I. The goal of a word study is to determine how a word was used by the author in accordance with the **normal usage of the word in the author’s time and culture**.
   A. The semantic range of the word in the original language – the possible meanings of the word
   B. The meaning of the word in the passage you are studying.

II. How to determine the meaning of words
   A. Select the important words in your passage for the focus of word study: central to the passage, theologically significant, unfamiliar, repeated.
   B. Basic word study procedure:
      1. **[optional] Develop a preunderstanding of the meaning of the word in English**
         a. Although the meaning of the English word is not the final goal, make sure you understand accurately what the translators were trying to say.
         b. Look up the word in an English dictionary to get the basic idea of the meaning of the word.
         c. Compare Bible translations to determine several approaches to translating the word.
         d. Look at footnotes in the translation: NASB (alternate translations); NET Bible (translation notes)
      2. Determine the underlying Greek or Hebrew word. This is the focus of your word study.
      3. Skim the entry on the word in a Greek or Hebrew lexicon to learn the semantic range of the word.
         a. A **lexicon** is a dictionary that lists words in one language and meanings in another.
         b. Read quickly to determine the range of possible meanings in the original language.
      4. Create your own list of meanings of the word as it is used in the Bible.
         a. The inductive study of every place a word is used in the Bible is the heart of a word study.
         b. Use a concordance or Bible software to find all verses that use the word. A **concordance** is an index to all places the word is used in the Bible.
         c. Read each verse and describe the word meaning as used in context.
         d. Summarize with a list of word meanings and verse references where each meaning is used.
      5. Consult word study books, Bible dictionaries and lexicons to determine subtle shades of meaning.
      6. Compare the list of word meanings you found in your inductive study to the word meanings listed in the lexicons and word study books.
      7. Determine which meaning best fits the context of the original passage you were studying.
   C. Study the word usage inductively first, so secondary sources will not color the way you understand the word. However, dictionaries and encyclopedias add important cultural, historical and linguistic information.
   D. You only need to follow all of these steps for words that are very important in a passage.
      1. For most words, it is sufficient to look up the word in a lexicon or commentary.
      2. For words that carry a lot of the weight of meaning in the passage, do this complete word study.
III. Inductively determining the range of meanings of a Greek or Hebrew word

A. An **inductive word study** looks at every verse where a word is used in the Bible (see step 4 above)

B. Studying the usage of a word in context throughout the Bible will give you a better feel for the word than reading articles in dictionaries and lexicons.

C. How to do a word study with a concordance
   1. Step 1: Determine the underlying Greek or Hebrew word.
   2. Step 2: Use a concordance or Bible software to find all verses that use the word.
   3. Step 3: Describe the word meaning as it is used in each verse.
   4. Step 4: Summarize with a list of all meanings of the word found in the Bible.

D. Step 1: Determine the underlying Greek or Hebrew word.
   1. Option 1: Look at the Greek or Hebrew Bible
   2. Option 2: Determine the word from a Bible commentary. Be sure to find the dictionary form (“lemma”) of the word, rather than the word in the Bible text itself.
   3. Option 3: Look up the English word in an English concordance and determine the Greek or Hebrew word used in the verse you are studying.
   4. Option 4: Use Bible software to determine the “lemma” or dictionary form of the word.

