

SUGGESTIONS ON SELECTING A NEW BIBLE

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When purchasing a new Bible, whether for yourself or for someone else, you first need to ask yourself three things: What special needs do I have? What are my preferences? How will I use it?

For instance:

- Do you need a Bible with large print?
- Are you particularly interested in a Bible with lots of study helps, such as maps, a concordance, a dictionary, commentary notes, and outlines of each book? And concerning study helps, remember that while the text of the Bible is the inspired Word of God, all study helps you find in a Bible (summaries, outlines, footnotes, chronologies, etc.) are the work of human editors- they are not necessarily without error. Be sure to treat the study helps as genuine scholarly attempts to help you get the most from your Bible study- just remember that they're the products of very human authors.
- Will you use the Bible primarily for devotional reading (In this case your main concern is to find a Bible that is easy to understand; a paraphrase, like the Living Bible, or contemporary language version, like the NIV or CEV, may be best.) or for Bible study (In this instance your primary interest should be to get a Bible that is very accurately translated from the original languages; a more literal, word-for-word translation such as the NAS would be preferred)? In either case, *select a translation that **you** can understand!* No matter how nice a Bible you get, **if you can't understand what it says, it does you no good.** Select a couple of verses- a familiar one (like John 3:16) and one that is particularly difficult to understand (like Hebrews 6:4-6).
- Do you like to make notes in your Bible? If so, look for a wide-margin edition.
- Do you like to read in parallel columns (normally two columns to a page), or do you prefer a paragraph format (usually only one column to a page; more like reading a regular book).
- What is your budget? (Bibles can run anywhere from \$10 to \$100 or more, depending on the version, the edition, and the binding. *Genuine* leather is the most expensive, but lasts longest **by far**. Bonded leather is not nearly as durable as genuine leather, but will wear relatively well for "Sunday-only" use. Hardcover is the least expensive, but somewhat cumbersome to carry and use; it often will not lay open by itself during study.)

While everyone has their own favorites, my personal preferences are:

TRANSLATIONS:

- for *accuracy* of translation: the **New American Standard Version**
- for ease of reading: the **New International Version** or the **Contemporary English Version**

BIBLES:

- The Open Bible, Study Edition*** (by Thomas Nelson Publishers): available in NAS
 - study notes, outlines, concordance, maps
- NAS Side-Column Wide-Margin Reference Bible*** (by Holman): available in NAS
 - easy-to-read sized print, wide margins for making notes, concordance, maps; paragraph format
- UltraThin Reference Bible*** (by Broadman & Holman): available in NAS and NIV
 - thin, easy to carry size, concordance, maps; double column text, center column references
- The Promise*** (by Thomas Nelson): available in CEV
- International Inductive Study Bible*** (by Harvest House Publishers): available in NAS and NIV
 - a BIG Bible; large print, plenty of room for notes; study note commentary, concordance, maps
- The Life Application Bible*** (by Zondervan): available in NIV
 - a large Bible; copious study notes, outlines, timelines, maps, etc.; emphasis on application to life
- The NIV Study Bible*** (by Zondervan): available in NIV
 - very similar in study aids and format to the *Life Application Bible* above
- The Student Bible*** (by Zondervan): available in NIV
 - study notes, concordance, maps, etc.; *specifically designed for older youth* (high school-college)
- The Teen Study Bible*** (by Zondervan): available in NIV
 - study notes, concordance, maps, etc.; *specifically designed for younger youth* (ages 12-16)

Lastly, remember that prices can vary **greatly** depending on where you make your purchase. Personally, unless there is a good sale locally, I order almost most of my theology and religion books either from **Christian Book Distributors** (<http://www.christianbook.com>) or **Amazon** (<http://www.amazon.com>). You can normally find discounts of 25-40% off retail.