

What will I use my Bible for...

Will you read this Bible for morning devotions, as part of a small-group study, for your own study, or for preparing to teach others?

Basic questions you may want to ask are:

- ◆ Do I want a study Bible with a lot of notes and maps or a reading Bible with few notes?
- ◆ Do I want a Bible portable enough to put in my coat pocket or something more substantial?
- ◆ Where will I be reading this Bible?
- ◆ Do I understand the wording?

It is important to choose a Bible that you can understand. The more confusing the language is, the less likely you are to read it regularly.



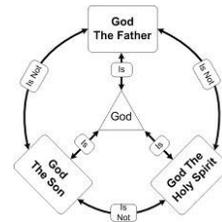
Compiled by PD Bravard

Read More About It:

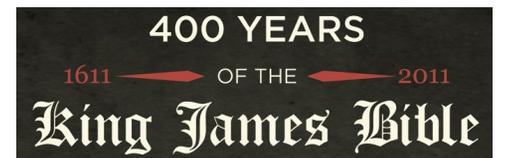
The Bible in English Translation: An Essential Guide
by Steven M. Sheeley and Robert N. Nash, Jr.
(Nashville: Abingdon)

This pamphlet does not cover every translation of the Bible. It covers those that are most widely used by Protestants and Catholics. The CEV, GNT, REB, NAB, NJB, NLT, NRSV and the NIV are outstanding translations when absolute literalness is not required. When it comes to notes, it is hard to beat the NIV Study Bible. Almost every verse has a note concerning it. My own personal favorite, although lacking on the notes, is the New American Standard Bible. This is an outstanding translation as well as a very readable Bible.

(I would strongly recommend against the New World Translation (NWT) and the Inspired Version (IV), as they are self-serving and often inaccurate).

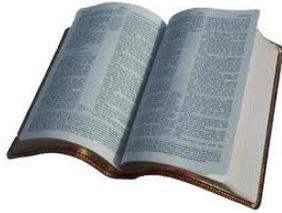


Which Bible to Read When?



Bible Uses:

Study Bibles usually filled with helpful footnotes, explanations, cross-references, diagrams, timelines, outlines and



maps. Great use for scholars, students and those seeking more information. A good study Bible can be found in most translations

Reading Bibles usually have just the text of Scripture with few notes. These are ideal for those who get distracted by lots of footnotes and devotional material. Available in a variety of translations.

Devotional Bibles usually have prayerful reflections and/or study suggestions for leading small groups of women or men or individual study, found in most translations.

Chronological Bibles attempt to place the various parts of Scripture in rough chronological order. These are helpful if you want to know which prophet was preaching when which king was king. What is lost, however, is the sense (unity) of each book as a whole. These Bibles are helpful if you are trying to read through the Scriptures in a year or less.

Bible Translations:

New International Version (NIV): A very readable translation that is relatively easy to understand developed by more than one hundred scholars working from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. It reads biblical and modern the same time. Good to use for Studying and individual reading.

New American Standard Bible (NASB): A conservative translation that is unique among other versions in that it represents the most thorough attempt to produce a verbal equivalence translation of the ancient biblical text. Great for serious studying.

New King James Version (NKJV) / King James Version (KJV): The KJV was the English Bible for hundreds of years. Some of the language is so beautifully poetic that it has persisted in familiar forms of the Lord's Prayer and the 23rd Psalm. However, the "Thee/Thou" language can be confusing and words mean different things than they did in the 17th Century. The New King James Version uses more currently discovered manuscripts and updates the "Thee/Thou" language. One notable of the NKJV is that it puts in italics words that are not in the original Greek (for the New Testament) but that are necessary for translation; plus, it maintains the poetic character of Scripture—especially in the Psalms. Good to use for Studying and individual reading

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV): A revision of the Revised Standard Version (RSV) using newer manuscripts. This achieves a more modern translation that is somewhat similar to the language of the KJV and still attempts a word for word translation of the manuscripts.

New Living Translation (NLT): A translation that is designed to impact the life of modern readers that the original text had for the original readers. This is accomplished by translating entire thoughts (rather than just words) into natural, everyday English.

New American Bible (NAB): The NAB is the official version that Roman Catholics in the United States use. Comparable to the **New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)** which is based quite extensively on a French translation. Both contain extensive notes and commentary. Great for serious studying and comparison.

Good News Bible (GNT) and New Living Translation (NLT): This is a good version in simple language. Both this version and the CEV (below) are written at the elementary level, to make it accessible to large groups of people. Using paraphrase, which means that it attempts to convey the meaning of the text rather than a more literal (like a letter to a friend) translation. These Bibles can give you a fresh individual perspective on a familiar phrase or passage.

Contemporary English Version (CEV): The CEV is similar to the Good News Bible in that it attempts to convey the sense of the Scriptures using simple language.

The Message: This version is an attempt to convey the sense of Scripture in contemporary language and metaphors also using paraphrases. As a general rule, it is better to stay away from paraphrases for serious study. Although very helpful for getting "another take" on familiar passages.