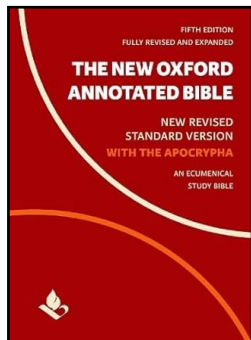


What Bible is best for you?

By Pastor Steve Scott

Regardless of the translation, Bibles are variously designed for:

- Reading
- Informal study
- In-depth study
- Devotions
- Age-appropriateness
- Ease of portability
- Faith-sharing



What works best for you is a matter of personal preference. You may find that different Bibles are useful for different purposes.

We can't possibly offer a definitive guide to all the types of Bibles that might be helpful to you. This is a representative sample.

What to look for in a study Bible

Helpful contents include any combination of the following, depending on your interest:

- Introductions to each book or section of books (the Bible contains 66 separate books)
- Biographical summaries of key figures
- Verse-by-verse study notes
- Essays and articles
- Concordance (indicating where certain words can be found)
- Topic index
- Timelines, maps, definitions
- Reading plans
- Typeface and size that is readable and comfortable for you

Bibles for in-depth study

THE NEW OXFORD ANNOTATED BIBLE

THE HARPER COLLINS STUDY BIBLE

THE NEW INTERPRETER'S STUDY BIBLE

These Bibles, usually featuring the NRSV/ NRSVue translations, include extensive notes; in-text maps, charts, and diagrams; supplementary essays on translation, biblical interpretation, cultural and historical background, and other general topics.

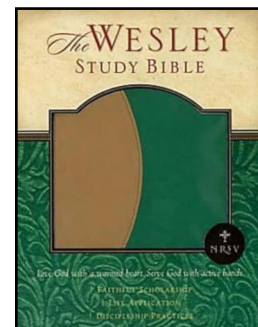
These Bibles are used by scholars, clergy and undergraduate and graduate students. That doesn't mean they're harder to understand; their study material is just more exhaustive and historically focused.

Other Bibles for study

WESLEY STUDY BIBLE (NRSV, CEB)

NIV STUDY BIBLE

These Bibles focus on helping readers grasp the meaning of biblical passages. As such, they come from a particular theological perspective. The Wesley Study Bible (offered in two translations) includes indexed explanations of core terms and key concepts in Methodism, and its study notes reflect the Methodist tradition. The NIV Study Bible is widely used across a number of traditions.



Bibles for ease of reading

You may wish to have a Bible by your bedside or in your briefcase, backpack or luggage that you simply enjoy reading. For this purpose, you may choose a Bible with few if any study notes, which make a Bible heavier and thicker. If a translation draws you into regular reading, it's a good one for you. We like the new NRSVue gift Bible. It has

What Bible is best for you? (continued)

a comfortable feel with very readable text style and size.

Compact, pocket or trimline Bibles, though of smaller type size, are designed to be very portable.

Bibles for age-appropriate reading

You'll find several Bibles designed to be used by students, youth and children. This is less dependent on the translation than on the types of study notes and illustrations that are included. Some examples:

SPARK BIBLE (NRSV)

The Spark Bible is intended to help young people explore the Bible in a personal way. Cargill began using this version in fall 2023 for its Confirmation students and children's ministries. It's appropriate for younger readers but isn't juvenile, which makes it useful for a wide range of readers, including adults who are new to the Bible.

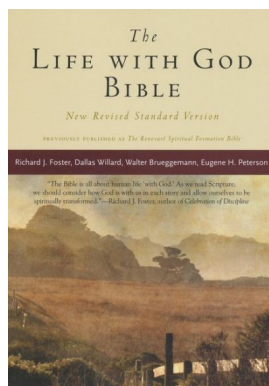
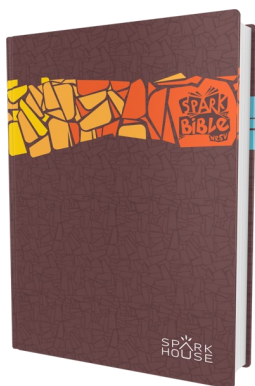
Good for anyone new to the Bible, old or young

NIV TEEN STUDY BIBLE

This Bible includes study helps and questions for reflection intended to connect with teens and speak to relevant issues in their lives.

