



# Studies in 1 Peter

## Introduction to Bible Class

### Why come to Bible Class?

#### **All Scripture is breathed out by God**

and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

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2 Timothy 3:16-17

To understand the Bible! It doesn't matter whether you're a believer or not, the Bible is by far the most influential book in human history. It has shaped countries and cultures. So shouldn't we try to understand it? In Bible class, we look first hand at the bible and seek to study it carefully to understand its meaning and its relevance to our world and our lives.

But this is more than an interesting study of history, culture, and belief. The Bible makes bold claims about itself and we all have to make a decision in our life as to the value we will put on it – whether we will treasure it or trash it! Let's make sure that we actually know what it is and what it says before we dismiss these claims.

The Bible is a collection of books which claim to be divine – breathed out by God, the creator of all things, including you and me. And it comes full of promises. It promises to show us how we can be saved from sin and death, and to guide us through life in a way that maximises our happiness and blessing.

This is why we have a Bible class. We want you to find in the Bible what we have, and to make it your "wonderful treasure". Bible class is a place to learn, to think and to ask questions. And we hope that the answers you find will lead you into a real relationship with the great subject of the Bible – Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

### Which Bible Will We Use?

Maybe you've heard someone say "You want me to believe the Bible? Well, which one!?". Many people are understandably confused by the enormous variety of bible versions and translations available. The website "biblegateway.com" lists over 60 English versions, the "Bible" app by YouVersion lists over 70, and Wikipedia says there are over 100. Why so many? And does it matter which one I read?

In truth, there is only one bible, The Bible. Pick up basically any version you want and you will be reading the same thing as everyone else, more or less. The differences are in the details, not the big picture.

#### **Best Selling English Bible Translations in US, 2022**

- New International Version (NIV) - 1978 / 84, 2011
- English Standard Version (ESV) - 2001 / 07 / 11 / 16
- New Living Translation (NLT) - 1996, 2004 / 07 / 13 / 15
- King James Version (KJV) - 1611, 1769
- Christian Standard Bible (CSB) - 2017 / 20

# A Brief Guide to Translations

In Bible class, we care about details. So let's understand a little about the differences in Bible translations. Here are three reasons why translations are different.

1. **The text being translated.** The Bible was originally copied by hand. This naturally led to changes between copies, usually made by mistake, but sometimes deliberately. The vast majority of these changes are insignificant, such as spelling mistakes, but there are a lot of significant changes as well. Newer translations have access to more of the handwritten copies and can make a more informed decision (though they don't always get it right!). Newer versions include footnotes to indicate significant variants in the text.
2. **The language being translated into.** All languages change over time. The earliest English Bibles (from before AD 1000!) are unintelligible today. While the KJV isn't as old as that, English has changed a lot in 400 years. There are many words in the KJV that have been replaced, or have changed their meaning in modern English, so that we might misunderstand them when we read the KJV. Modern translations try to use language understandable for a modern English speaker.
3. **The translation method.** Translation is hard! Translators have to strike a balance between a literal, word-for-word translation that may not make much sense to an English mind, and a more paraphrastic, thought-for-thought translation that tries to convey the meaning of the original. A less literal translation is easier to read and overcomes some of the cultural barriers to the Bible. But these translations are less accurate and more subject to the biases of the translator. Translations old and new lie on a spectrum between these extremes. The KJV and ESV are both quite literal. The NLT is more idiomatic. And the NIV is somewhere in the middle.

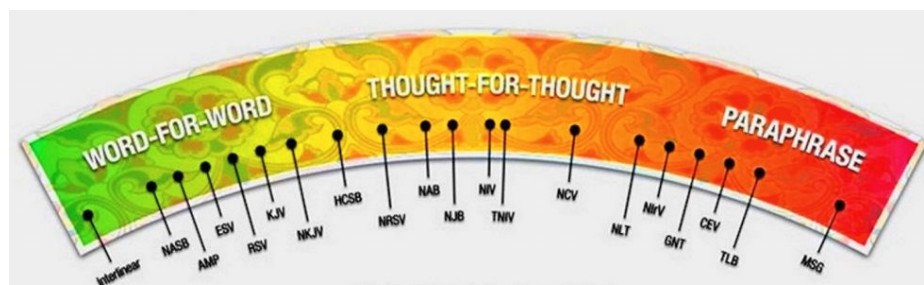
## "You" or "Thou"

One redeeming feature of an old translation like the KJV, is how it distinguishes the singular and plural in second person pronouns.

When you read "thou", "thee", or "thy", it means that one person is being addressed. When you read "ye", "you" or "your" it means there is more than one person.

This is a feature that most languages have – including the biblical languages! But sadly we have lost this in English, so that instead of six words we use just two – "you" and "your".

Maybe we need to start making Bible translations with "y'all" and "yous"!



All things considered, I have decided to use the English Standard Version as our main translation this year. But we will often consider alternative translations.