

Prayer and Equipping

Teaching

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Introduction

It is encouraging that you have chosen this course. The church today is seriously lacking in the area of the knowledge of the Word of God. It is also alarming how many people ask fundamental questions about their faith even though they have been saved many years. In a time when the foundational teachings of Christianity are being challenged and questioned, we need more than ever to be a people who not only understand these for ourselves but are able to teach them as well.

Hebrews 6:1-2 "Therefore, let us leave behind the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment."

We need to ask ourselves the following question, "What do we expect the elders to do in the church?" Maybe it is to visit the sick, teach and preach, show hospitality, encourage, serve etc. However, if this is what only the elders are doing, then they have failed in the purpose that Jesus has for them. This should be what the whole congregation is busy with.

The next question to answer is what do you expect from this course? I trust that those who have a teaching gifting, will have that confirmed, that you will be challenged to grow your gift and that you will be given useful tools with which to do this.

1. The Foundation – Week 1

Ephesians 4:11 unpacks what has come to be called the five-fold ministry. We need a foundation of understanding of what these ministry gifts are all about. It will also help us to see the importance of why we need to have these gifts in operation and the value of this course as a whole.

Ephesians 4: 1-16

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit- just as you were called to one hope when you were called- one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and

forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

- In verse 7, it says that to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This must become revelation knowledge for us that everyone has at least one gift that must be put to use.
- *Ephesians 2:10* "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
- *1 Peter 4:10* "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ."

The verses above should settle any questions we have about the fact that we have received gifts. We all have at least one, and these gifts must be used.

It is important for us to understand the Ephesians 4 passage on the gifts as a whole before we expand on the specific gift of teaching.

Psalm 68:18 "When you ascended on high, you took many captives, you received gifts from people, even from the rebellious, that you, Lord God, might dwell there." Paul quotes from the Psalm when he writes Ephesians 4 but changes around the receiving of the gifts by a victorious conqueror to the giving of gifts by an ascended Lord.

Ephesians 4:9-10 "What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe. "

As I have understood it and Mark Driscoll also sees it this way, Luke 16 describes Hades as a place which has compartments and at the time when Jesus descended, He emptied Paradise. He told us that He was going there, when he spoke to the criminal on the cross. He did not descend to hell to suffer. He said on the cross that it was finished. He did not have to do any more. It was all accomplished on the cross. *Colossians 2:15* "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

The Ascended, Glorified Christ gives gifts to His church. Note that these are not "offices", that is if you have the gift of prophecy for instance, you do not necessarily hold the office of a prophet. Rather, we see them as "gift people" who flow in these different gifts and bring these gifting's to the church:

- Apostles
- Prophets
- Evangelists
- Some Pastors and Teachers

To clarify, when we speak of these "gift people", they are not offices held, but ministries performed.

Jesus intention is that His church be led by five different types of leaders. Referring to Charismatic Leadership, Howard Snyder in His book, "The Community of the King", one can look at the leadership of any church and compare that team to the Ephesians 4 gifting's. If there is not some similarity in those gifts compared to the people on the team, then serious restructure should occur. If we look at the Northpoint eldership team, you can see all of these gifting's displayed, not in one individual necessarily but the whole team reflects all five gifting's. This is something that God has done. Some churches will advertise to get certain gifting's within their church and these people are almost like hired professional religionists.

The Ephesians 4 gifting's in more detail

Apostle

Technically the office of the Apostle is sealed. Only the men, who walked with Jesus on earth, can technically hold the office of an Apostle.

This office was only held by 12 disciples. Matthias later replaced Judas. This is seen in *Acts 1:21-22* "Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

The criteria for the office of Apostleship are therefore:

- They were with the other disciples from John's baptism to Jesus' ascension.
- They were witnesses of Jesus resurrection

As no one can claim to have done these two things, in our present day, any person claiming that they are an apostle holding this office is making claims against the bible, and is a fraud. Not even Paul met these requirements. However we see in Paul, Barnabus and Apollos for example that this gift was operating in the early church and at no point do the scriptures indicate that these gifts cease to operate.

The word apostle comes from the Greek word "Apostolos" which means an ambassador of the gospel, with miraculous powers and a messenger that is sent. This can apply to church planters, or people in trans-local ministry like Dudley Daniel. This ministry gift is very much alive in the Church today. A person with this gift will plant churches, and have influence over these churches. When it comes to commentaries that explain this gift we need to be aware that many do not see this gift as functioning today.

