

I've Got Jesus...

WHICH BIBLE TRANSLATION IS BEST?

Carrie's quick answer: The one you will read.

The longer answer gets, well, complicated. Different translations strive to hold fast to different priorities. This doesn't make one better than the other; it just makes them different.

Some aim for a literal translation of the words, word for word, throughout the entire Bible. This presents at least two problems for modern readers. First, much of the Bible was written for an audience who spoke in word pictures, a vibrant language where words conveyed deep meaning. Second, word definitions change over time, even in our modern culture.

Others aim for more of a thought translation. Conveying the meaning of the text takes precedence over the literal words. The problem is that this can simplify the text to the point that it loses some of its intended meaning.

Finally, some Bible versions are paraphrases rather than actual translations. A few work from solid translations and they strive to communicate the meaning of passages, but the summarization can imply meanings that are unusual or less popular among theologians.

So what does Carrie recommend? Start with the one you will read and don't worry about its priorities. As Bible reading becomes a habit, branch out into a second version that catches your attention. And, over time, a third or fourth or fifth.

Want more guidance? Here are some of Carrie's favorites.

Carrie grew up on and best knows the New International Version which blends the strict word-for-word translation with the overall thought translation process. It's the version that sits on her desk and she most often reaches for when studying the Bible.

Word Translation

New American Standard Bible

Thought Translations

Contemporary English Version

The Message

New Living Translation

Paraphrases

The Living Bible

The Story