

How to Study the Bible

The National Church Life Survey says that of all those who attend a church in Australia, some (91%) believe the Bible is the Word of God.

“Based on their responses, different positions can be identified. The ‘Literalist’ group, those believing that the Bible is to be taken literally word for word comprising of 24%. The ‘Contextualist’ group, those believing that the Bible has to be interpreted in the light of its historical and cultural context accounting for 32%. The ‘Traditionalist’ group, those believing that interpretation must take place in light of the churches teachings and traditions made up 35%.”

7 Important Principles about the Bible

1. God Has Spoken — Gen. 1:1, 3; Hebrews 1:1-2.
2. The Bible is a Revelation of God’s Will — 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Cor. 14:37.
3. The Bible Has Been Accurately Translated — (Original Old Testament was written in Hebrew and a small amount of Aramaic while the New Testament in Greek.)
4. The Bible is Infallible/Inerrant — Psalm 19:7
5. The Bible is Complete and Final — Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:15-17
6. The Bible is Understandable — Romans 15:4; 10:17
7. The Bible is Authoritative — 2 Peter 3:16



The Bible is made up of 66 different books that were written over a 1,700 year period by more than 40 kings, prophets, leaders, and followers of Jesus. The Old Testament has 39 books, the New Testament has 27.

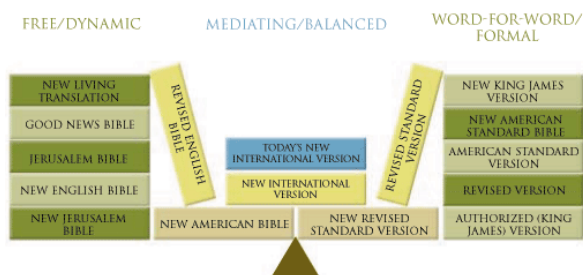
Choose a Translation of the Bible

There are two methods of translation that are popular today. The first is to translate the Bible literally. The second is what is called dynamic equivalency where the translator attempts to convey the essence of what has been written.

There are also a number of paraphrases available. These are not true translations, but rather an attempt to put the Bible in today’s language.

Popular English Translations

TYPES OF TRANSLATIONS



King James Version — Excellent literal translation dated from 1611; though there have been many revisions.

Revised Standard Version — Dates to 1929 and is a good literal translation not widely used today.

New Revised Standard Version — An adequate fairly literal translation updating the RSV.

New American Standard Version — This is an excellent literal translation that was updated in 1995. It is quite accurate, but sometimes is a bit difficult to read. It lacks the poetic quality of the KJV, but is extremely literal.

New International Version — By sales this is the most popular English translation today. It is a dynamic equivalency translation and is easy to read, but sometimes is not as accurate as other translations. New updated versions use “gender inclusive language.”

New King James Version — Update of the KJV which is a good and literal translation.

English Standard Version — A literal and readable new translation in the tradition of the KJV and RSV.

Paraphrases — The Message and Good News Bible are popular paraphrases. They are useful especially for those who are not proficient in English, but they also have serious weaknesses.

Serious Bible students will want more than one translation to compare. Nearly every translation is good enough to lead someone to Christ and to help them grow in Him, however some translations are certainly “better” than others. Personal preference can help decide what translation is best for one’s own use. The very best translation is one that you will use.

Helpful Bible Tools



1. Concordance
2. Bible Dictionary
3. Maps and Atlases
4. Various Translations
5. Books and Commentaries
6. Time set aside to study
7. A place to study
8. Pencil and Paper

Good Study Habits

1. As you read consider Who is Speaking, Who is Being Addressed, What is the Occasion of the Dialogue.
2. Think — Ask, compare, contrast, explore, concentrate, memorize, read out loud.
3. Mark in your Bible — Underline, highlight, take notes.
4. Take notes, make outlines, write questions.

Something to Think About This Week

Rules of Interpretation

1. Most passages will have only one message. (1 Cor. 1:10)
 2. The most simple and obvious meaning of any passage is probably the correct one.
 3. Interpret passages in harmony with their context.
 4. No passage in the Bible will contradict another passage.
 5. Use easily understood passages to help explain more difficult ones.
 6. Study all passages on any given subject. (A topical Bible might be helpful here).
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Remember that God's Word is lamp for our feet and a light for our path. (Psalm 119:105) While we might call the Bible a textbook, it is much more. It is the Word of God. It is His revelation to us. It provides us with comfort, and joy, and hope.

Don't read the Bible to only learn facts. Read and study the Bible to better understand God, to see His love displayed to you, and to learn more about the spiritual journey you are on.

Questions —

1. What is the value of the Bible? (1 Peter 1:23; Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 2:2)
2. Where did the Bible originate? (Exodus 24:12; 2 Samuel 23:2; Jeremiah 1:9; 2 Peter 1:21)
3. How should we treat the Word? (Deut. 4:12; Rev. 22:18-19; Colossians 3:16)

Record Your Answers to the Questions at Bottom of the Page