



The English Standard Version of the Bible

CrossPointe has a “two-handed” theology, which holds essential doctrines in a closed fist and non-essential doctrines in an open hand. By this, we mean that some doctrinal stances are essential according to biblically orthodox Christianity (i.e., the Trinity; Jesus’ deity, virgin birth, sinless life, death for sin, and resurrection; the authority of the Bible; salvation by grace through faith in Jesus alone; etc.). Others are non-essential, because they stem from secondary issues which CrossPointe holds in an “open hand.” A person’s salvation does not depend on a particular stance concerning these secondary issues.

CrossPointe’s preferred Bible translation is an open-handed issue; however, we do hold a few doctrines about the Bible itself in a closed fist.

We believe the Bible is God’s Word. As such, we also believe the Bible is inspired, inerrant, and infallible. To explain each of these terms would take far more pages than this paper allows, but for clarity’s sake this is what we mean:

- Inspired—God himself inspired the words of Scripture to be written by sinful men in such a way that the words are “God-breathed.”
- Inerrant—The Bible contains no errors so that all it records is true.
- Infallible—The Bible is completely trustworthy and does not mislead those who read it.

Jesus, God in the flesh, affirmed what we today call the “Old Testament” throughout his ministry. Moreover, he himself said that “all the Law and prophets testify concerning” him. Consequently, those who love Jesus, the Savior from sin, should read the Bible as they seek him.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 reads, “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 competent, equipped for every good work.” In this way, the Bible’s 66 books compose God’s inspired words to men and women around the world who desperately need his instruction, wisdom, and correction.

It is important, then, that Christians read the Bible.

Word-for-Word Versus Thought-for-Thought

The Bible was originally written in three languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Because God inspired it to be written in these languages, a good translation is necessary for those who do not understand the original texts.

The Biblical manuscripts have been transmitted and translated many times since their original versions. As such, the pastors and scholars who have worked to present God’s word to his people have typically acknowledged a scale between two paths or philosophies when translating—literal “word-for-word” to readable “thought-for-thought.”

A literal translation sticks closer to the original language than the more paraphrased thought-for-thought translations. Because of this, Christians can trust literal translations to present individual words closest to the original language’s intended meaning. Because more literal translations pay more attention to individual words, they can sometimes be “wooden” and more difficult to read. The original Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament are the most literal versions of their respective texts. However, the New American Standard Bible (NASB), English Standard Version (ESV), King James Version (KJV), and

New King James Version (NKJV) are all very good translations for their abilities to capture the Bible's original word-for-word meaning.

Conversely, thought-for-thought translations focus more on capturing the thoughts of Scripture rather than the specific words. This eliminates some grammatical confusion in order to be more readable, but these translations can lose important nuances of the original Scripture's grammar (irony, vagueness, wordplay, etc.). Additionally, some of these translations verge on paraphrasing Scriptures rather than translating them directly, which lets the translators insert their own commentary into a text without leaving the interpretation to the reader. The New International Version (NIV), New Living Translation (NLT), and The Message are all thought-for-thought translations of the Bible.

The ESV—Literal and Readable

CrossPointe uses the English Standard Version on Sunday mornings and recommends it to our members for personal Bible reading and memorization.

We use the ESV for two reasons: it's both literal and readable. It preserves the integrity of the original Biblical texts without being grammatically confusing or dry in its reading. Thus, the ESV better represents the original words' meaning in a readable and clear expression.

The Use of Other Translations at CrossPointe

By no means do we want to communicate that other translations are necessarily wrong or inadequate. Other translations can help clarify or interpret confusing portions of Scripture. They also provide a fresh look at familiar texts, thus keeping them from becoming stale or "empty" as the reader grows accustomed to their preferred translation. While we typically don't use other translations on Sunday mornings unless the sermon could be aided by them, certainly LifePointe groups and Bible studies are free to use them.

The main point is that Christians should read the Bible. Find a translation that allows you to understand and enjoy reading the Bible!

Bible Translations

- List of Bible Translations
 - Contemporary English Version (CEV)
 - English Standard Version (ESV)
 - Good News Bible (GNB)
 - Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)
 - King James Version (KJV)
 - New American Standard Bible (NASB)
 - New Century Version (NCV)
 - New International Version (NIV)
 - New Living Translation (NLT)
 - New King James Version (NKJV)
 - New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
 - New Testament in Modern English (NTME), also called Phillips
 - Revised English Bible (REB)
 - Revised Standard Version (RSV)
 - The Amplified Bible (TAB)
 - The Living Bible (TLB)
 - The Message (TM)
 - Today's New International Version (TNIV)
 - The Street Bible (TSB)

- Word-for-Word Translations: ESV, HCSB, KJV, NASB, NKJV, NRSV, RSV

- Thought-for-Thought Translations: NCV, NIV, TNIV, NLT, CEV, GNB, REB

- Paraphrases: NTME, TAB, TLB, TM, TSB
- Corruptions (errors in translation): New World Translation, used by Jehovah's Witnesses

Online Bibles/Commentaries

- ESV Online (<http://www.gnpcb.org/esv/browse/> and <http://www.esvonline.org>)
- BibleGateway.org (features several translations and study tools, all for free)
- BestCommentaries.com

We highly recommend the ESV Study Bible for its translation and helpful notes, articles, maps, and illustrations. Check www.esvstudybible.org for more information.