**Studying God’s- Word-properly defining words Part 3**

We are told to be diligent in our study of God’s word, 2 Timothy 2:15. To “rightly divide” the word of truth” we must study each passage with the fervent desire to learn the truth. In the first two articles on this subject, I tried to emphasize the need to consider what the entire Bible says on this subject what the entire Bible says on a particular subject. Too many people decided what they believe and then seek a passage to back up their argument and reject what the Bible says on that subject in different places. This causes contradicting doctrines and the truth to be neglected. Let me suggest some other logical steps to take in your Bible study.

In Alice and Wonderland there is the line, “words mean whatever we want them to mean”. That is simply not be arbitrarily changed.

The writings of the Apostles were in the Greek language. Each word had a meaning and that meaning can not be changed to fit our practices. People have tried to redefine the word “baptize” to mean sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. However, the word baptize is a transliteration of the Greek word, ***baptizo***, meaning to immerse. We see this word in practice in Acts 8:38. “So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.” The eunuch was immersed in water.

We must understand the context of the word in a passage. The word, ***fellowship*** means joint partaker, a common bond, to work together. In the New Testament it is spiritual in nature. Our fellowship is in the Gospel of Christ, Philippians 1:5. The basis of our fellowship is being in the body of Christ. Our fellowship is determined by God. We “fellowship” when we assemble together to sing (Ephesians 5:19), pray (Acts 2:42), give as we purpose in our hearts on the first day of the week. (2 Corinthians 9:7 & 1 Corinthians 16:1-2), and observe the Lord’s supper (1 Corinthians 11:24ff). Today the word fellowship is often used referring to eating a common meal or some sporting activities run by the local congregation.

If we can understand the importance of properly defining baptism, we should also understand the importance of rightly defining fellowship.

The definition of the word ***church*** is very important. It comes from the Greek word, ***ekklesia***. It means the called out. When referring to the saints it refers to those individuals who have been called out from the world. It can be used referring to the called out in the universal sense, Christians throughout the whole world (Acts 2:47). It can be used referring to a local congregation, such as, the church at Antioch (Acts 11:26). In 1 Corinthians 14:28, Paul uses the word church to speak of the assembly of the saints. The proper definition of this world is important because it always refers to the people inside of Christ’s body. It is ever used referring to a building or a denomination.

The Bible sometimes defines words for us. In the parable of the sower, Jesus said the seed is the words, the seed is the word of God, Luke 8:11.

Sometimes the Bible helps us by giving us a parallel passage. That is two passages addressing the same subject. We can in such cases use one passage to better understand the other passage. In Titus we read the word, the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (3:5). What does that mean? In Ephesians 5:26, Paul says the church has been sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word. Both passages are speaking of out salvation. We are saved when we hear the word God and are baptized for the remission of our sins. That corresponds to the washing of regeneration in TITUS 3:5.

Occasionally I am asked what book I would recommend for some body’s library. I would start out by buying a good Bible Dictionary. Vine’s Greek Dictionary would do the job. To rightly divide the word of truth we must righty define words. D. T.