Prophet

(Also prophetess)

Prophets are foretellers, inspired speakers and by extension a poet. They take the Word of God and proclaim it boldly, re-orienting people to God. This is often done by addressing sin and error. They preach repentance, and proclaim the truth regardless of the cost.

These prophets are not like the Old Testament prophets. As is outlined in Deuteronomy 13 and 18, they:

- Had to be Hebrew
- Were stoned if they lied
- Gave us much of the scripture (known as the Law and Prophets)

The bible is sealed and cannot be changed. There is some comment base therefore, that this gift like the Apostolic gift is also closed and no longer operates. This is based on the following Ephesians 2:20 scripture.

Ephesians 2:20 "Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone."

Evangelist

The work of an evangelist is to announce Good News, especially the gospel. They declare good tidings. They love people who are not Christian and often find themselves wanting to be sharing the Gospel with people rather than sitting in a church meeting. An example of such an evangelist is Hudson Taylor, who skipped his Sunday evening meeting at church and spent the time doing door to door evangelism.

Pastor and Teacher

These gifts often describe the same person. They are two gifts that often operate side by side.

Pastor

These people have a genuine love for people. They will take time to counsel people and are patient and nurturing. They teach and instruct, and are good listeners. They are plugged in, and don't look over your shoulder when you are speaking to them. They want to be involved in your life and when they say they will pray for you, they actually do.

Teacher

This gift is needed and used in a measure in the operation of all the other gifts. This gift expands minds. It requires many open books and much study. We must function in sound doctrine and have our theology in order. Areas explored by the teaching gift include subjects like church history, apologetics and how to interpret the bible accurately etc.

These gifts all need to work together. If we focus too much on one area, there will be deficits in the others. For example if the church just has the pastoral gift in the leadership team, the church will be loved, but ineffective and unmotivated to reach its community and the nations. Modern day examples of teaching gifts to the church are people like Michael Eaton, Mark Driscoll, and RT Kendall.

Why are the Ephesians 4 gifting's important?

These gifts are important because they do the following in the church:

Ephesians 4:12 "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

Equip

Equipping is linked to preparation. There is a perfecting that needs to take place amongst God's people in order to fulfill the good works God has prepared in advance for us to do. The meaning of this word also speaks of being completely furnished, like a room that has nothing lacking in furnishings.

Built up

The original meanings of these words speak of Architecture and Structure. The church in like manner is ordered and has structure, the Ephesian 4 gifts provide this for the Body of Christ.

Unity

We need to move to a place of unanimity and therefore complete oneness in the Body. There needs to be no more superstars, just the whole Body working together, and having a common understanding of the pivotal doctrines of the faith.

Mature

We need to mature, become complete and lack nothing. Paul in his letters to the churches he established would say he longs to visit them in order to provide them with what they lacked in their faith. 1 Thess 3:10 and 1Cor 16:17

Fullness

We need to grow in stature and reach the measure of the fullness of Christ. The understanding here is Christ like maturity.

Ultimately, the job of the gifts is to prepare God's people. The leaders empower the people to do what God is calling them to. Many churches are divided, because the people are not serving. There are a few people who are trying to do everything, while the others do nothing, when everyone is called to do something. Maturity inevitably comes to those who are doing, we *become* mature, and it is not something that just happens overnight.

Some Scriptures related to the gifts

Romans 12:6-8

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

"To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues."

1 Corinthians 12:28

"And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues."

Ephesians 4:11-12

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

2. The Importance of Teaching – Week 2

In his book, “I Believe in Preaching”, John Stott maintains that it is an exceedingly important gift to the Body of Christ. It is important because it is used over all the other gifts. The apostle, pastor, evangelist and prophet all need to be able to teach.

The word teacher is the Greek word “Didaskalos” which means instructor, doctor or master.

The Great Commission in *Matthew 28:19-20* “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Highlights the following:

- We are to make disciples, not converts. People must be taught about their salvation in Christ, but also about the Lordship of Christ in their lives.
- People are saved out of many differing theologies and convictions about religions. They do not immediately know the truth about God and this must be taught to them.
- When we are born, we needed teaching in every area of life. This is similar when we are born-again.

