



"I have but to say, the Bible is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong."

—Abraham Lincoln

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New and Improved? A PC Bible

Most readers will probably not be aware of the latest raging controversy over the Bible. The International Bible Society and Zondervan Publishing are releasing the New Testament portion of *Today's New International Standard Bible* (TNIV), and it has received nothing but scathing reviews by conservative Christian groups, primarily for its attempt to be gender-neutral.

For instance, most occurrences of "brethren" or "brothers" have been changed to "brothers and sisters." In the TNIV, [Hebrews 12:7](#) now reads, "Endure hardship as discipline; [God](#) is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their parents?" obscuring the use of "sons," "son," and "father" in the Greek. In addition, Mary is not "with child" but "pregnant." Overall, Zondervan has produced a politically correct Bible to please the loud and boisterous feminist lobby. Maybe this Bible's acronym should be PCNIV.

Lost in the hubbub over the TNIV is the release of another new translation, *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (ESV), by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. It is an update of the 1952/1971 Revised Standard Version (RSV). The ESV's translation committee purposefully and diligently endeavored to produce a Bible as free of interpretation as possible, calling it "an essentially literal translation" ("Preface," p. viii). "[W]e have sought to be 'as literal as possible' while maintaining clarity of expression and literary excellence" (ibid.).

While no translation is perfect, the ESV is good, with no outstanding problem areas. Being translated by trinitarians, one might think the inserted material at [1 John 5:7](#) would remain, but to the translators' credit, it is absent—without even a footnote! They note the manuscript variations in Mark 16 and John 8 but leave the passages in. On the negative side of the ledger, the translators compromise a little on gender language, rendering "any man" as "anyone" and "men" as "people" in instances where the original languages refer to both men and women. But they have retained "brothers" for *adelphoi* and "sons" for *huioi*. They have also retained the generic "he" (instead of "he or she" or "he/she") and "man" (instead of "humanity" or "human kind").

All this begs the question, "Why the need for so many new translations?" The ultimate reason—for the publishing companies—is financial. Bibles are bestsellers, and they sell well if they are targeted to certain niche groups. Thus we have kid's Bibles, teen Bibles, women's Bibles, men's Bibles, prophecy Bibles, African-American Bibles, Spirit-filled Bibles, etc., etc.!

A better reason for all the new translations is the sense that many of the newer versions lean toward one extreme or the other in their perspective and translating philosophies. One camp attempts to produce the "most accurate" translation, while the other shoots for the "most understandable, most up-to-date" rendering. Most conservative Christians support the "most accurate" camp and its several versions because they are interested in what God says, not what man thinks He says as filtered through today's lingo.

All of this controversy, however, is peripheral to the fact that, once we have a Bible, we must believe and use it. To believe it, though, we must prove it to our own satisfaction. We must challenge it to verify its claims, and on the other hand, we must take up the challenge to put its instruction to the test in our own lives. We must make this proving of God's Word a personal crusade that will erase all doubts about its validity for all time.

Everything that we need to know about God and His way of life we can find in the Bible. Thus, it becomes eternally vital to know what it says—and to know what it says is true! After we have thoroughly tested the Word of God, we will be convicted of its [truth](#), and holding fast to it will be easier to do. It will certainly be better for us—eternally—if we run from PC perversions of God's Word and stick to the smaller number of more accurate, less biased versions available to us.

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Studying the Bible](#)

by John O. Reid

John Reid, reminiscing on the first love of our calling, admonishes us to rekindle our ardency for Bible study, God's personal instruction to us on the big questions of life. Because of the busy times in which we live, we may feel overwhelmed, forgetting the awesome intent and responsibility of our calling. Bible study provides a personal means of attaining the mind of God, growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. This message provides a practical alphabetical, mnemonic guide to systematically and analytically process (including asking questions, outlining and analyzing the books, chapters, paragraphs, verses, and individual words, understanding their contexts) biblical information we may have otherwise discarded. Alternate methods (themes, topics, principles, proverb indexing, and scripture cards) are also modeled.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[By the Waters of Ahava](#)

by Ted E. Bowling

Ezra faced a dilemma: Should he ask the king for military protection or trust God for the Jews' safety? Ted Bowling takes us through his decision-making process as an example to us during our trials.

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