

# EXPLORING THE BIBLE | 2 • HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

SMALL GROUP STUDY | EASTSIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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## WEEK 2: Exploring the Bible | How To Read The Bible

- How is it going for you to set aside time to read the Bible? Share your biggest challenge.

### Play the teaching video for Week 2.

- [You Tube](#)
- [Vimeo](#)

### Discussion Questions

- Why is it important to start our Bible study time with prayer? How do you think prayer affects your understanding of Scripture and connection with God during your Bible study?

*Put this into practice by inviting the Holy Spirit to grant you the wisdom and perspective to see what God wants to reveal to you through his scripture.*

- When reading the Bible, we want to practice exegesis (“to draw out”). This means to let meaning come from the text in its original language and historical context. This is the opposite of eisegesis (“to lead into”) which is importing one’s own subjective interpretations to the text, unsupported by the text itself.

Cherry picking and improperly quoting bits of scripture out of context to support one’s opinions, wishes, or agenda has been going on since the beginning. Can you think of examples of this?

- What factors should you consider when choosing a Bible translation?
- Let’s compare some different translations. Ask one person to read the following verses from the King James Version, another from the New International Version, and a third from The Message. Have everyone follow along using [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com). You can write down anything that sticks out below.
  - [Acts 2:38-41](#)

- [Ephesians 2:8-10](#)

- [Romans 3:22](#)

- [Philippians 2:1-4](#)

Discuss what you thought of the different versions.

- It's vital to approach scripture with deep humility, asking God to help us understand how he sees things. We are prone to holding onto the opinions and biases we have created from our experiences to determine what we believe or don't believe.

In what ways have you experienced God drawing near to you as you engage in Bible study, and how has it impacted your spiritual growth?

## Going Deeper | Put into Practice

- Here is a list showing some of the more popular Bible translations and where they land on the word-for-word to thought-for-thought spectrum. At the literal-version end of the spectrum are the Interlinear translations of the Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic wording. At the other end are paraphrased versions designed to get the meaning across in contemporary English.

If you are interested in delving further into the meaning of a particular word or phrase, the word-for-word versions will be of most help to you. The thought-for-thought and paraphrase versions make reading the Bible smoother. Reading scripture in multiple versions can help you understand the range of meaning implied from the original Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic words and phrases.

### **Word-For-Word**

Translators look to stay as true to the Hebrew and Greek word meanings as possible. These can be the least readable or understandable in modern language.

Interlinear  
New American Standard Bible (NASB)  
Amplified Bible (AMP)  
English Standard Version (ESV)  
Revised Standard Version (RSV)  
King James Version (KJV)  
New King James Version (NKJV)  
Young's Literal Translation (YLT)

### **Thought-For-Thought**

Here, translators are looking to make the sentence readable and seek to express the meaning through modern text.

Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)  
New Revised Standard (NRSV)  
New American Bible (NAB)  
New International Version (NIV)  
Today's New International Version (TNIV)  
New Living Translation (NLT)  
Common English Bible (CEB)  
Contemporary English Version (CEV)

### **Paraphrase**

Paraphrase translations try to share what the original author said, even if the exact words are not used. The focus is on making the meaning easy for readers to understand using more straightforward language.

The Living Bible (TLB)

J.B. Phillips New Testament in Modern English (PHILLIPS)

The Message (MSG)

- This week, select three sections of scripture to compare in different versions. Using one of the tools listed below for each section of scripture, try one translation from each of the three types. Write any differences below.

1.

2.

3.

- Check out some of these Bible study websites. All of these sites have mobile apps you can download as well.

BibleGateway.com

For a parallel Bible view, click [here](#).

BibleHub.com

For a parallel Bible view, click [here](#).

BibleStudyTools.com

For a parallel Bible view, click [here](#).

Bible.com

- After looking up the scriptures, which translations do you like? Share why you chose the ones you did.
- Prepare for reading the scriptures with prayer. Remember [James 4:8](#): “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” Ask God to calm your mind and help you focus. Ask him to help you understand and see what he wants you to see as you study the scriptures.