

# A Light in the Darkness

THE DOCTRINE OF THE WORD OF GOD



# Contemporary Bible Translation

## – Formal Equivalence

- Emphasis on word-for-word accuracy with the source text, sometimes at the expense of readability.
  - The smallest logical group in formal equivalence is the word/word group.

## – Dynamic/Functional Equivalence

- Emphasis on “thought-for-thought” translation that captures what the original reader would have understood, reflected in smooth, contemporary language. This is sometimes called a “mediating” translation.
  - Because the clause is smallest logical unit in dynamic/functionally equivalent, there is more interpretation inherent to the methodology.

## – Paraphrase

- As the name sounds, paraphrase translations seek to accommodate the language to most simply communicate the original languages to a contemporary audience, using contemporary idioms and phrases.
  - The smallest unit of translation here differs, but it generally the “thought” level, without a particular regard for preserving word order or exact language.



# So, What Translation Should I Read and Recommend? | 5 Guidelines

- Chill out on the translation sensationalism. If hearing that someone reads the KJV, NIV or NLT makes you question their Christian maturity, it says more about you than them.
- Understand the translation philosophy behind the translation you are using, considering or recommending. Remember that *all* translations contain *interpretation*.
- Understand the reason for which you or the person you are advising will *primarily* be using their Bible
  - Daily time with the Lord?
  - Public reading?
    - Who is the audience?
  - In-depth Bible study and exegesis?
  - Listening?



# So, What Translation Should I Read and Recommend? | 5 Guidelines

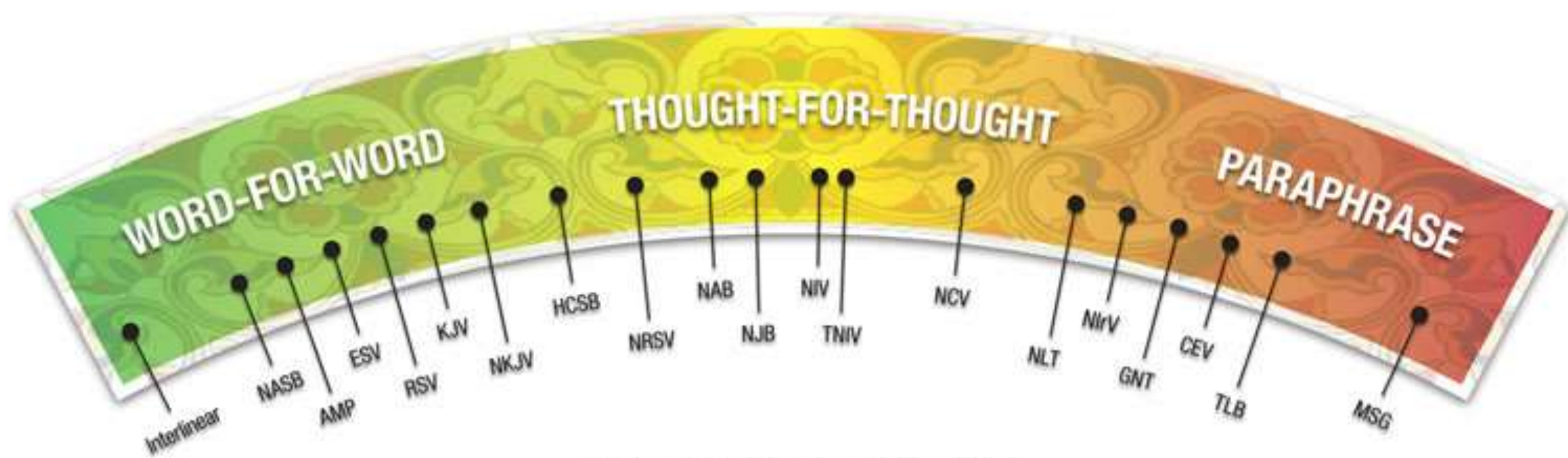
- Have access to and read multiple translations
- For devotional reading and “regular” use, read and recommend translations that consider personal reading level.
  - If a *translation* must be overcome by someone to grasp the *message* of the Scriptures, they need to be reading something else so that they can focus more on encountering God and listening to the Story and less on understanding the meaning of English sentences.
    - Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level rating



