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104 Getting Or Buying A Bible

1. Once you've decided on a version of the Bible to use the next step is to get a copy of the scriptures. In this guide we'll talk about **Getting Or Buying A Bible** including electronic and print versions, where to get them, why you should have them and what to look for in a print Bible.

2. These days some people only use electronic versions of the Bible while others feel more comfortable with a print copy. There isn't a right or wrong decision when it comes to e-versions and print copies but I recommend that you have access to both which will be a plus in the long run.

Electronic Bibles are readily available and can be found in free and paid versions both of which offer a number of tools and options. Bibles can be found on a number of popular sites in a wide range of versions. You can download a variety of free editions, try them out and if you don't like them all you have to do is uninstall and keep looking until you find one that's right for you. Most free versions will allow you to bookmark passages, highlight text and perform word searches.

A website I recommend for free and paid editions of the Bible is **Olivetree.com**. You'll find multiple versions of the Bible and some of the best layouts in an electronic format. Olivetree also has a number of Bible helps available for purchase including Bible dictionaries, maps, handbooks and more.

Print Bibles in my opinion are a necessity even if you have an e-version. I sometimes jokingly refer to print Bibles as power outage editions. But seriously, there are advantages to having a print version and like electronic Bibles there are free as well as paid editions, but getting a free copy may take a bit more work than just downloading one. There are organizations that will provide you with a free Bible on request. The problem with free print Bibles is that you can't pick the version, binding or anything else but you'll have a Bible. Low cost copies can be found in places like dollar stores and discount book outlets but the features and versions may be limited.

When you walk into your local bookseller or religious bookstore you'll find shelves of Bibles with different edition names and features in a wide range of prices. You'll find paperbound editions as well as ornate volumes that could serve as family heirlooms. There are Bible editions for women, men, folks in the military, ethnic editions and so forth. The list of available editions appears to increase frequently making it difficult to decide which one to buy. When it comes to Bibles you can spend as little or as much as you want but you want to make sure you get an edition you're comfortable with, has the features you need and fits your budget.

I'm going to cover criteria for selecting what I call a no frills study Bible that will meet

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the characteristics I just outlined. We're going to review

- a. The various editions that I mentioned a moment ago
- b. Study Bibles or what are referred to as study Bibles and
- c. How print Bible's are made including cover materials, binding, paper stock, layout and helps that may be included.

8. So what about all these special edition Bibles? These are commercial products that make their publishers money and special editions present content of interest to particular groups identified by the edition name. This seems like a good idea but the content that's added many times simply increases the price without adding any benefit for study purposes.

9. Study Bibles come equipped with helps including illustrations, dictionaries, archaeology notes and usually a running commentary appearing on each page. These are intended to supply everything you need in one volume and while that sounds good in theory it presents a couple of concerns.

10. First, the notes were written by an individual or group and represents their particular interpretation of the scriptures. While there's some value in these Bibles I've read notes explaining some verses that cause problems with other passages. If you plan on investing in one of these make sure you find out who wrote the notes and what their teachings are before buying one. You should always be careful to compare anyone's comments with what the Bible actually says.

11. Secondly, the running commentary may take up more of the page real estate than the actual text of the scriptures. This many times limits the available space for margins which means that notes you want to make on the page are going to be cramped. There are some beautifully bound study Bibles available but be careful when making a choice and be aware that added features will elevate the price.

12. An important consideration in selecting a print Bible is its physical construction and a very important component of this is the cover. There are a variety of materials used in Bible covers ranging from paper to genuine leather. Let's examine the characteristics of each of these.

13. First are paperback Bibles. These can be for children or adults and are usually lower in price than other cover types, but as with any other book, paperbacks don't have a long lifespan when used daily, but they're a good choice for student grade and are lighter and easier to carry.

14. Hardbound Bibles come in a wide range of cover qualities. Some are good and others are cheaply made and will wear out fairly quickly. One way to test the quality is to open a hardbound

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Bible and see how flexible the cover hinge is. Difficulty opening the book or cracking noises can indicate the spine and cover is already breaking. Well made books factor in enough material and space allowing the cover to open without stressing the pages or spine. A well made hardbound Bible should last for years but you can expect to pay more the added quality.

15. Bonded leather, a widely used cover material, is made from pieces of leather that are glued together with adhesives and treated with things like polyurethane to make them more durable. These covers are slightly more durable than paper but have a tendency to crack or break at the hinge joint along the spine. They can also delaminate at the corners or develop stress tears on the longer sides of the cover. Bonded leather has the look and feel of genuine leather but lacks its durability and longevity.

16. Newer cover materials have been introduced that are similar to imitation leather. These have a variety of names and come in a broad range of colors and designs. They have a look and feel that's close to genuine leather and are similar to their bonded leather cousins in longevity and durability.

17. The most durable and expensive covers are made from genuine leather. These come in a variety of materials that include top grain cowhide, calfskin, goatskin and Morocco, a handmade goat leather that's very soft and pliable. More exotic leathers are available as well but are very expensive. Leather covers will last for years and if you're looking for a study Bible that will hold up, genuine leather is the way to go. Many commercial booksellers and religious bookstores typically stock few Bibles with leather covers probably due to their higher price but you can find them. Be sure to protect Bibles with genuine leather covers from sunlight, extreme cold and dampness that can damage the material.