E. Step 2: Use a concordance or Bible software to find all verses that use the Greek or Hebrew word.
   1. Option 1: Use an English concordance
      a. Look up your English word in the concordance
      b. Find the verse in the concordance list and determine the Greek or Hebrew word used in that verse. The concordance will either list the word or a word number (Strong’s or NASB number).
      c. Find the word in the dictionary in the back of the lexicon.
      d. Write down all the ways the word is translated in your Bible version.
      e. Look up all occurrences of each English translation and collect a list of verses with your particular Greek or Hebrew word (or word number). Caution: Don’t list verses that use a different Greek or Hebrew word.
   2. Option 2: Use a Greek or Hebrew concordance
      a. This can be an “Englishman’s” concordance (Greek/Hebrew word index with verses in English)
      b. This saves time compared to an English concordance, because it lists all verses in one place.
   3. Option 3: Search for the word in Bible software.
      a. You can create an instant concordance of any word in any Bible.
      b. Greek and Hebrew words change their spelling depending on the grammatical function of the word in the sentence. This is **inflection** (cf. English plural and possessive nouns, verb tenses).
         1. Greek and Hebrew change the forms of words much more than English words. E.g. The noun that is the subject is spelled differently than the noun that is the direct object of the verb.
         2. If you search on the form of the word in the sentence (**inflected form**), you will only find instances of that specific form.
      c. The **lemma** is the dictionary form of the word.
         1. To find all occurrences of a Greek or Hebrew word, you must find the lemma of the word.
         2. If you search on the lemma, the Bible program will find all forms of the word.
      d. Logos offers several alternative approaches to search on the lemma (see the handout “Tips for Using Logos Bible Software”):
         1. Enter the Greek or Hebrew word in the search command.
         2. Search from the Greek or Hebrew Bible. Right click on a word, select “Lemma”, then “search This Resource”.
         3. The easiest way is to search on the Greek or Hebrew word from the English Bible text.
            a. Many English Bibles in Logos are **reverse interlinear Bibles** (currently NASB, ESV, NRSV, NIV, NLT, KJV, NKJV)
ii) Every English word is tagged with the Greek or Hebrew word that has been translated as well as other information about the Greek or Hebrew word.

iii) You can search on the Greek or Hebrew word directly from the English Bible.

iii) If you point the mouse to a word in the English Bible a balloon pop-up shows information about the Greek or Hebrew word.

(b) Steps:

i) Right mouse click on a word in a reverse interlinear English Bible.

ii) In the pop-up menu, select “Lemma” (the dictionary form of the word).

iii) In the pop-up menu, select “Search This Resource”.

iv) A Search window will open with the Greek word entered in the Find edit box and a list of verses with this word displayed in the English Bible you chose.

v) The word that translates your Greek or Hebrew words is highlighted.

(4) Note on Logos bug: Sometimes the verse list does not highlight the entire phrase that translates a Greek or Hebrew word

(a) E.g. 1 Thess 2:1 - only “in” is highlighted”; it should be “in vain”.

(b) Tip: Open a second Bible version to the search results (even the same version) to get the proper highlighting

e. A few tips

1. Important: If there are more than one word in the pop-up menu, this is because the English word translates more than one Greek or Hebrew word.

   a. If you don’t know the original languages, pick the longest word. The short one is probably an article (e.g. John 6:66 “disciples”)

2. There are lots of other things you can search on in that pop-up menu.

   a. “selection” = English translation

   b. “manuscript” = the form of the word in the Greek or Hebrew Bible text

   c. “lemma” = dictionary form

   d. “root” = the core aspect of meaning from which related nouns, verbs and adjectives were historically derived; can help you find cognate words

   e. And much more . . .

(3) Logos lets you paste your matching verses into a word processor:

   a. Click on the Resource Panel icon for the search results window and select Print/Export.

   b. To export to Microsoft Word, click on Microsoft Word under “Send to New Document”.

   c. A new Microsoft Word document is created with your search results in a nice table.

F. Step 3: Describe the word meaning as it is used in each verse.

1. Read each verse carefully in context.

2. Write a brief definition of what the word means in the verse.

   a. Don’t just repeat the word that the English Bible translators used.

   b. Try to distinguish shades of meaning. (e.g. if the word is “hand”, what sense of “hand” is meant?)

   c. Emphasize the meaning of the word, not the meaning of the verse.

   d. If you pasted the search results into your word processor, add the notes under the verse.

