

In 2002 I heard a college professor who taught Greek tell us the two different ways Bibles are translated. The first way is "literal." This means you will read a word for translation according to the Hebrew in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament. In a Bible translated "literally" you would read "Jesus opened His mouth and then began to speak."

The second way of translating is according to the "meaning." In a Bible translated this way you would read "Jesus began to speak." Note the words "opened His mouth" are missing. But we already know Jesus had his mouth open because He was speaking.

We call Bibles that are translated literally "formal equivalence." And Bibles translated according to their meaning are called "dynamic equivalence." But I much prefer using "literally" or with "meaning" as that's the way I first heard it.

An example of a Bible verse translated literally is found in Matthew chapter five verse two. Here you read "He opened His mouth and He taught them saying." In a Bible with meaning you would read "this is what He taught them." Note the words "He opened His mouth" are missing, but once again you know what's taking place.

Two Bibles that are translated literally are the 1611 King James Version or KJV and the New American Standard Bible or NASB.

The KJV translation was started in 1604 and finished in 1611. It's still popular today, but unfortunately, it was translated with what I call "old English." In the text you will find words like "tarry along the way" and "ye" instead of the word "you." Naturally we don't talk like this anymore. And for this reason it's the most difficult Bible to read and understand.

The NASB is also a Bible translated literally. This Bible was first published in 1971 and updated in 1995. The translators removed most of the old English. This translation is much easier to read than the KJV. And like the KJV it's been translated literally.

Today we also have the New King James or NKJV and the Modern English Version or MEV. The NKJV was translated in 1975 and updated in 1984. The MEV was translated in 2005. Both of these Bibles have removed the old English. Translators worked with the King James Version because it was a bestselling Bible at the time. Their aim was to make it easier for people to read a Bible that was a bestseller and translated literally. So if you're looking for an easy to read Bible translated literally you could do either a NASB, NKJV or MEV.

One of the Bibles translated with "meaning" has a bit of history attached to it. In the early 1960's Kenneth Taylor was having family devotions. He was using the King James Bible to do this. One day his daughter asked him "Daddy, why can't they make a Bible everyone can understand?" Taylor agreed with his daughter and translated what is called "The Living Bible."

The Living Bible is what's known as a paraphrase. Taylor would read a few paragraphs and summarize them in modern day English. He used the King James Bible to do this as it was a

bestseller at the time. This Living Bible was popular for many years, but today most of these editions are now out of print.

In 1996, Tyndale House Publishers, a company founded by Taylor felt they could do better than The Living Bible. So they did an entirely new translation of the Bible called the New Living Translation or NLT. This Bible is an actual translation from the original languages and not a paraphrase like The Living Bible. The NLT has a sixth grade reading level. It has undergone a few revisions since 1996 and if you're not familiar with the Bible, this would be an excellent translation to start with. It's my personal favorite. In this Bible you will read "Jesus began to speak."

In 1965 the New International Version or NIV had its beginnings. The word "International" comes from the fact that the translating committee had people from many different countries and denominations on the translation committee.

The NIV is a Bible that has been translated both literally and with meaning. The translating committee went with what they felt best depending on the scripture. The NIV like the NLT is an easy to read Bible. The NIV had a 7-8 grade reading level. Like the NLT the NIV is also an excellent choice if you're not familiar with the Bible.

In 2004 Holman Christian Publishers released the Holman Christian Standard Bible or HCSB. This Bible has been renamed the Christian Standard Bible or CSB. Translators of this Bible also translated both literally and with meaning. But they chose to go a step further. They translated God's personal name "Yahweh" rather than "Lord" because they felt it was a more accurate description. They also used the word "Messiah" because they felt it would assist our understanding of God's promise about "Jesus the anointed one, the Messiah."

The English Standard Version or ESV done by Crossway Publishers is not an entirely new translation. This Bible was done in 1998 and is a revision of the Revised Standard Version of 1952. The ESV is a literal translation and it did have a minor revision in 2007. The RSV of 1952 is hard to find and no longer a bestselling Bible.

Lastly, we have the Common English Bible or CEB. The CEB was translated to reach a wide variety of people. This Bible was released in 2011. Its main tagline is that this Bible is "relevant, readable, and reliable." The CEB has been translated both literally and with meaning like the NIV and CSB. The purpose of the CEB was to use words the "common man" would use.

In the CEB you will find the words "Son of Man" in the Old Testament has been replaced with "human." And in the New Testament where Jesus used the Greek version of this term of Himself the CEB uses the phrase "the Human One."

Okay, so how do you choose a Bible that's right for you?

1) Find a scripture you know and compare it to different translations. A scripture most of us recognize is the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. Look at a few translations and see which one you find the easiest to

read and understand. Do you like one translation over another? And would you prefer a Bible translated literally or with meaning?

2) Once you've decided on the translation you need to decide how much you "want" in your Bible. Today's Bibles come for reading or for study purposes. They also come in various sizes. You can get them compact to carry with you or with large print for easier reading. Just about all Bibles today have red letter in the New Testament. That's all the words of Jesus in "red" print.

Perhaps you're looking for a study Bible? Study Bibles can come with charts, foot notes, short essays, maps and more. Do you need study helps to better understand the Bible? Maybe you want a Bible to help you study different topics found in it. Each study Bible has different features in it. Decide what's most important to you if you want one.

3) Decide how much you want to spend. Bibles can come in paperback, hardcover, imitation leather, and leather. Today's imitation leather bound Bibles are pretty sturdy and come in a variety of colors. A common form of leather is bonded leather. Standard leather colors are black and burgundy but you can find them in other colors. And if you're looking for a better quality leather, you want genuine leather. It's heavier and a step up from bonded leather.

Hopefully I haven't confused you! Many years ago there were few Bibles out there. But today we have hundreds of choices. So if you're still confused please stop in! Let me help you make the choice that's right for you.