Mandate of the church

The mandate of the church is:

- Ministry to God
- Ministry to one another
- Ministry to the world

In light of this, we need to ask ourselves the following questions:

- How do we minister to God unless we take the scriptures and find out what God says?
Romans 12:1
“Therefore, I urge you, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship.”
- How do we minister to one another?
- How do we minister to the world?
Nicodemus John 3:10
“ you are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things?”
Even the teachers of the Law in Jesus time were ignorant of the coming Kingdom of God.

A final example is seen in *Matthew 6*, the Lord’s Prayer “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

The coming of the Lord’s Kingdom means making the rule of God effective in the lives of people and then making it effective through their lives, so that the will of God is done on earth. *Matthew 6:10* “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” **This is accomplished by teaching.**

Things we need to look at if we want to teach

- **Our Theology**-How we understand God determines how we relate to God and to people. It affects how we make decisions in life, who we marry, how we use our money, how we parent etc.
- It is not just having doctrine but having sound doctrine. We can all have a certain belief but we need to make sure our belief is based on the truth of the Word of God.

In reality, not everyone will pioneer church plants or use their teaching gift in that type of arena, but you may be required to teach your children, or in a life group context, you may teach at children's church or help an inquisitive colleague at work. Some of you may even write books on the topic. Do not limit yourself to just getting up in front of the church.

How to approach teaching

According to the Oxford Dictionary, to teach is to "enable or cause by instruction and training, give instruction to, educate"

How do you teach a gift that is supernaturally imparted?

Nobody is gifted with the full measure of the gift. Jesus, who is the embodiment of all these gifts, at twelve years old was astounding the teachers of Israel. It says though, that even He grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men. *Luke 2:52 "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."*

- When we are gifted, we have a propensity and ability to grow in the gift, but it requires us to develop, grow in stature and operate in it etc.

Paul writes to Timothy in *2 Timothy 2:15 "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."*

- You need to do your best. Perfection is not expected, just your best. In the King James Study Bible, this is described as, "labour, diligence and effort." We need to work at being better.
- Present yourself to God. Our preparation is before God and must not be to impress men.
- Approved. Is our offering acceptable and pleasing to God? Does He approve of the standard of our preparation and teaching?
- Rightly divides (dissects/cuts straight) the Word of Truth. This includes expounding the Word and making it easy for people to understand, as well as concentrating on which key concepts and ideas to emphasize and include.

How do we practically meet these requirements?

- **Pray**-Asking God to show you what to say and what to leave out. This is like preparing a good meal, you do not use the same amount of ingredients and just lump them all together in a big pot. You only need a little of some ingredients and much more of other ingredients.
- **Read commentaries**-Read as many as possible. You can also study the bible's footnotes. This gives us boundaries/banks to operate within. This makes us less likely to preach heresy.
- **Understand**-Try to understand the context, who wrote it, to whom and some history eg. Hebrews was written to Hebrew Christians who had lost their temple worship and priests. What was peculiar to these times was that there was persecution and famine.

If we know this, we are able to avoid spiritualizing scripture. We will also not just pick the verses that we like, and want to hear. This type of “Promise Box” Christianity is dangerous. An example of this is *Jeremiah 29:11* “*For I know the plans I have for you,*” declares the LORD, “*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*” This example is applicable today and it is not inconsistent with the New Testament. However we also first need to understand that it was addressed to the People of Israel that had been exiled in Babylon. It is also useful to know whether a particular scripture is descriptive or prescriptive. If it is descriptive we must be careful not to make a doctrine out of it. For example, the choosing of the 7 deacons in Acts 6. We do not make a doctrine that a church must have 7 deacons because we find this in scripture. Matthew 28:19 is prescriptive as it instructs us to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations

- **Read the text in different Bible translations-** This is to mine the timeless truths of Scripture in language of our day and not just 1600 King James English. Eg. Read Romans 12:1 in the Phillips Translation, Prov 29:18 in The Message, and 2Tim 2:15 in the Wuest New Testament.

There are 2 basic translation methodologies or styles used:

- Formal Equivalence
- Dynamic Equivalence

Formal Equivalence- This is also known as literal translation. This is where translators attempted to render the exact words of original Hebrew or Greek. These, claim to be the most accurate but can fail to communicate the essence of what is being said.

