

b. In making any distinction between permanent *content* and temporary *form*, we may suggest several principles to guide the interpreter:

- 1) Distinguish between what the author *prescribes* and what he merely *describes*.
 ie.: The Community of Goods in Acts - Is Luke describing or prescribing?
 or: The Baptism of Holy Ghost & Charismata in Acts - Descriptive or prescriptive?
- 2) Consider whether a biblical author is citing a *specific illustration* of a more fundamental principle. If so, does modern culture warrant the same application, or should the basic principle be freshly applied?
- 3) Consider any reasons given by the biblical authors for the commands given. Is there evidence for temporal limitation, or is the teaching (commandment) rooted in some trans-cultural reality (the nature of man, the nature of God)?
 ie. Paul's command concerning women based on creation order (I Tim 2:11-15)

C. Words and Syntax

We remind ourselves that the first goal of the interpreter is to reconstruct the *author's intended meaning*. To do this we must give attention to at least three areas: lexicography (the meaning of individual words), syntax (how words are combined), and logic (the principles of rational thought).

1. Lexicography/Word Study

This is a rapidly expanding and challenging field. Great developments have taken place in the field of theoretical linguistics which have only recently touched biblical studies. The crucial book which initiated much of the discussion was James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961). An important recent study is Moises Silva, Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).

- a. Purpose--to determine both the denotative and connotative value of a word. Denotation is the referential meaning. Connotation is the emotive meaning--what are the associations called up by this word?
- b. Problems: a brief list! See here the relevant chapter in Carson.
 - 1) The Etymological Fallacy--a word's meaning is determined by its origins (Carson calls this the root fallacy). We might also call it the Preacher's Fallacy. Illustrative of the ideas behind this fallacy is the statement by Trench that