DEEP BLUE KIDS BIBLE (CEB)

Amplly illustrated with lots of features for younger readers. Cargill UMC has also used this version for young Sunday school students.



Devotional Bibles

Similar to study Bibles, these Bibles are designed to guide you in a particular area of your life.

THE LIFE WITH GOD BIBLE (NRSV)

The abundant study helps in this Bible are intended to connect readers with their daily lives (what is called "spiritual formation"). It has excellent introductions to sections of the Bible and individual books, as well as a very thorough topical index. All of the material is arranged around the theme of the "With-God Life."

Pastor Steve's favorite

THE LIFE RECOVERY BIBLE (NLT)

Though designed for people seeking recovery from addictions, the articles, verse-by-verse study helps, reading plans, and unique indexes are helpful for anyone seeking to connect more deeply with God.

Pastor Amy's favorite

THE INSPIRATIONAL STUDY BIBLE (NKJV)

This Bible contains articles on several faith topics and offers "life lessons" written by the popular spiritual author Max Lucado.

LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE

Designed to help readers apply biblical teachings, it comes from Lifeway, the publishing arm of the conservative Southern Baptist Convention.

Other Bibles

THE FAITH-SHARING NEW TESTAMENT WITH PSALMS (NRSV)

This soft-cover pocket-size Bible includes a section on how to share faith with others.

THE MESSAGE

This is a very popular paraphrase, not a translation (see Page 2). Eugene Peterson's work is intended to read and sound like contemporary English. An interesting resource to compare against more scholarly translations.

What Bible is best for you? (continued)

THE GREEN BIBLE (NRSV)

Just as “red-letter editions” of the Bible highlight Jesus’ words in red, this version highlights in green ink passages that teach about God’s care for creation. Includes essays by theologians and conservationists.

EVOLUTION OF THE WORD (NRSV)

Edited by Marcus J. Borg, this presents the books of the New Testament in the order they were written, with extensive introductions to each book. It helps trace the chronological development of Jesus’ message and the movement called The Way as it evolved following the Resurrection.

THE NEW TESTAMENT: A TRANSLATION

David Bentley Hart attempts to do the opposite of most translators: to present the New Testament as literally as possible from what are often the fragments of original texts, without “augmentation or correction.”

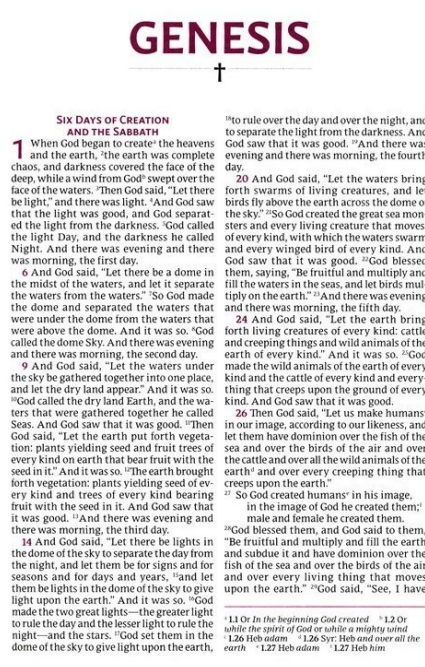
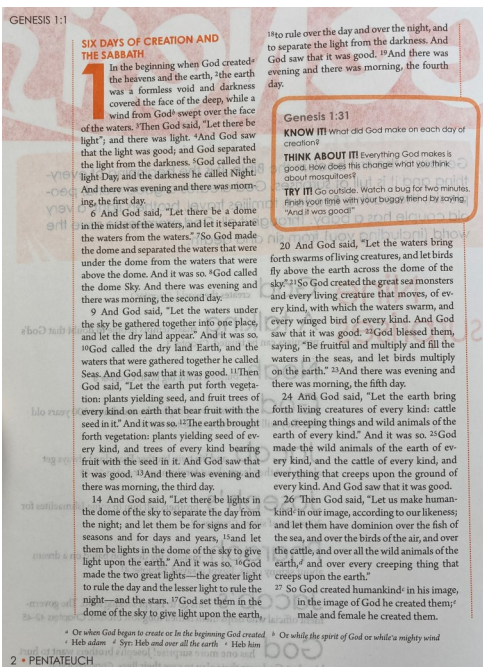
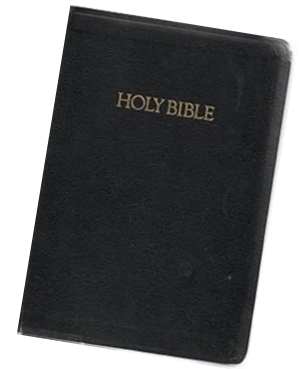
STUDY HELPS TO THE HOLY BIBLE: NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