Dynamic equivalence-This is translation done thought for thought, rather than word by word. This way is not necessarily less accurate.

Difficulties with Translations

Examples:

- A. *Luke 18:13* “*But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast in remorse and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’*” In the Zambian language of Chokwe, to “beat one’s breast” is the action of congratulating oneself. This is the opposite of what Jesus meant, and so in this context, they said that the tax collector “beat his brow” in order to communicate correctly what Jesus was implying.
- B. In the Philippines, repeating what you are saying, means that you are unsure of what you are saying. Every time Jesus says, “Truly, truly, I say to you,” it is communicated to them that He is unsure of what He is saying, rather than that He really means what He says and that we should pay attention to it.

- **Do a word study-**Use a Hebrew/ Greek Lexicon (dictionary) this is explained in more detail in the third session.
- **Find your own conviction-**Make sure you have an understanding of a topic and are biblically convinced of it eg. What is your view on creation taking six literal days or do you think this refers to ages? Do you believe in an old earth and a new creation? In this regard, it would be good to get hold of some material by Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, who list several views in their book *Doctrine, What Christians Should Believe*. On page 96 of this book 5 different views are put forward as examples:

1. The earth is young but appears old.
2. The earth appears old because it was made mature, like Adam was.
3. The earth appears old due to the Genesis 6 to 9 flood. This flood covered the earth universally, compressing the geological layers and rearranged the topography greatly.
4. The earth is in fact old and the days mentioned in Genesis 1 and 2 are not literal 24 hour days but rather extended periods of time.
5. The earth may be, or likely is, old. Then in six literal days God prepared the earth for the creation of mankind and on the sixth day made the first man and woman.

With this creation example in mind we need to know what we consider “open-handed” issues and what are “closed-handed” issues? Open handed issues are the 5 examples given above on the way God created the earth. We can have a conviction on any one of these and it does not need to cause division amongst us. A closed handed issue would be that God created everything, it did not evolve. Genesis 1 tells us clearly that God created.

- We need to be able to reasonably defend our position from scripture.
- We need to be taught from scripture by the Holy Spirit.

*1 John 2:18-29 “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. **But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.** I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is what he promised us—eternal life. I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him. And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.”*

You have an anointing (chrisma) of the Holy Spirit. This is a special endowment to understand and perceive all things.

In John 14 and 16 it talks about the ministry of the Holy Spirit, which is to take truth from what is of Jesus and make it known to us. We can hear and learn from the Holy Spirit.

- We need to be aware of what is going on in the world around us. Our teaching must be functional and apply to our realities. We need to stay relevant to our society and the times we live in.

3. How to do a Word Study – Week 3

Introduction

Teaching the truths of the Bible is about clearly laying out God's great truths for people to understand. In achieving this, there is no substitute for time spent preparing. We must take the necessary time spent in studying the Word.

It is necessary to look at the context of each Scripture. We need to understand there is a whole chapter around every verse, a whole book around every chapter, a whole Testament around every book and a whole Bible around the Testaments. It may seem like a major task – understanding the whole Bible context! How do you begin to comprehend what the whole Bible says in relation to each verse? One has to start somewhere – begin to work your way through the whole Bible. Take one book and start to read through it today. At the time of this writing, Northpoint has a daily Bible reading plan included in our monthly calendar. You may want to work through that – at the end of one year you will have read through the entire Bible.

Starting to look at the language of the Scriptures will broaden our understanding of their true meaning. If I read a medical or legal journal I might not be able to follow it, unless I learn to understand the medical and legal jargon, the names of the various parts of the body etc. Similarly, we need to understand the concepts which the Bible speaks about, in order to explain them clearly to others. Can you define Biblical terms like salvation, justification etc? Often we have an understanding of these concepts ourselves, but can you actually articulate them clearly to others? So, we need to learn to understand and be able to explain the terms we find in the Bible.

But it goes deeper than just understanding in our English context, because the Old Testament (OT) was written in Hebrew (with some Aramaic), and the New Testament (NT) was written in Greek. Some words in the original languages may have deeper meanings than one at first realises. For example, there is one word in English for “Love”, but many words in Greek. These include “Phileo” (brotherly love), “Eros” (love between a man and wife), “Agape” (unconditional love – a revolutionary term around the time of the NT, exemplified by God's love for us in Christ's atoning sacrifice), and more. When Jesus told us to love our neighbour in Matthew 22:37-38, He didn't ask us to Eros our neighbour!