## Translations Listed from Most Difficult to Least Difficult Reading

<b>Translation</b>	<b>Year First Published</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Young's Literal Translation (YLT)	1862	14.86
Amplified Bible (AB)	1958	10.52
American Standard Version (ASV), a.k.a., American Standard Bible (ASB)	1901	10.02
Geneva Bible (revised)	2006	9.87
King James Version (KJV), a.k.a., Authorized Version (AV)	1611*	9.52
Revised Standard Version (RSV)	1952	9.33
Darby Translation (DBY)	1890	9.21
New American Standard Bible (NASB or NAS), a.k.a, New American Standard Version (NASV or NAS)	1971	8.81
New King James Version (NKJV)	1982	8.47
New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)	1985	8.12
The Jerusalem Bible (JB)	1966	8.05
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)	1989	7.96
English Standard Version (ESV)	2001	7.9
New International Version (NIV)	1973	7.08
New English Translation (NET Bible)	2005	6.61
Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)	2003	6.51
Good News Translation (GNT), a.k.a., Good News Bible (GNB), a.k.a., Today's English Version (TEV)	1976	5.44
The Message (MSG)	2002	4.73
New Living Translation (NLT)	1996	4.72
New Century Version (NCV)	1991	4.23
Contemporary English Version (CEV)	1995	4.21
New International Reader's Version (NIrV)	1994	1.94

# Types of Bible Translations



NASB - New American Standard Bible  
AMP - Amplified Bible  
ESV - English Standard Version  
RSV - Revised Standard Version  
KJV - King James Version  
NKJV - New King James Version

HCSB - Holman Christian Standard Bible  
NRSV - New Revised Standard Version  
NAB - New American Bible  
NJB - New Jerusalem Bible  
NIV - New International Version  
TNIV - Today's New International Version  
NCV - New Century Version  
NLT - New Living Translation

NlrV - New International Reader's Version  
GNT - Good News Translation  
(also Good News Bible)  
CEV - Contemporary English Version  
TLB - The Living Bible  
MSG - The Message



# Translation Comparisons | Rom. 7:15-19

- **ESV:** For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. <sup>17</sup> So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.
- **NIV:** I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>18</sup> For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. <sup>[c]</sup> For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.
- **NLT:** I do not understand myself. I want to do what is right but I do not do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate. <sup>16</sup> When I do the thing I do not want to do, it shows me that the Law is right and good. <sup>17</sup> So I am not doing it. Sin living in me is doing it. <sup>18</sup> I know there is nothing good in me, that is, in my flesh. For I want to do good but I do not. <sup>19</sup> I do not do the good I want to do. Instead, I am always doing the sinful things I do not want to do.



# Translation Comparisons | 1 Jn. 1:5-7

- **ESV:** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
- **NIV:** This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin
- **NLT:** <sup>5</sup> This is what we heard Him tell us. We are passing it on to you. God is light. There is no darkness in Him. <sup>6</sup> If we say we are joined together with Him but live in darkness, we are telling a lie. We are not living the truth. <sup>7</sup> If we live in the light as He is in the light, we share what we have in God with each other. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, makes our lives clean from all sin



# Translation Comparisons | Isa. 53:4-6

**ESV:** Surely he has borne  
our griefs  
and carried our sorrows;  
yet we esteemed him  
stricken,  
smitten by God, and  
afflicted.  
<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for  
our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our  
iniquities;  
upon him was the  
chastisement that brought  
us peace,  
and with his wounds we  
are healed.  
<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have  
gone astray;  
we have turned—every  
one—to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on  
him  
the iniquity of us all.

