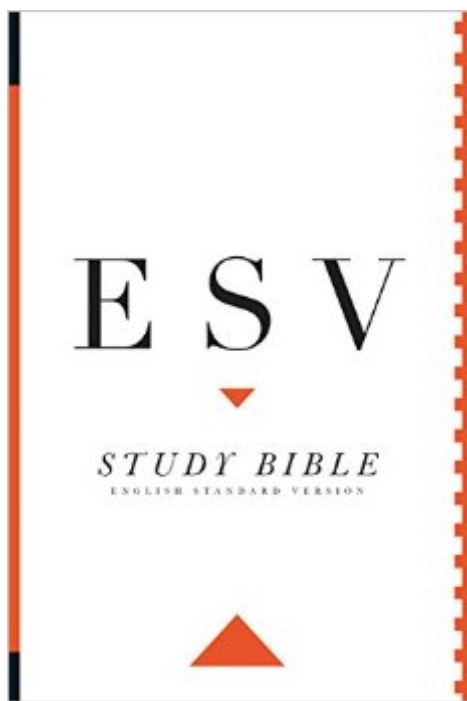


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ESV Study Bible, Personal Size



Synopsis

The ESV Study Bible, Personal Size compresses nearly all the features of the award-winning ESV Study Bible into a smaller size for easier carrying. This Personal Size edition retains all of the originalâ€™s 20,000 study notes, 240 full-color maps and illustrations, charts, timelines, and introductionsâ€”more than 2 million words of Bible text, insightful explanation, teaching, and reference material. To conserve space, some of the extensive articles have been removed from this more compact edition and moved online for free access. Enjoy the comprehensive resources of the internationally best-selling ESV Study Bible, now in a convenient and portable smaller size!

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Customer Reviews

The ESV Study Bible has launched with eight editions: Hardcover, TruTone Nat Brown, TruTone Classic Black, Black Bonded Leather, Burgundy Bonded Leather, Black Genuine Leather, Burgundy Genuine Leather and Premium Calfskin Leather. In any edition the ESV Study Bible looks great. It is contemporary in its coloring (white is dominant with orange accents in the hardcover) and in the rectangle which shows up throughout (on the cover, to mark headings, and even as a bullet for lists of information). The rectangle has no deeper significance than a simple design element. In an interesting but effective design decision, the TruTone editions have this triangle stitched to the cover. The leather editions have "ESV" in large gold letters on the spine with "Study Bible," "English Standard Version" and "Crossway" in smaller gold type. The TruTone has the same text but with the "ESV" embossed. The hardcover features black and orange backgrounds on the spine with the text

printed over top. The standard ESV guarantee applies to these Bibles, meaning that a customer who discovers manufacturing defects during normal use can return the Bible to have it replaced with one of equal or greater value. The Bible is made to be durable. It is Smyth sewn which is the binding process considered by many to be the best and longest-lasting method. It allows the Bible to lie flat even on page one and on page 2,752 (at least in the TruTone). It is printed on "high-opacity, high-quality French Bible paper" and in a single-column format with the cross-references in the inside margin. The paper is thin and light but still sturdy. My two year-old put the Bible to the test when she inadvertently stepped on it while it was lying open. The page wrinkled under her heel but did not tear. I also learned from her that chewing gum can be removed from the cover of the TruTone while permanent marker cannot. The fonts are very dark and easy to read with a heavy black serif font for the biblical text and a thin black sans-serif for the notes and cross-references. The page headings are in a bold gray with page numbers in a thin gray. Chapter numbers are a large gray serif font while headings are italicized black sans-serif. The pages display a fair bit of bleed-through where, when you look at a page, you can see the ink showing through from the previous page or two. Most of us are accustomed to this bleed-through in our Bibles. Where it is a bit more apparent and distracting is where it shows through on the maps and illustrations. One feature that has received much attention in the ESV Study Bible is its use of color. Most study Bibles offer maps and illustrations only in grayscale. The ESV Study Bible, though, offers full-color illustrations and maps. This is quite a nice feature. The splashes of color throughout, including colored highlighting and shading, are unexpected to my eye but very effective. Though the standard glossy maps in the back of the Bible are superior in quality to the ones scattered throughout, even the smaller maps are nicely done and provide important geographical context without having to slip to the Bible's final pages. The illustrations, commissioned specifically for this project, are very well done and nicely supplement the notes. ESV Study Bible Online The ESV Study Bible is one of only a couple of study Bibles to offer an extensive online component to accompany the Bible. Included with each Bible is a registration code that will allow the customer to access the ESV Online Study Bible. There they will find the complete text of the Bible along with all of the study notes, articles, maps, and all the other features of the Bible. Unique online features include the ability to create and save personalized online notes; to search and follow interactive links between notes, maps, articles, charts, timelines, illustrations, and cross-references; and to listen to audio recordings of the ESV. It adds interactive features that are only possible in a computer-based environment. While the online component is a useful addition to the Bible (and a free one!), at this time it seems under-developed and I suspect many readers will find that they do not refer to it very often. Format Each book of the

Bible begins with an extensive introduction. This may include sections dealing with Time, Date and Title; Author; Theme; Key Themes; Purpose, Occasion and Background; Literary Features; Outline; and so on. Particularly important is the History of Salvation Summary which sets each of the books within the context of the wider body of Scripture and hence within the history of salvation.

