

# “You Keep Using That Word”

**Introduction.** In the 1987 classic comedy *The Princess Bride*, the Sicilian Vizzini, played by Wallace Shawn, is constantly describing events he had not foreseen as “Inconceivable!” Eventually, his hired swordsman Inigo Montoya, the Spaniard, as portrayed by Mandy Patinkin, tells him, “You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.”

Similarly, there are several words for which the common usage simply does not match the meaning in scripture. For this reason, we will investigate six words that are commonly misused in the world and among the saints.

## ***I. “Anxious”***

- A. Many have the regrettable tendency to use the word “anxious” when “eager” is the more correct term. “Anxious” communicates worry or nervousness, and God’s people should not be characterized that way.
- B. We are taught by Paul to replace anxiety with peace (Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7). An “anxious” mind implies a lack of trust in God’s provision (Luke 12:22-31). The results can be disastrous (Proverbs 12:25; Matthew 13:22). It is possible to have an “earnest desire” without being anxious (Luke 22:15).

## ***II. “Proud”***

- A. Many are “proud” of their country, their branch of the military, their school, or their sports team. Gratitude for being part of something special or deriving pleasure from a sense of accomplishment are not the problem, but pride is.
- B. Jesus condemns pride as defilement (Mark 7:20-23). Pride does not originate with the eternal God, but with the temporal world (1 John 2:15-17).
- C. The exact opposite of pride — humility — is commanded on the faithful (Jeremiah 13:18; Micah 6:8; 1 Peter 5:5-6). Pride has harmful consequences, but humility is commended (Proverbs 11:2; 13:10; 18:12; 29:23). There is really only one exception to the rule against pride — boasting in Christ (Jeremiah 9:23-24; Galatians 6:14).

## ***III. “Hope”***

- A. Hopes and wishes are often mistaken for one another. A wish is merely a desire, a want, or a preference; hope is so much more. Hope is confidence in expectation. It is trusting anticipation.
- B. Hope is a proper fixation on the unseen, an awareness of something better that is to come (Romans 8:24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:19). The Christian’s hope is set on Christ’s coming and the heavenly inheritance (Titus 2:11-13; 1 Peter 1:3-5). Our hope is a sure and steadfast anchor based on the immutable promises of God. This is not mere wishful thinking (Hebrews 6:17-19).
- C. Of course, we are permitted to have hope about lesser elements too, but even then the word carries the meaning of realistic expectation (Romans 15:24; 1 Timothy 3:14). Wishes, too, are allowed, so long as we perceive the distinction between wishing and true biblical hope (3 John 13-14).

#### **IV. “Inspired”**

- A. Inspiration is often reduced to the equivalent of motivation or encouragement, yet its real meaning is far deeper. The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution may well be described as brilliant documents, but they are not inspired. Shakespeare may have been a talented playwright, but attributing inspiration to a witty rogue belittles the true meaning of inspiration.
- B. The original word in 2 Timothy 3:16 describing scripture means “God breathed” (cp. Jeremiah 36:2; Revelation 1:11, 19). Even the English word is translated for us: “inspiration” means “in spirited,” to put the Spirit in, to breathe in. This is what gives the word its power (Hebrews 4:12). Of all writings of all time and place, scripture, and only scripture, can be described this way.
- C. The source of any piece of scripture was never the man who penned it, but the Holy Spirit who moved that man to do so (2 Peter 1:20-21). We do not hold any other text in such regard, no matter how beloved. The breath of God is a life-giving force (Genesis 2:7). What God did to animate mankind, He likewise did to the words of the Bible.

#### **V. “Miracle”**

- A. Many of us have heard, and possibly even used the word “miracle” to describe a patient’s extraordinary reaction to medical treatment. Certainly some bodies and DNA structures make them prone to an amazing response to medication or other kinds of therapy, but this is not a “miracle”.
- B. A true miracle in the biblical sense is an event not explicable by natural or scientific laws, and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency. Over 40 times in the Bible, miracles were used to confirm the power and words of God and Christ (1 Kings 17:23-24; Acts 2:22; 10:38).
- C. True miracles have several characteristics. They were undeniable (John 3:1-2; 9:16), instantaneous (Matthew 8:1-3; 9:20-22; 20:30-34), complete (Acts 3:6-10, 16), diverse (Matthew 8:23-27; 14:22-33; Luke 5:1-11), and unstaged (Mark 5:25-29; John 9:1).

#### **VI. “Christian”**

- A. “Christian” is a word cheapened by its common usage. Scripturally, it is not an adjective used to describe something, so there really never can be “Christian” homes, “Christian” schools, “Christian” nations, “Christian” businesses, or “Christian” books. Correctly employed, the word is a noun, specifically a person. As used in the Bible, it is a far narrower word than most would prefer to think.
- B. According to its application in these verses, a “Christian” is a disciple, one who has been instructed. Given that the word is derived from the name “Christ,” it necessarily follows that a Christian is a disciple of Christ, one persuaded to follow Jesus (Acts 11:26; 26:28).
- C. The Master commanded that those who are His disciples be baptized (Matthew 28:19-20). Baptism is the means whereby one gets “into Christ” and has “put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). Not everyone who calls Jesus “Lord” is accepted by Him. It takes agreeing with His commands and obeying them (Matthew 7:21-27).

**Conclusion.** Words mean something. If we portray ourselves as people who respect the Bible, then our language should reflect proper biblical understanding. “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Proverbs 18:21), and our appropriate use of words will only draw people closer to the truth, not farther away from it.

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