G. Step 4: Summarize with a list of all meanings of the word found in the Bible.

1. This is your personal “mini-lexicon” article on this word.

2. List all of the word meanings that you found. Include the verse references where a meaning is used.

H. Optional deeper study: Study related words

1. **Cognate words** come from the same word stem (sometimes called the root).

   a. e.g. related Greek noun and verb for love: ἡγάπη (agapē) and ἠγαπάω (agapāō)

   b. e.g. πληρῶ (plerō, fill, fulfill), πληρόμα (plerōma, fullness), πληρῆς (plerēs, full)

2. You can learn about the area of meaning of a rare word by studying the more common word.
IV. Sample word studies

A. πειρασμός (peiramos): “temptation”, “test”, “trial”
   1. Range of meanings (“mini-lexicon”):
      a. Temptation: an enticement to sin (Matthew 6:13 “do not lead us into temptation”)
      b. Trial: suffering (Acts 20:19: “. . . trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews”)
         (1) subcategory: suffering that develops character (James 1:2-3 “consider it all joy . . ., when you
            encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance”)
      c. Test to prove the genuineness of something: Trial that proves character (1 Peter 1:6: “you have
         been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith”; cf. James 1:2)
   2. Reference books
      a. Bauer’s Greek lexicon (BDAG): One meaning is missing: trial/suffering
      b. TDNT
         (1) Has a good diacronic study (especially Old Testament idea of temptation).
         (2) An extensive discussion of temptation
         (3) No discussion of suffering or testing of faith as a NT word meaning. Only acknowledges that
             the word can refer to testing in secular Greek.

B. μαθητεύω (matheteuo): “make disciples” in Matt. 28:19
   1. Since the verb only occurs 4 times in the NT, you have to study the related noun to clarify the
      possible meanings: verb (“become a disciple”, “make a disciple”): μαθητεύω, matheteuo; noun
      (“disciple”): μαθητής (mathetes)
   2. English dictionary meaning of “disciple” (noun) - Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed.:
      a. one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another
         (1) one of the twelve in the inner circle of Christ’s followers
         (2) a convinced adherent of a school or individual
      b. In the English dictionary it is only a noun.
   3. Bible dictionary (noun):
      a. The pupil of a teacher
      b. derived from μανθάνω (manthanō), “to learn”
   4. Bauer’s Greek Lexicon (BDAG):
      a. noun μαθητής (mathetes):
         (1) one who engages in learning through instruction from another: “pupil”, “apprentice”
         (2) one who is rather constantly associated with someone who has a pedagogical reputation or a
             particular set of views, “disciple”, “adherent”
            (a) of John
            (b) of Jesus
               i) particularly the Twelve
               ii) one of his larger group of adherents
               iii) a believer in Jesus, after Jesus’ resurrection
               iv) a martyr for Jesus (early Church Fathers)
      b. verb μαθητεύω, matheteuo:
         (1) to be a pupil (in Church Fathers)
         (2) to become a pupil or disciple (passive - deponent)
         (3) to cause one to be a pupil, “teach” (active)
   5. Inductive study with a concordance:
      a. Although my interest is in the verb, since the verb is rare, I will also study the noun.
      b. Noun (only representative verses listed – you should list all in your study):
         (1) A follower of John the Baptist (e.g. Matt 9:14; 11:2)
         (2) In reference to Jesus:
            (a) Any follower of Jesus during his earthly ministry (e.g. John 6:66)
            (b) Anyone who believes in Jesus (e.g. Acts 6:1)
            (c) One of the 12 apostles (e.g. Matt 11:1)
(d) “True” disciples – believers who love other believers (John 13:35), hold to Christ’s teachings (Jn 8:31) and bear spiritual fruit (John 15:8)

c. Verb (4 times in NT)
   (1) Active: make a disciple
       (a) make a person a believer in Jesus during the early church (Acts 14:21)
       (b) Also Matt 28:19 – the passage we are studying
   (2) Passive: become a disciple
       (a) a disciple of Jesus (Matt 27:57 – Joseph of Arimathea showed his commitment to Jesus by asking Pilate for permission to bury the crucified Jesus in his family tomb)
       (b) a disciple of the kingdom of God (Matt 13:52 – one trained to live for the kingdom)
       (c) Note the emphasis on a life commitment, not just faith in Jesus

6. Conclusion on Matt. 28:19
   a. The context suggests that the usage refers to “true” disciples, due to the command to obey all that Christ commanded (v. 20).
   b. We are not simply to help people to believe in Jesus, but also to teach them to change their lives so they live in accordance with his will.