Effective Bible Study: Lesson 6

Significant Words

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As you read through Jude, and other books of the Bible, you've probably noticed certain words jump off the page at you. These would be "strong" words, words that give umph to a text and incite questions. This is where we learn to understand words in a context. I will be including some references to books in this study and offering ideas for tools that can help you. Be warned, not everything out there is good and some of it is filled with denominational and/or Scripturally inaccurate leanings, or sometimes flat-out false teaching. If you have questions on a resource, please feel free to PM me about it and I will look at it for you. The resources I will share with you are pretty safe (without any significant leaning), and typically will mostly include general historical or textual knowledge. If you are really interested in taking an honest approach to Scripture (which we all should) and you want to learn more, there is a great book by D.A. Carson titled Exegetical Fallacies. This book advocates an honest approach to interpreting and approaching Scripture by considering a well-rounded awareness of the text's Spirit-driven, historical, cultural, doctrinal, textual and contextual setting.

But let's get back to the words we read in a text and the importance of those words. God didn't put a single word in the Bible for no reason at all. He wants us to understand something, to take something in. Proper understanding of words helps us to better understand a text's significance. But a proper understanding of "significant" words can bring an entirely different light to a text and a Biblical principle.

What makes a "significant" word.
1.   A word that is difficult to understand.
2.   Profound. This is a word that carries a lot of meaning.
3.   A word that seems crucial to understanding the text or sentence.
4.   A word used multiple times in a text.

Assignment: Pick out a few words that appear from the text to be significant. Use at least three sources to help you identify the meaning of the word. In other words, you don't want to read what just one person says, but you want to weigh the various definitions against each other. Below are some books that can help, some of which have digital editions. You can search the internet for Greek/English word studies and lexicons.

-   "An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon" by Henry George Liddell & Robert Scott
-   "Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words: With Topical Index"
-   by W.E. Vine & Merrill F. Unger
-   "A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature", by Walter Bauer, Frederick William Danker
-   "Word Studies in the New Testament" by Marvin Richardson Vincent

- "The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament", by Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III
- Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament by Joseph Thayer

For this assignment, write down the word, summarize what each of the three sources say. Finally, write your own summary of what you think that word means and analyze that within the context of the passage. How does this word and or text apply to you?