be anxious about in Matthew 6:25, 27, 28, 31, 34; Luke 12:22, 25, 26?

    b) What is the context of Matthew 10:19 and Luke 12:11? Is this a different kind of anxiety than that prohibited in Matthew 6:25?

    c) What stands in contrast to Martha's anxiety (Luke 10:41)? How does this contrast help to define Martha's anxiety?

    d) In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul uses the word four times. Describe the context of this usage.

    e) What do the contexts of 1 Corinthians 12 and Philippians 2 have in common?

    f) What kind of anxiety is Paul describing in Philippians 4? How do you know?

4. As you survey the word in context, do you want to add to or take away from the list of meanings? Based on your brief study of the word as used in context, describe as best you can the semantic range of the word. There are at least two major senses of the word and perhaps a couple more.

5. Now decide what the Greek word used in Matthew 6:25 and translated "be anxious" actually means in this verse. Select one of the semantic-range options that you identified in step 2 and explain why you think the word carries that meaning in Matthew 6:25.

6. To check your work, see Verbrugge, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology: Abridged Edition*, 364.

Assignment 9–3

You want to study the word "meditate" in Joshua 1:8, where God tells Joshua: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it" (ESV). Use the STEP Bible program to answer the following questions:

1. Click on the word "meditate" in Joshua 1:8 What is the transliteration of the Hebrew word that appears in the Vocab panel to the right? _____

2. How many times is it used in the Old Testament? _____

3. List out the meanings provided in the Vocab panel as a way to begin establishing a range of meaning. Now click on the phrase "Search for this word" in the Vocab panel to generate a list of its occurrences in the Old Testament. Now look at each occurrence as a means of clarifying the word's range of meaning. Based on your brief study of the word as used in context, describe as best you can the semantic range of this word.

4. Now decide what the Hebrew word used in Joshua 1:8 means. Select one of the semantic-range options that you identified in step 2 and explain why you think the word carries that meaning in Joshua 1:8.

5. To check your work, see VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 1:1006–8.

Assignment 9–4

Complete the following word study of the word "trials" in James 1:2 using the STEP Bible program. The example of our study of the word "present" in Romans 12:1 in this chapter may prove helpful.

1. First, why do you think it is important to study this word?
2. What *could* this word mean? In other words, identify the word's semantic range.
3. What *does* this word mean in context? Be sure to discuss your choice.

Assignment 9–5

Complete the following word study of the word "sick" in James 5:14 using the STEP Bible program. The example of our study of the word "present" in Romans 12:1 in this chapter may prove helpful.

1. First, why do you think it is important to study this word?
2. What *could* this word mean? In other words, identify the word's semantic range.
3. What *does* this word mean in context? Be sure to discuss your choice.