So we see a good understanding of the correct Greek interpretation for specific words will help us to understand the NT. It is not absolutely necessary to get a degree in ancient Greek, although you can. But there are resources available for us to understand.

Can't I just check the dictionary?

English dictionary definitions are helpful but cannot be our ultimate resource for understanding a Biblical word. Read John 14:25-27. Jesus says He would give the disciples peace. “Not as the world gives do I give.” God doesn't give as the world gives. What is the world's sense of peace?

The dictionary will tell you that “peace” is an absence of war, state of quiet, absence of arguing. (I used the Oxford English dictionary). This is a passive, negative connotation – peace is mostly explained as a lack of something else.

In the Greek for this verse it's “Eirene”, which is connected to the Hebrew word, “Shalom”, which was used as an Israelite greeting - “Peace be with you”. It denotes harmony, tranquility, safety, well-being, health. Positive blessing. Even in turmoil, the one who walks with God can say, “it is well with my soul,” in the words of the popular hymn. Why because through Christ, we have reconciliation with God. Look at the context of the verses we read. Jesus is talking about sending the Holy Spirit. The Spirit promotes peace in our hearts because He brings us into relationship with God through

Christ. Do you see how much greater it is than “lack of war?”

How do I find the true meaning of Biblical words?

So how do we get to the true meaning of Greek and Hebrew words? Let's look at some steps.

- **Pray.** With faith, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the Word to you. Keep an open, honest heart.
- **Read in context.** Ask: Who is it written by, and to? What is the whole chapter and book about? Does it fall into the OT or NT? What does the whole Bible say on the topic? Reading it in context will already have given you a better insight into the true meaning.
- **Read in many translations.** Looking at good translations will give you an insight into how a word can be correctly interpreted. Theologians have said that if you read up to 6 or 7 good translations you will have a good feel for the original text.

Some good translations include NIV, ESV, ASV, and NKJV.

Good paraphrased versions include the Message, NLT and Good News Bible.

One example of a bad translation is the “New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures”. This was purposefully mistranslated to distort the true meaning of certain verses.

- **Strong's Concordance.** Look up the definition for the Greek word. You can also look up root words as well as related words. There is a full guide at the front of the concordance on how to use the concordance. Also, Esword software is available at www.esword.net, which includes concordance functionality and Greek and Hebrew dictionaries.
- **Read the portion in a study Bible.** Read the notes on the verses, introductions to the books of the Bible, articles etc.

Good study Bibles include the ESV study Bible, the NIV study Bible and the Spirit-filled Life Bible (NKJV)

- **Read a good commentary** or three.
Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible is available for free online.
- **Other good resources:** Nave's topical Bible, a good Bible dictionary. I use Zondervan's Compact Bible Dictionary. There are many other fine resources available.
- If you want to go deeper into a topic, you can do an “**exhaustive study**”. This includes all of the above, plus you can use your concordance to look up and examine every time a Word occurs in the Bible, in context.

If teaching is a calling for you, invest in some of these resources. Some can be costly – trust God to provide for you if this is something He wants you to do. Ask for these as gifts. When you start building up your own reference library, use it – don't let it gather dust on the shelf.

We will now look at some examples of how getting to the deeper meanings of a word can open up the whole passage into a very rich and rewarding experience.

Examples of word meanings in 2 Peter 1

To start with, read 2 Peter 1:1-12. This will give context to the reading. Peter is encouraging Christians everywhere with the overwhelming blessings we have received in Christ. From verse 5 onwards he urges us to add certain characteristics to our faith – virtue/goodness, knowledge, the list goes on. Why? In verse 8 he explains that if we add these things to ourselves - if we earnestly work on these areas, we will be effective for Christ. We won't just make it into heaven by the skin of our teeth, as it were (see 1 Cor.3:10-15), but we will have a rich entrance into heaven (2 Peter 1:11).

So let's look at some of these characteristics which must be present in our lives in increasing measure. I have obtained the following information from the methods above.

