



Class notes - Week 1: Attitudes and Attributes

Big Idea: Our approach to studying the Bible is impacted by our attitude towards Scripture, and by the attributes of Scripture. Both need to be examined closely in order to deepen our faith.

Attitudes:

Knowing God's Word is _____ (Philippians 4:8)

Knowing God's Word enables us _____. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Knowing God's Word will cause us to carefully _____. (Hebrews 4:12)

Knowing God's Word requires _____. (1 Peter 5:5-6)

Knowing God's Word leads us to _____. (Romans 12:1-2)

Attributes: Two important parts of the discussion of the Bible: translations of the Bible and the types of genres that are in the Bible. Both play a key role in how we approach the Bible.

Translations:

- Word-for-word ("Formal equivalence")
- Thought-for-thought ("Dynamic equivalence")

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

TWO APPROACHES
Two main philosophies behind translating the Bible range on a continuum between:

- **WORD-FOR-WORD**
Adhering to the words and structure of the original language without sacrificing clarity.
- **THOUGHT-FOR-THOUGHT**
Prioritizing clarity and understanding of the meaning of the original language without sacrificing accuracy.

The Bible was originally written in:
HEBREW, ARAMAIC, and GREEK.

Freely read the Bible on Bible Gateway in more than 200 versions and more than 70 languages including:

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International Children's Bible
International Standard Version
King James Version
The Living Bible
The Message
Modern English Version
New American Bible (Revised Edition)
New American Standard Bible
New Century Version
New English Translation
New International Reader's Version
New International Version
New King James Version
New Living Translation
New Revised Standard Version
Revised Standard Version
The Voice

Bible translations represented in this spectrum by their abbreviations are available for reading on Bible Gateway

<https://www.biblegateway.com/learn/bible-101/about-the-bible/bible-versions-guide/>

Genre: The type of literature found in the Bible influences our interpretative decisions.

Genre	Description	Examples & References
Law (Torah)	God's covenant instructions and commands	Genesis–Deuteronomy (Exod. 20; Deut. 6:4–9)
Historical Narrative	God's work in history through His people	Joshua; Judges; Ruth; 1–2 Samuel; Acts
Poetry	Worship, lament, praise using imagery	Psalms; Song of Songs; Lamentations (Ps. 23)
Wisdom Literature	Practical instruction for godly living	Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; Job
Prophecy	Warning, repentance, and hope	Isaiah; Ezekiel; Amos
Gospels	Life and ministry of Jesus	Matthew; Mark; Luke; John
Epistles (Letters)	Instruction to churches and individuals	Romans; Ephesians; 1 Corinthians; James
Apocalyptic	Symbolic visions of God's victory	Daniel 7–12; Revelation

Examples:

“You shall have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3)

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; 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. (Psalm 1:1-3)

There is gold and abundance of costly stones, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel. (Proverbs 20:15)

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

For more information: https://biblehub.com/q/bible_genres_and_literary_forms.htm

Exercise

Pick a passage that you are familiar with. Read it in two or three translations and answer the following questions:

What genre is it? How does the genre affect your interpretation?

What are the key words in the passage? Why are they important?

What differences do you notice between translations?

How would you summarize the meaning of the passage in your own words?