**NIV:** Surely he took up our  
pain  
and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him  
punished by God,  
stricken by him, and  
afflicted.  
<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for  
our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our  
iniquities;  
the punishment that  
brought us peace was on  
him,  
and by his wounds we are  
healed.  
<sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have  
gone astray,  
each of us has turned to  
our own way;  
and the LORD has laid on  
him  
the iniquity of us all.

**NLT:** Yet it was our  
weaknesses he carried;  
it was our sorrows that  
weighed him down.  
And we thought his  
troubles were a  
punishment from God,  
a punishment for his  
own sins!  
<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for  
our rebellion,  
crushed for our sins.  
He was beaten so we could  
be whole.  
He was whipped so we  
could be healed.  
<sup>6</sup> All of us, like sheep, have  
strayed away.  
We have left God's paths  
to follow our own.  
Yet the LORD laid on him  
the sins of us all.



# Translation Comparisons | Ps. 1:1-3

ESV: Blessed is the man  
who walks not  
in the counsel of the  
wicked,  
nor stands in the way  
of sinners,  
nor sits in the seat  
of scoffers;  
<sup>2</sup> but his delight is in  
the law of the LORD,  
and on his law he  
meditates day and  
night. He is like a  
tree  
planted by streams  
of water  
that yields its fruit in  
its season,  
and its leaf does  
not wither. In all that  
he does, he prospers.

NIV: Blessed is the one  
who does not walk in  
step with the wicked  
or stand in the way that  
sinners take  
or sit in the company  
of mockers,  
<sup>2</sup> but whose delight is in  
the law of the LORD,  
and who meditates on  
his law day and night.  
<sup>3</sup> That person is like a  
tree planted by  
streams of water,  
which yields its  
fruit in season  
and whose leaf does not  
wither—  
whatever they do  
prosper.

NLT: Oh, the joys of  
those who do not  
follow the advice of  
the wicked,  
or stand around  
with sinners,  
or join in with  
mockers.  
<sup>2</sup> But they delight in  
the law of the LORD,  
meditating on it day  
and night.  
<sup>3</sup> They are like trees  
planted along the  
riverbank,  
bearing fruit each  
season.  
Their leaves never  
wither,  
and they prosper in  
all they do.



- ESV: Blessed is the man  
    who walks not  
in the counsel of the  
wicked,  
nor stands in the way  
of sinners,  
    nor sits in the seat  
of scoffers;  
    <sup>2</sup>but his delight is in  
the law of the LORD,  
    and on his law he  
meditates day and  
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tree  
    planted by streams  
of water  
that yields its fruit in  
its season,  
    and its leaf does  
not wither. In all that  
he does, he prospers.



# Phenomena of Scripture vs Didactic Material

- The Phenomena: how Scripture *appears* or what it seems to *present*
  - “God changes his mind” (Ex. 32:14)
- The Didactic: what Scripture *teaches* or *affirms* about itself and/or a specific topic
  - “God does not change his mind” (Num. 23:19)
- Where do we “start?”
  - *Authorial intent* is much clearer in didactic teaching.
  - Didactic material communicates *conceptual* precision and nuance more effectively than narrative.
  - Jesus and the Apostles *primarily* used didactic material in the OT for *instruction*, with phenomenal material as *examples and/or illustrations*.



# “God-Breathed” | Textual Grounds for Inspiration

- 2 Tim. 3:16-17

- The word “inspiration” comes from the King James Version’s translation of *theopneustos* (lit. God-breathed).

- The emphasis in verse 16 is the *source* of Scripture; only derivatively is it a verse about inerrancy.

- Regardless if *pas* is understood as “all” or “every,” Paul is still communicating that anything that can be rightly be called Scripture (Gr. *graphe*) has the ensuing properties (to be discussed further elsewhere).

- Thus, the *text* itself is said to possess the property of “being inspired.”

- The *hina* clause in verse 17 indicates purpose (“in order that...”).