Faith v5

The Greek word is “pistis” – belief or trust, confidence. What you have faith in determines whether your faith is effective. The world has a kind of romanticised version of faith, in which you are supposed to believe or trust in yourself, love, family, or just hope for the best. Biblical saving faith on the other hand is trust in the person of Jesus, the truth of His teaching, and the redemptive work He accomplished at Calvary. See 1:1.

Faith is not merely intellectual, but total active commitment to Jesus as Lord. The word implies that action based on trust may follow.

The whole of Christianity is about trusting less and less in yourself, and more and more in Christ.

The opposite of faith is unbelief stemming from pride and is the supreme and unforgiveable evil.

The word “Faith” is not used much in the Old Testament, maybe 5 times with related words such as “Belief”. However, OT guys exemplified faith, even though they mentioned it far less. By faith they slayed giants! Fought and defeated armies! Worked miracles, Etc.

How do we get our faith to this effective level, of slaying the giants in our own lives – the real-life issues we all face? Well, according to this passage, we must add the following characteristics.

Goodness v5

Greek “Arete”. Virtue. This is not a weak human idea of goodness, like mere acts of kindness, being kind to the dog, helping old ladies across the street, etc. It is moral goodness. Strength, ability. Excellence. We know that God is good and it implies taking on His good attributes in our behaviour.

One proper translation is “manliness”. Men: “Man up”. In “Maximised Manhood”, Edwin Louis Cole talks about how manliness is equal to Christlikeness. It talks about decisiveness. Character. Stability. Ladies: In Proverbs 31 it talks about the “virtuous woman” – a woman of ability. The word used there is related to this Greek word “arete”. The Hebrew is “hayil” – valour, capability, skill.

This is a military term. The idea is of an army heading out to battle.

If you're mixing this with faith you're now getting ready to take on giants! But wait, there's more. Next we add:

Knowledge v5

Greek: "Gnosis". Understanding. Science. Study.

"Theology" is not a bad word. Here we are encouraged to study God's word. The word "Theology" comes from Greek "Theos", meaning "God", and "Logos", meaning "Word". Literally it means word of God. We must study it and arm ourselves for battle.

There is another Greek word translated as "knowledge", found in the same passage in verse 2 and 3. This is "Epignosis", which is also rendered as knowledge and understanding but it's more about insight, and knowledge by inference. Relational knowledge. Both of these are important: "Gnosis" and "epignosis". We must know God – this is supremely important. It is the basis of our faith and Christian walk, having a relationship with God. But we also need to know about God. Study Him, study His Word, learn His attributes, His characteristics. This is for everybody, not just for a select few theologians.

Fools hate knowledge (Prov.1:22). Fear of God is beginning of knowledge (Prov.1:7).

Knowledge of God will prevent us from going off half-cocked and thinking we are doing His work where actually we are causing more damage than good! We must humbly study His word with faith.

Self control v6

Greek: "Enkratea". Temperance. It talks of the discipline of armies to obey orders. It comes from "enkratos", "Within" + "strength". If we have self-control we will have protection against sin. We are not called to always be reacting to our circumstances, but acting under orders like good soldiers. This, too, prevents us from going off half-cocked.

Perseverance v6

Greek: "hypomone". Steadfastness, stability, patient continuance. Endurance, patience, long-suffering. It comes from "hypo" + "mone", "By remaining". Abiding in Christ will help us to persevere in all circumstances. See John 15:1-8, and 1 John 2:5 and 6.

The point is, it's no good having these traits (faith, goodness, knowledge etc) for one afternoon and then falling away. We need to persevere in them, and in fact increase in these traits to be effective.

Godliness v6

Greek: "Eusebeia". Comes from "Eu" + "sebo", "Well-reverent", devout, God-fearing. It speaks of piety, religious duty. Being a man or woman after God's heart. Doing what is fitting for children of the light. Realise: you are a child of God! What is expected of you as such? Holiness, righteousness.

In doing all these other things don't lose sight of God. Don't become puffed up. Be cleansed. Be reverent - worship God! This is fulfilling the first mandate of the church, to "love God".

Brotherly kindness v7

Greek: “Philadelphia”. Charitableness. Fellowship. Being of the same purpose as your fellow Christians, worshipping together. Showing love to the family of believers. Friendliness.

