

How to choose a Bible



Guide



ROOTED
in God's word

Part of Gold Hill's 'Take a Step' discipleship pathway.
www.goldhill.org/disciple

The aim of this guide is to help you choose the right Bible for you. We tend to do a lot of research before we buy a car or a phone or a new TV contract, so why not also give proper thought to the Bible we choose to use as well?

Why does it matter?

The Bible is fantastic! It is God's revelation of Himself to us, and if we want to keep moving forward with Him then getting rooted in the Bible is an absolute must. But nowadays the Bible comes in all different shapes, sizes and styles. That's great news because it means there's bound to be something that is just right for you, but can also make it hard to decide. So here are some ideas.

Physical or Digital?

This choice is entirely up to you, and is really about how you prefer to read.

Paper Bibles

There are lots of options for physical Bibles. What size (large print, pocket-size, slimline to fit in a work bag)? What kind of cover? Do you just want the text of the Bible, or other tools printed alongside (like getting a Study Bible, or a Journalling Bible with space for you to write and draw in the margins, or a Bible laid out as a 'Bible in A Year' with suggested readings each day)?

Digital Bibles

For a digital Bible, we recommend the **'YouVersion'** app, on all platforms. As well as the text, it has reading plans, the ability to make notes, and can send notifications to prompt you.

What version should I choose?

The Bible has been translated from its original language into thousands of languages, and in the English language there are lots of different versions. There is no such thing as 'the best version'. Mike Pilavachi (leader of Soul Survivor church) says the best version of the Bible is 'the one you will actually read', and we agree!

The basic difference between translations is that different emphasis or focus has been applied by the people translating. Some focus on strict word-for-word translating (which can be great for studying but flow a little less smoothly when reading). Others focus more on readability, so aim to capture the meaning of the text well by using modern ways of writing and speaking. Here are a few versions we would particularly recommend (but there are other great versions too!).

NIV (*New International Version*)

This great translation is simple and tries to balance accuracy and modern readability. It is very widely available, and is the version we tend to use most at Gold Hill.

NRSV (*New Revised Standard Version*)

This is the version used by most academics, because it stays close to original languages in structure and style. So it is great for study but doesn't flow as easily just to read.

NLT (*New Living Translation*)

This is a very readable version of the Bible, using simple English. That does not mean it loses the meaning or isn't accurate, but the focus is on flowing well for the reader.

AMP (*Amplified Version*)

This version 'amplifies' the meaning of the text by putting (in brackets) an expanded meaning of certain words and phrases. This helps expose the meaning in great ways.

(Note: '**The Message**' is also really helpful. It isn't strictly a translation of the Bible, as the author brilliantly paraphrases the meaning rather than putting the text into English. It is an excellent tool alongside your Bible, but we wouldn't recommend as your main version.)

What do I do now?

If you think you have an idea of what you'd like, we recommend heading to eden.co.uk/bibles. This has lots of Bibles, and a great search facility to filter and find what's best for you. If you still aren't sure and would like some help, please do talk to us and we'd love to help you more.



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