

What Do You Mean?

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer warns of the dangers of words losing their original meaning and being used in new ways that can lead to false ideas and a lack of understanding.

Scripture: Proverbs 18:21, Isaiah 5:20, Matthew 5:37, John 8:32, 1 Corinthians 14:33, Ephesians 4:14, Colossians 2:8, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, James 1:22, 1 John 4:1

Topics: "The Meaning of Words", "The Integrity of Faith"

Description

A.W. Tozer addresses the alarming trend of familiar words losing their true meanings, particularly in the context of religion and society. He points out that terms like 'freedom,' 'war,' and 'peace' have been redefined, leading to confusion and misunderstanding. This phenomenon extends to religious vocabulary, where essential words such as 'inspiration,' 'worship,' and 'conversion' have been stripped of their original significance. Tozer emphasizes the need for vigilance in understanding the true meanings of these words to maintain the integrity of the Christian faith. He calls for a return to the foundational meanings of these terms to avoid the pitfalls of modern reinterpretation.

Transcript

A disturbing phenomenon of the day is the new and tricky use of familiar words.

A "people's republic," for instance, is not a republic nor does it belong to the people. The word "freedom" now in most countries refers to something so restricted that a generation or two ago another word altogether would have been chosen to describe it.

Other words that have changed their meanings without admitting it are "war," "peace," "grant" (to describe the small sop the government tosses back out of the money it has previously taken from us), "right," "left," "equality," "security," "liberal" and many more. These have been emptied of their meaning and a different meaning has been poured into them. We may now read them or hear them spoken and, unless we are very sharp, gain from them a wholly false idea.

This phenomenon has invaded the field of religion also. In a predominantly Christian society such as prevails in the West the words of Scripture and of Christian theology have quite naturally acquired a fixed meaning and until recently always meant the same thing whenever they were used by educated and responsible persons. With the coming of the various revolutions--scientific, industrial, philosophical, social, artistic, political--fixed meanings have deserted religious words and now float about like disembodied

spirits, looking for but apparently never finding the bodies from which they have been exorcised by the revolutionists.

Among religious words which have lost their Christian meaning are "inspiration, "revelation," "spiritual," "fellowship," "brotherhood," "unity," "worship," "prayer," "heaven," "immortality," "hell," "Lord," "new birth," "converted"--but the list is long and includes almost every major word of the Christian faith.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/what-do-you-mean/>

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