

Distorting Word Meaning

by A.W. Tozer

The misuse of biblical terms and the simplification of truth for the masses can lead to religious confusion and undermine the Christian faith.

Scripture: Proverbs 30:5, 1 Corinthians 14:33

Topics: "Theological Clarity", "Importance of Language in Faith"

Description

A.W. Tozer addresses the alarming trend of distorting biblical word meanings, emphasizing that the misuse of religious terms often occurs without malicious intent. He warns that the shift in meaning of key theological words over generations can lead to confusion and misunderstanding within the church. Tozer stresses the necessity of maintaining fixed meanings for biblical terms to ensure clarity and unity in faith. He critiques the modern approach of simplifying Christian doctrine for broader appeal, arguing that it has only compounded religious confusion rather than alleviating it.

Transcript

The constant use of biblical terms to express non-biblical concepts is now common. Yet not everyone who misuses religious words is guilty of wrong intent. For two full generations the habit of emptying words of one meaning and refilling them with another has been taking place among the churches; so it is quite natural that many sincere ministers should engage in theological double-talk without knowing it.

Certain biblical words along with certain theological terms embody what God has given to be intellectually grasped by man. It is critically important that the same word should mean the same thing to everyone in a given language group. To permit a change in meaning is to invite disaster. To preserve life the physician and the druggist use words of fixed meaning common to both. How much more should the pulpit and the pew have a clear understanding about the words of eternal life.

The modern effort to popularize the Christian faith has been extremely damaging to that faith. The purpose has been to simplify truth for the masses by using the language of the masses instead of the language of the church. It has not succeeded, but has added to rather than diminished religious confusion.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/distorting-word-meaning/>

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