Fulfilling the second mandate of the church to “love one another” and teaming up to tackle the forces of darkness as an army!

Love v7

Last but not least. This is the nature of God, and the heart of Christianity. Expressed in what Jesus did for us at Calvary. It is the greatest commandment. Why is this left to last in the list? It unites all Christian virtues/characteristics. See Col. 3:14 - “Above all, put on love.”

The Greek is “Agape” – unconditional love. Love for God, men and even enemies. This is incompatible with love of the world. (1 Jn. 2:15). It is demonstrated by obedience, submission, generosity, sacrifice. This is true “charity”, which is how the word was interpreted in older translations.

It includes the third mandate of the church to “love the world”, and save the lost. Actually it includes all three mandates!

Note: all of these attributes, from faith onwards are given by the Holy Spirit – some are listed as fruits of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-26. Even studying the Word is only effective under the power of the Spirit. Also, all of these are attributes of Christ. As we become more Christlike, we demonstrate these more and more in our actions and lifestyles.

4. Practical points in the delivery of the teaching/preaching – Week 4

At the end of the second session we asked for a volunteer to prepare a 5 minute teaching on the Breaking of Bread that would be taught in this final session. The teaching would be constructively critiqued by the group.

At the end of the third session some homework was given also to be discussed in this final session. The work was to define the word Propitiation as found in 1 John 2:2 and 1 John 4:10.

Having done these practical sessions, the following are some points that will be beneficial to remember when preparing a teaching and delivering it to your audience.

- **Honour the instruction you have received from whoever invites you to teach-** stick to the theme or Scripture passage that you have been asked to cover. It is not helpful to go on a tangent and teach on perhaps your favourite subject when there has been a series of teaching/preaching out of a particular book or chapter of the bible. It is like building a wall with clay bricks and deciding you will use change to using mud bricks. The wall will be rendered useless and this is a dishonouring of the privilege to bring a teaching and co-labour with what has been done before.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit to give you revelation understanding and a conviction about the text/topic-**teaching and preaching should be different to a lecture for instance. There must be an anointing of the Holy Spirit and a personal conviction for the subject. The anointing

comes from prayer and even fasting in preparation for the teaching. One cannot teach on the subject of Tithing with any conviction if it is not something you believe in and actually practice. Then it is just an offloading of information on what will quickly become evident to be an unresponsive and disbelieving audience.

- **Do as much research and scripture reading as possible in the available time-** become familiar with the texts you intend to use, be able to quote them without having to look them up. Read as many reliable commentaries on the passages involved in order to get a feel of the meaning. This will keep you in safe territory and prevent stretching scripture.
- **Have an outline/ structure to the message-** bringing a teaching with a string of points is not very elegant when delivered. A simple method that works well and that we use when writing a letter is an Introduction, a Body and a Conclusion.
 1. The Introduction: Communicate what you are trying to achieve with this teaching. What is the goal? For example, the goal of Session 1 of this course was to establish an understanding of the Gifts listed in Ephesians 4, explaining the passage in its context and also expounding on the meanings of some key words in the text.
 2. The Body: Here you can have a list of points that give structure to the message. 3 or 4 main points maximum will usually suffice for a preach more if it is a dedicated teaching time. Try and make the points flow towards a climax rather than firing a string of disjointed ideas. For example we are listing a group of practical points here but you will see the flow moves from the invitation to speak to the preparation, the writing of the notes and finally to the delivery.
 3. The Conclusion: This should point back to the Introduction's Goal. Connect the Introduction to the conclusion. If the goal was to bring a teaching on the Breaking of Bread as was done in the practical, then conclude by reminding the listeners what you intended to do at the beginning, summarize the points in the body without rehashing everything, and close with a challenging statement, or relevant quote.

Always bear in mind that there will be a cross section of people listening to the teaching. There will be mature believers, growing "young adult" sheep, infants in the faith, unsaved/unchurched, people visiting from a denominational church, even young children. It is important to cater for them all in terms of "feeding the sheep" and ensure that it is pitched at a level that even the children get you. It is not necessary to dumb down the teaching, if there is a word or term that commonly describes a doctrine or teaching, then use it but explain it at the same time.

