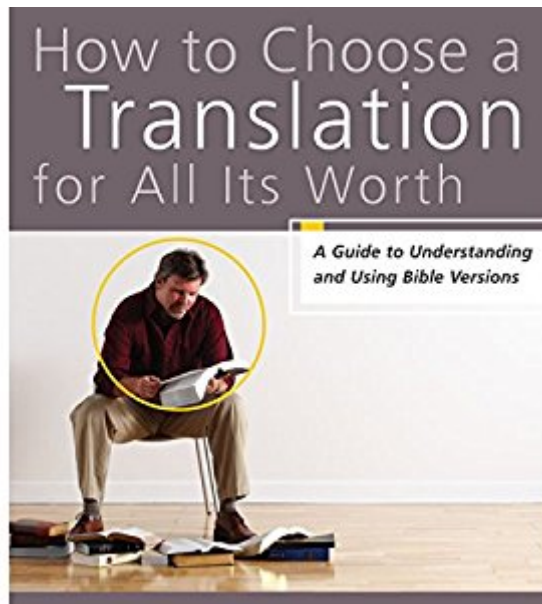


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# How To Choose A Translation For All Its Worth: A Guide To Understanding And Using Bible Versions



## Synopsis

With so many Bible translations available today, how can you find those that will be most useful to you? What is the difference between a translation that calls itself "literal" and one that is more "meaning-based"? And what difference does it make for you as a reader of God's Word? *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth* brings clarity and insight to the current debate over translations and translation theories. Written by two seasoned Bible translators, here is an authoritative guide through the maze of translations issues, written in language that everyday Bible readers can understand. Learn the truth about both the word-for-word and meaning-for-meaning translations approaches. Find out what goes into the whole process of translation, and what makes a translation accurate and reliable. Discover the strengths and potential weaknesses of different contemporary English Bible versions. In the midst of the present confusion over translations, this authoritative book speaks with an objective, fair-minded, and reassuring voice to help pastors, everyday Bible readers, and students make wise, well-informed choices about which Bible translations they can depend on and which will best meet their needs. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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## Customer Reviews

Which Bible translation do you use? In the early years of the Twentieth Century, the answer to that question was simple and obvious: the King James Version. In the middle of the Twentieth Century,

however, readers had two major choices: the KJV and the Revised Standard Version. By the early 1970s; they had four: KJV, RSV, the New American Standard Bible, and the New International Version--not to mention Kenneth Taylor's Living Bible paraphrase. Now we have such a proliferation of Bible translations that choosing just one is a real chore. In *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth*, Gordon Fee and Mark Strauss give us "a guide to understanding and using Bible versions," as the subtitle puts it. Fee is a world-renowned New Testament scholar and Assemblies of God minister. With Douglas Stuart he authored *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (now in its third edition) and *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*. Strauss is professor of New Testament at Bethel Seminary in San Diego, California. Both are members of the Committee for Bible Translation that produced Today's New International Version. Let me explain why I am personally interested in this issue. For some time, I have struggled with which translation to use. I grew up with the NIV, but it has a number of features that bug me. One is its persistent translation of Paul's concrete language with abstractions. "Flesh" becomes "sinful nature" in Galatians. "Walk" becomes "live" in Ephesians. The meaning of "flesh" in Galatians is "sinful nature," just as the meaning of "walk" is "live" in Ephesians, but I prefer the concrete metaphor over the abstraction. Recently, the English Standard Version (basically, a conservative update of the RSV) has been gaining ground among evangelicals.

Which type of Bible translation is better: formal equivalent (essentially literal) or functionally equivalent (used to be called dynamic equivalence)? That's what *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth* is about. It should be mentioned that Fee was on the translation committee for the TNIV (a functionally equivalent version). And I'll also mention that Fee is the author of many superb books, including the excellent volumes on 1 Corinthians and Philippians in the New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT) series. *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth* comes out swinging as the first four pages of the book contain a series of endorsements by some very respected and beloved authors, including D.A. Carson, Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Bruce Waltke, Tremper Longman III, and Daniel I. Block. With these endorsements, this book couldn't be bad, and it isn't. It's quite good and I really enjoyed reading it. When you see the title of this book along with its subtitle ("A Guide to Understanding and Using Bible Versions"), you would think that the book is just a guide of the strengths and weaknesses of various Bible versions. But it is more. Fee and Strauss have a preference. This preference is clearly stated in the conclusion to Chapter 8: "Biblical translation involves the transfer of the meaning of words originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into functionally equivalent words in English." But you don't have to wait until

Chapter 8 to learn that. From the beginning of the book they make their case for the superiority of functionally equivalent translations and, while I learned many things, I disagree with their preference. I own approximately 30 Bible translations, from the KJV to the NCV, from the RV to the NLT.

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