

BENEATH THE INK

HOW TO READ — YOUR — BIBLE

Which Bible Translation
Should You Use?

EPISODE 2 STUDY GUIDE



Most people do not struggle with believing the Bible. They struggle with knowing which one to read.

Not all Bibles read the same. And that's not an accident. How you choose your Bible shapes how you understand Scripture.

How you read the Bible shapes how you live it.

CHECK YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

Before you choose a Bible, you're already bringing expectations.

Reflection Questions:

When I think about Bible translations, I usually feel:

Have I ever thought one translation is the "only right one"? Why?

What do I want most from a Bible? *(circle all that apply)*

Accuracy Readability Simplicity Depth Familiarity Study

When I see different wording in translations, I usually:

UNDERSTANDING TRANSLATION TYPES

Not all translations are trying to do the same thing, and that matters

Types of Bible Translations

WORD-FOR-WORD	THOUGHT-FOR-THOUGHT	PARAPHRASE
IN NASB AMP ESV RSV NKJV	CSB NRSV NAB NJB NIV NCV NIRV	GNT CEV TLB MSG
WORD-FOR-WORD	THOUGHT-FOR-THOUGHT	PARAPHRASE
IN - Interlinear Bible NASB - New American Standard Bible AMP - Amplified Bible ESV - English Standard Version RSV - Revised Standard Version KJV - King James Version NKJV - New King James Version	CSB/HCSB - Christian Standard Version NRSV - New Revised Standard Version NAB - New American Bible NJB - New Jerusalem Bible NIV - New International Version TNIV - Today's New International Version NCV - New Century Version NLT - New Living Translation NIRV - New International Reader's Version	GNT - Good News Translation (also Good News Bible) CEV - Contemporary English Version TLB - The Living Bible MSG - The Message

GENTRY MINISTRIES

Word-for-Word (Formal Equivalence)

- Focus: Accuracy to original wording
- Strength: Precision
- Challenge: Can be harder to read

Thought-for-Thought (Dynamic Equivalence)

- Focus: Clarity of meaning
- Strength: Readability
- Challenge: Some interpretation involved

Paraphrase

- Focus: Simplicity and accessibility
- Strength: Easy to understand
- Challenge: Less precise

KEY QUESTION:

What is this translation trying to do?

(Not just: Do I like how it sounds?)

Two Ways Things Go Wrong

Not every Bible problem is the same problem.

CHANGES MEANING

⚠ Alters the Text Itself

(Not just wording — actual meaning)

- ✗ **New World Translation (NWT)**
Jehovah's Witnesses
- ✗ **The Passion Translation (TPT)**
Interpretive Paraphrase
- ✗ **The Queen James Bible (QJB)**
Edits on Sexuality
- ✗ **The Inclusive Bible**
Gender-Inclusive Language
- ✗ **The Mirror Bible**
Paraphrase with Theology Added

↓
Text is being rewritten.

Bottom Line: "You're no longer just reading Scripture —
— you're reading someone's theology."

FRAMES MEANING

🔍 Shapes How You Read It

(Scripture is intact — but the lens is added)

- 📖 **The American Patriot's Bible**
(Historical & Political Lens Added)
- 📖 **The Reformation Study Bible**
(Theological Lens — Reformed Perspective)
- 📖 **The Jesus Calling Bible**
(Devotional Lens & Agenda-Driven Notes)

↓
Text is being shaped.

Key Question:

"Am I aware of the lens I'm reading through?"

Bottom Line: Helpful tools — but not neutral.
They might guide your interpretation.

The Goal: Faithful Translations + Clear Awareness
Read the Word God gave you — not someone else's version of it.



Some differences are **translation choices**. Others are **interpretation choices**.

Have I ever confused clarity with compromise?

Have I ever assumed different wording means something is wrong?

SCRIPTURE CHECK

2 Timothy 3:16 - *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*

2 Peter 1:21 - *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

Psalms 119:160 - *The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.*

God's Word is perfect. Our translations are faithful attempts to communicate it. God inspired the original writings. Translations are how we faithfully access them today.

DISCERNMENT CHECK

Not everything labeled "Bible" functions the same way.

Ask:

Is this translating the text, or reshaping the meaning?

Is this helping me understand or guiding me toward a conclusion?

HEART CHECK

Am I choosing a Bible based on:

- What is easiest
- What I grew up with
 - What confirms what I already think
 - What helps me grow and understand

— INK IT IN —

What would it look like for me to read Scripture with both: clarity AND faithfulness?

SLOW IT DOWN

Pick one verse and compare translations:

Example: John 1:14

Write what you notice (not what it means yet):

Translation 1:

What stands out?

Translation 2:

What stands out?

Translation 3:

What stands out?

What stays the same across translations?

What changes?

What does that tell you?

3 - DAY CHALLENGE

Each day this week:

- Read the same passage in 2-3 different translations
- Write down what stands out
- Notice what stays consistent

🚫 Do NOT rush to conclusions

🚫 Do NOT assume differences = error

👉 Learn to observe before you evaluate

You don't need:

- the perfect translation
- more confusion
- more opinions

You need clarity

Because how you read the Bible shapes how you live it.