Be careful not to criticize or belittle other faiths, if there is a particular untruth that you intend addressing, for instance the teaching of Purgatory as taught in the Catholic Church. Use scripture and logic to explain why the concept is false. Some religious practices are so ludicrous and belittling to their practitioners that some clever use of words can expose the downright stupidity of the belief system without being derogatory.

Common preaching/teaching methods include:

 1. Topical preaching. A single topic or theme is explored using usually more scripture to explain it. For example the Love of God, Tithing and giving, water Baptism etc.

Textual or exegetic preaching. Also known as expository preaching, this is where a passage of scripture is opened up, explained in detail, context, and how it applies today to us.
- **Practice the message beforehand-** where it is possible to do this is greatly increases confidence and clear thinking when it comes to the actual delivery. It also helps with removing points or ideas that do not work properly and helps to think of things that need to be included.
- **Use of humour and illustrations-** be careful not to use inappropriate humour, it can torpedo hours of preparation. Illustrations and quotations are useful as long as they are

relevant and understandable. One of the most compelling tools is the use of personal life experience. It builds trust with the listeners and personal stories reinforce our humanness. People can identify with the challenges of life that we experience and deal with. Be careful not to use too many of these or long stories, to the point so that it will drive the idea we are explaining home. The same goes for use of scripture, not too many, keep them short, quote them rather than look up and read. It saves time and accomplishes the same thing. Acknowledge the source of material, outlines and concepts that are not your own. Short of doing this is deception and tantamount to plagiarism. Acknowledging your sources indicates integrity and builds confidence that you have done your research.

- **When delivering the teaching-** watch your body language, be aware of distracting repetitive words or phrases used. This can be very distracting where eventually people are counting how many times the word “ok” is used and not what the teaching is about. Try to be conscious of repetitive hand movements, scratching your head, putting hands in pockets, or walking up and down too much.

Be conscious of the time. Note when you start speaking and constantly gauge whether you will get through the material with the time left. This is where practicing beforehand can help a lot.

Be flexible during the talk. Be aware of the surroundings and be able to make changes as you proceed. It may not be a good idea to make a joke about men wearing pink shirts only to discover Mike Tyson decided to visit the church on that day and happened to be wearing one too. On this point of flexibility, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and act on His promptings. He may drop a scripture in your heart that would break the yolk over someone needing to hear it. We need to be able to do that sometimes which means we need to be familiar with scripture.

Never use the pulpit to “teach someone a lesson”, vindicate yourself on some subject, or promote your pet theory. That is abuse of the privilege given to us. If we do not have the courage to confront someone on an issue of dispute, we should not hide behind the pulpit to do it.

Always remember to point people to Jesus, wherever possible build in some of the Gospel message into the teaching/preaching, invite people to receive Jesus.

Pray for the recipients of the teaching in the preparation time, ask god to reveal His heart for them to you. Respect and show love to the people that receive your teaching. Our heart should be to build them up in the faith and equip them to be all that Jesus wants them to be.

In closing this session here are three points from the Preaching Training Manual written by Terran Williams from Friends First Church.

- **Three basic observation about preaching:**

1. **Preaching is an amazing privilege.**

Listen to some of the people who say this...

J.H Merke d' Aubinge: ‘the sublimest calling which man can attain on earth is that of preaching the Word of God.’

Brian Edwards: ‘Preaching is God in action. It is the miracle of God communicating himself to a fallen world through the words of a fallen person.’

2. Preaching is a frightening responsibility.

P.T. Forsythe: '@With it's preaching, Christianity stands or falls.'

Bruce Milne: 'A church cannot live above its level of preaching.'

Terran Williams: '@Whenever I preach I remember that there are some non-Christians who are giving church just one try. And I remember that there are Christians here who are on the edge of walking away from it all.'

3. The preacher is the main ingredient in the in the preaching.

The state of the messenger is more important than the state of the message.

John Blanchard: 'It takes more grace for a preacher to listen to a message than to preach. 'If we are not good at hearing God speak to us through other preachers, can God trust us as his messengers?'

C.S. Lewis: 'The charge to Peter was 'Feed my sheep'; not 'Try experiments on my rats', or even, 'Teach my performing dogs new tricks.'

Vance Havner: 'A preacher who is too big for a little crowd would be too little for a big crowd'

W Sangster: 'A crowd is not an achievement, only an opportunity.'