

A review of grammar...
assembling words together to communicate ideas and concepts...

The principles of communication vary little among the different languages of the world. How the words are put together form the means by which ideas are conveyed. Let's examine some of those principles.

What is the **form** of the word or term?

The *form* of a word describes how it is put together. Examples:

1) "Just," is an adjective, which means, "righteous, honorable and fair in dealing or action, valid within the law."

2) "Justify" is a verb, which means, "To show or prove valid, absolve, to declare free of blame."

WARNING: Root words can help reveal the meaning of a word; however, few words retain their original meaning. In other words, this is a useful tool but not a definitive one. Example: "atone", which means, "to make amends for one's sin", is derived from "at" "one", which means, "in agreement." "At one God" is the equivalent phrase to "atone."

What is the **function** of the word or term?

The *function* of a word pertains to its use in a phrase; this specifically refers to the nouns (nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and prepositions) and verbs (verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, and interjections). Examples:

1) **Verbs** indicate the **action, mood, or tense** of nouns or pronouns. Notice the mood and tense.

-Please pray. He is praying. Did he pray? He prayed. Pray!

2) Modifiers such as **Adjectives** modify a noun or pronoun and reveal a **quality** such as "*forgiving* God (Ps 99:8)" or **Adverbs** modify a verb, adjective, or another adverb and reveal a **quality** such as "pray *without ceasing*; (1 Thes 5:17)."

3) **Prepositions** used with a noun, pronoun, adjective, or verb, reveals a **relationship** such "by, from, with, over, against, according, etc."

-"...pray *to* your Father who is in secret,... (Matt 6:6)" conveys a relationship or direction.

-"...pray *at* all times... (Eph 6:18)" conveys a relationship of time.

-"... , but *in* everything by prayer... (Phil 4:6)" conveys a relationship of method.

-"...joyful in My house *of* prayer (Isa 56:7)" conveys a relationship of origin.

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4) **Conjunctions** are used to **connect** words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. Often overlooked, these can be road signs that tell you what you must observe to understand the word, term, or phrase in context.

- "but" indicates a contrast and tells you read the phrase or sentence before it.

- "and" or "also" indicates an addition.

- "because" or "for" indicates a reason.

- "as" indicates a correlation.

- "therefore" or "then" or "consequently" indicates a result or conclusion.

- "when" or "until" indicates time.

- "that" indicates purpose.

Example of **conjunctions**: Joshua 1:8

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, (what does this mean?)

But you shall meditate on it day and night, (*but*-contrast)

so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; (*so that*-purpose)

for then you make your way prosperous, (*for then*-result)

and then you will have success (*and*-addition).

5) **Interjections** are **exclamatory** words that can stand on their own such as "why? Oh! etc."

It is clear that **the principles of grammar affect the meaning of words**; however, instead of focusing on the form or function of the word as this note summarized, understand how the word, term, or phrase is used within the context of the sentence. Challenging at first, the discipline of improving your observation skills will become a reflex with practice and result in a more satisfying Bible study.

TIPS:

1. Look for relationships of the word or term.
2. Look for a pattern. Anything repeated? A sequence or order? A cause and effect? A question and an answer?

For more information on a grammatical analysis in Bible study from a real scholar, read Roy Zuck's book, [Basic Bible Interpretation](#).