17. A second consideration when reviewing a Bible's construction is the way in which the pages are bound. Three binding methods are typically used including perfect binding, sewn signatures and post binding. The first two are more common while the third is fairly rare in comparison.

18. The perfect bound method is typical in the modern publishing industry. The pages are printed in blocks, pressed together, glued and bound. In some of these a gauzelike material called a mull is glued along the spine to reinforce the pages. Many perfect bound Bibles and books omit this and the pages have a tendency to come loose and fall out. Over time Bibles with perfect bindings may break into sections along the spine or separate from their covers.

19. A more traditional and secure method of binding is that of sewn signatures. Pages of a Bible bound using this technique are printed on large sheets, folded and cut so that each section forms a booklet or signature. Signatures are sewn together while held in place with cords or linen tapes then reinforced with a gauzelike material to further secure them and add flexibility. Bibles

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bound in this manner will have a longer lifespan if properly cared for. With age and high usage a cover may become separated from the pages but these are often good candidates for recovering by a book binder specializing in Bible repair.

20. I've also seen a few Bibles that were bound using a hybrid of perfect binding and sewn signatures in which the sections were pressed into a block and glued together instead of being sewn. These Bibles may run the risk of breaking into sections as they wear just as the perfect bound volumes will.

21. Post binding is a method in which the pages of a Bible are printed, holes are drilled in them and they're secured using metal posts. This is a very secure binding but not one that I've seen very often. Post bindings are secure but may cause wear points where the post ends come in contact with the cover creating a weak spot that could become a hole or tear.

22. Bibles are printed on a variety of papers including low grade newsprint-like ground-wood papers, commercial book grade stocks and what is known as Bible paper.

23. Most of us are familiar with ground-wood or newsprint as we might call it, and recognize its often off white tone and texture that comes in a variety of qualities. This is a less expensive paper and usually appears in childrens' editions or student Bibles. This paper is vulnerable to moisture and has a tendency to yellow with age and exposure to light.

24. Offset or various commercial paper stocks can be found in hardbound editions of the Bible and range in quality from lower, thinner weights to heavier papers found in textbooks. These papers are generally more durable than newsprint and are a good choice if you want to write a note or highlight passages. These paper types usually resist yellowing and higher grades are acid free to make them last longer.

25. Bible paper is a higher grade material that includes cotton or cotton linen fiber blends having varying degrees of opacity. Thinner Bible papers may be difficult to read since the text on opposite pages is visible through the one you are reading. Highlighting verses on these thin pages can make it difficult to read them as the colors may bleed through the paper and obscure the text. More opaque grades will ease this problem so you'll benefit from examining these firsthand. Bible paper is also found in hardbound copies of the scriptures as well.

26. Another factor related to the opacity of the paper is brightness. Thinner papers have a tendency to be less reflective and will appear darker making them harder to read while opaque papers tend to be brighter. If you have issues with your vision or are light sensitive you should examine print Bibles firsthand and determine what's right for you.

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26. And while we're on the subject of the pages of the Bible we have to address the font and text format. Slim and compact Bibles reduce the font size to save space but you might have to carry a magnifying glass to see it. Giant print Bibles text may be so large that your eyes will wear out from traveling back and forth across the pages. As with other considerations, the size of the letters is a visual characteristic that has to be seen to be evaluated. Most Bible publishers put a text size sample on the packaging which will help but the best thing will be to have the volume open and try it for yourself.

27. **Page layout** may be a concern when it comes to the margins. Some Bibles will have very little margin space facing the spine and you might find yourself holding the pages down in the middle to read the text on the inside . That doesn't make for an enjoyable read if you have to do that. Other Bibles may have very little outer margin robbing you of space to jot a note or hold the pages while reading.

28. Also in regard to page layout, some editions of the Bible are printed in **paragraph format** without separating verses. This helps keep thoughts together but during a study its difficult to locate verses quickly. That may be a format that works for you but you need to investigate further and see it firsthand.

29. The last thing to make a note of in regard to the pages is ink saturation. Text in some Bibles appears faded and if the pages are thin the combination of showthrough text and faint printing causes eyestrain and other problems. If these Bibles are red letter editions the red inks may also be difficult to read. This is another reason to make sure you visit a shop and take a look at a publishers print quality.

30. I mentioned earlier that study Bibles with running commentary and notes may turn out to be more of a distraction than a help, so what do we really need in a good functional study Bible.

31. One of the most helpful things to have in a Bible are **center column references**. Keywords in verses are given a letter or number which are linked to other instances of its usage elsewhere in the Bible. This is very helpful for comparative studies and will save time when researching a particular topic. These references can also be placed in a side margin or elsewhere on the page.

32. Some Bibles include a **dictionary of Biblical** terms. These are usually limited in their number of entries but are helpful in a variety of situations. These aren't found in all Bibles so you'll have to see what's available.

33. A **concordance** is another add-on that can be found in well rounded study Bibles. Like the Bible dictionary a concordance is usually limited in its number of entries. A concordance simply

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lists keywords and then provides references in the Bible. The function is similar to the center column references.

34. And finally a few maps are a great addition to a Bible and can add a lot to your study sessions.

35. So there you have it. You know what version you want to use, where to download an e-version, what to look for in a print edition so we're almost ready to actually start studying the Bible but first we're going to review a few study resources that you can add.

36. In the next video we'll discuss external helps for your Bible study library.