If you type the above into an Internet search engine, you can likely find a copy of this straightforward, very useful Bible. The 27-page introduction includes simple, helpful essays on the history and authority of the Bible and major themes in Scripture.

SPECIALITY BIBLES

Some Bibles are designed for:

- Journaling & drawing
- Note-taking (with wider margins)
- Large print
- Parallel Bibles (containing two or more translations side-by-side)



From left: Genesis 1 from the Spark Bible, the NRSVue Gift Bible, and the New Oxford Annotated Bible NRSV

Where to find a Bible

Brick & mortar stores such as Barnes & Noble and Books-a-Million carry large selections, but often in only a few translations (skewed toward the evangelical market).

Used bookstores often have many versions. Check out:

- An area shop
- AbeBooks.com
- Powells.com

Best bets for new Bibles online:

- Cokesbury.com
- Christianbook.com
- Big-box online retailers such as Barnes & Noble and Amazon

Or contact us at Cargill United Methodist Church (see back page). If you're in person at Cargill UMC, visit the Welcome Center.



**Your word is
a lamp to my
feet and a
light to my
path.**

Psalm 119:105

NRSVue

The Bible online



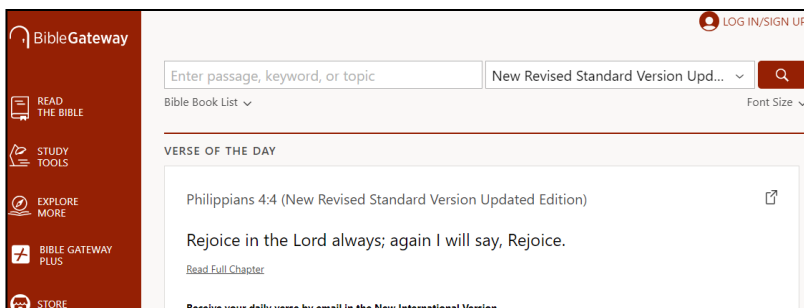
App

BIBLE | YouVersion

The app is available in 60 languages and offers access to the Bible in 71 English translations.

You can bookmark passages and add your own notes. It also includes reading plans, topical studies, verses of the day, prayer exercises and social networking if you desire.

For smartphones and tablets. Look for the icon above in the App Store or the Google Play Store. Available for Apple (IOS) and Android.



Web sites

BIBLEGATEWAY.COM

The entire Bible — searchable by passage, keyword or topic — in more than 60 English translations, nearly 20 Spanish translations, and dozens of other languages.

BIBLEHUB.COM

Also offers numerous translations in several languages. Includes an “interlinear” feature to search original Hebrew and Greek words for in-depth study.

LECTIONARY.LIBRARY.VANDERBILT.EDU

Churches such as Cargill UMC occasionally select Scriptures for worship following a three-year rotation of passages found in the Revised Common Lectionary. This site features reading for the current week and current season. They can be sent to your mobile calendar.