

## The Importance of Proper Word Appropriation

I hope I won't be accused of straining at a gnat on this subject, but we love God's Word, and I've always felt it's important that we appropriate the meanings of words correctly. I was reminiscing about the good old days before the electronic age when I hauled around my Bible and one other essential book: my big, green Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.

And I do admit it would cause me to wince a little bit when a preacher would misappropriate a word, such as 'reins,' found 15 times in the Bible. It is easily misappropriated since it is not referring to the reins of a horse, which word actually comes from the words 'reign' or 'free reign,' or 'reign in,' which dates back to Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400). The Scripture usage of 'reins' is totally different, which figuratively or allegorically refers to the innermost part of man:

*Psalms 7:9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.*

From that word we get 'renal' as in kidneys. Ancient man looked upon the physical heart and kidneys in the torso as being the emotional center of man.

Strong's defines the Greek word nephros (#G3510) as: "of uncertain affinity; a kidney (plural), i.e., (figuratively) the inmost mind: —reins."

Another word meaning easily misappropriated is the figurative or allegorical portrayal of the Church as a beautiful, shiny apple. The apple of the eye, in the Bible, is an allegory for protection, not affection.

The word 'apple' means the pupil or the central aperture of the eye. Although God's people are indeed, the object of His affection, there are no references to 'the apple of his eye' to affection as an object of beauty, but instead of protection - as the pupil of the eye is protected with an eyebrow, eyelashes, and eyelids, as well as the continual tear ducts that provide fluid to keep it moist and clean.

*Zechariah 2:8 For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.*

So that scripture is interpreted as "For he that touches you gives a poke in God's eye"!

*Deuteronomy 32:10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.*

Protection - not affection.

*Psalms 17:8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,  
9 From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.*

Again, a euphemism for protection.

*Proverbs 7:1 My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.  
2 Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.*

As you protect and value your eyes, keep His commandments.

*Lamentations 2:18 Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease.*

Do not allow your eyes to quit weeping. In all instances, 'Apple' refers to the eyes.

Shakespeare's use of the phrase in his play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in Act III, Scene 2 also shows the phrase to be in reference to the pupil of the eye and not the object of affection:

Flower of this purple dye,  
Hit with Cupid's archery,  
Sink in apple of his eye.  
When his love he doth espy,  
Let her shine as gloriously  
As the Venus of the sky.—  
When thou wak'st, if she be by,  
Beg of her for remedy.

Interpretation: putting flower juice on Demetrius's eyelids.

“Your purple flower, hit by Cupid's arrow, sink into the pupils of this man's eyes. When he sees the girl he should love, make her seem as bright to him as the evening star. Young man, when you wake up, if she's nearby, beg her to cure your lovesickness.”

It is purported that Alfred (Alefred) the Great used the phrase in his Gregory's Pastoral. However, a search of 569 pages does not turn up even the word 'apple.'

Sir Walter Scott was one that we know that morphed the meaning from the eye to an actual apple of affection in his "Old Mortality" in 1816 unless he meant that he valued 'Poor Richard' as he does his eyes. He writes:

"Poor Richard was to me as an eldest son, the apple of my eye."

And while I've only covered two words here, hopefully this is better than an old adage that I have adopted, "a poke in the eye with a frozen carrot."

~JNR

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