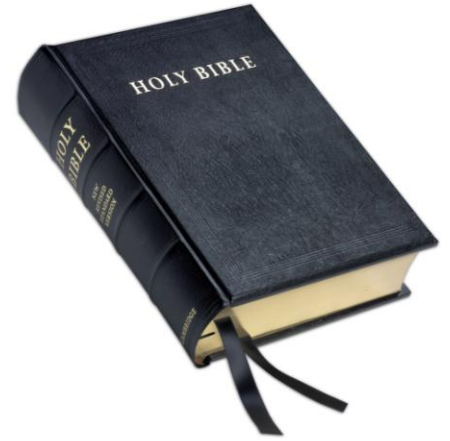


DEAR AEBI: *"What kind of Bible should I buy? Why do some Bibles have red letters? Are red letters an advantage?"*



I suggest you get a version (translation) that you're comfortable with and that is accurate enough for you to learn the word of God from it. A serious student of God's word will want several versions. For the Bible you will use regularly, avoid a version translated by one person or by only a few; it may have more bias in it. Being comfortable with a version is important, because you want to use it regularly. If you have used and are comfortable with the King James Version, get it; if you have trouble with its wording, get a modern speech version--the New King James Version, the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, or the English Standard Version. I personally prefer the New King James Version as my modern speech translation, and for accuracy I compare it with the 1901 American Standard Version. The New International Version is a freer translation and therefore has the potential of more interpretative bias than NKJV or NASB. The New American Standard Bible has difficult wording sometimes and may be harder to understand.

Get a Bible that has good print, large enough and plain enough to read without straining. Remember that your eyes will not get better over the years, so print that is easy to read now may be harder to read ten years from now. Most people keep a good Bible longer than ten years.

Get a Bible that is well bound. Leather lasts longer than hard back unless you put the hard back into a zipper cover. Talk to someone at the Ohio Valley University Bookstore or some other reliable Bible bookstore about this; they sell Bibles and will know which ones have good bindings.

Get a Bible that is not too large for you to take with you to church and other places. Here you have to weigh overall size of the Bible against size of print. To make it small, publishers must either reduce the size of print or make the pages very thin. Avoid paper that you can see through because it is so thin; you won't be able to write well on it or underline passages without the ink bleeding through to the other side of the page.

Red letters. Bibles are often made with the words spoken by Jesus printed in red. You probably should ignore the red letters in buying a new Bible; I don't let red letters or the lack of them influence my decision. Usually a red letter edition is not an advantage, and it may be a disadvantage if it leads you to think those words are more important than others. The reason is that what Paul wrote is the commandment of the Lord as much as if Christ had said it (1 Cor. 14:37), because Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to inspire the apostles and others to write the New Testament. Jesus himself wrote none of the New Testament; it is all written by the men he inspired to write it. Thus what they wrote is the word of Christ, the gospel of Christ, the commandments of Christ, and the history of Christ. Many other passages (like Acts 2:38; 10:48; 1 Cor. 5:4; Col. 3:17; Gal. 1:11-12) clearly teach that the words of the apostles carried the full weight of Christ's endorsement. The New Testament is the word of God through Christ (Heb. 1:1-2), whether spoken by our Lord's own lips or given by the Spirit of Christ to us via inspired men. It is all Christ's.

Charles Aebi