Introductions may also include timelines, maps, and notes on literary features specific to that book. In every case, the reader will receive a thorough explanation as to the book's authorship, purpose and context in God's plan of salvation. The text notes vary in density but typically comprise about half of each page in the New Testament and perhaps a third in the Old Testament. They focus primarily on explanation and rarely on application. In one handy feature, highlighted notes correspond to primary points in the outline while highlighted verses and headings within the notes correspond to secondary points in the outline.

Scholarship The ESV Study Bible has been produced by as good a group of scholars as any study Bible. The General Editor is Wayne Grudem, the Theological Editor is J.I. Packer, the Old Testament Editor is C. John Collins and the New Testament Editor is Thomas Schreiner. The study note contributors represent a broad cross-section of reputable Evangelical scholars. The articles included within the Bible have been contributed by some well-known pastors and scholars, including John Piper, David Powlison, Darrell Bock, Leland Ryken, R. Kent Hughes, Daniel Wallace, and many more.

Controversial Theology One concern people are likely to have when considering a new study Bible concerns the theological perspective offered in the notes. Does this particular study Bible take a Reformed or Arminian position on salvation? A complementarian or egalitarian perspective on gender roles? An amillennial or premillennial position on the end times? I looked through many of the notes seeking what this Bible says on some of the more common controversies: end times, spiritual gifts and soteriology. I found this an interesting comparison with the Reformation Study Bible. It seems to me that the Reformation Study Bible came from a much more narrowly-defined theological position; it was Reformed, it was cessationist, it was amillennial. The ESV Study Bible, on the other hand, offers a wider or less-defined perspective. Where the doctrine is clear and undisputed among Evangelicals, so too are the notes. But where doctrines are controversial and within the area of Christian freedom or disputable matters, the notes tend not to take a firm position, even when the author or editor is firmly in one camp or the other. Whether this is positive or negative may well depend on the individual reader.

To satisfy my curiosity, I opened my NIV Study Bible, Reformation Study Bible, MacArthur Study Bible and ESV Study Bible and compared their notes on several areas of controversial theology--spiritual gifts, predestination and spiritual gifts. None of these Bibles offered notes that were unbiblical so I was left looking for the differences in perspective. In general I found

that the MacArthur Study Bible offered the most defined position. This makes good sense as it represents the position of a single individual. This was followed by the Reformation Study Bible which offers the position of many individuals but each of them drawn from a very consistent theological position. The ESV Study Bible came next, offering a charitable but open view on most of these issues. The NIV Study Bible seemed almost to shy away from some of the issues. So while it is clear that the ESV Study Bible is not distinctly Reformed in its position, neither is it Arminian. It is not cessationist or continuationist and is neither amillennial nor postmillennial. In fact, it seems as if it emulates the parent who tells one of his children to cut the last piece of cake in half and the other to choose the first piece. In many cases a person from one perspective wrote the notes while a person from the other perspective screened them. This ensures the notes maintain both charity and some degree of objectivity in those areas of dispute. Having looked at the areas of dispute, I would not hesitate to recommend the ESV Study Bible to either new or mature Christians. The matters at the heart of the faith are described and defended while the matters of lesser importance are presented charitably and non-dogmatically. Conclusion I suspect that many of the people reading this review will already be owners of at least one study Bible. I feel it is important to affirm that there is nothing innately wrong with the Reformation Study Bible, The New Geneva Study Bible, the MacArthur Study Bible and many of the other similar products. If you are currently using one of these Bibles and are happy with it, there may be few compelling reason to rush out and purchase the ESV Study Bible. I have used the Reformation Study Bible and its predecessor for many years with great benefit. I have no doubt that I will continue to refer to it. With that said, I think the ESV Study Bible is an incredible resource. A long list of endorsers have expressed their excitement for its theological faithfulness, its accessibility, its insight, its scholarship, its practicality and its sheer excellence. I would simply append my name to this list. I agree wholeheartedly with C.J. Mahaney who writes, "I can't imagine a greater gift to the body of Christ than the ESV Study Bible. It is a potent combination indeed: the reliability and readability of the ESV translation, supplemented by the best of modern and faithful scholarship, packaged in an accessible and attractive format. A Christian could make no wiser investment for himself, a pastor could recommend no better resource for his congregation." This is a powerful resource and one that can aid any reader of Scripture. It is one I recommend wholeheartedly. Early in this review I wrote, "Today, if you drop by my home in the early morning, you are likely to see me reading from the Literary Study Bible." I think it's safe to say that, if you drop by my home early tomorrow morning, you are likely to see me reading from the ESV Study Bible.

Of the making of many study bibles there is no end as perhaps Solomon might have said today (Ecc. 12:12)! While there are many study Bibles that in my estimation would be better off having never been printed there are also some study bibles which are extremely useful to the Bible student. One such useful study bible is the ESV Study Bible which was released a couple years ago. The study bible was embraced by many as a faithful study tool which served a comprehensive guide to the Bible including such features as notes, introductions, essays on OT and NT theology and literature, maps, concordances, and illustrations. A complaint that is commonly raised by those who use the ESV Study Bible is the size and weight of the book. If any Bible qualified as a "tome" it is definitely the ESV Study Bible. The size and weight was of course understandable in view of the amount of content placed between its 2700+ pages. I have used the ESV Study Bible profitably in the past and continue to do so but the size and weight always made it somewhat unwieldy. I was therefore glad to see that Crossway was releasing a personal size edition which is significantly smaller and lighter than the regular edition. I decided to compare the two editions to see what the differences were. - The content of the two editions is exactly the same except that the articles found in the back of the book (i.e. "Bible Doctrine", "Biblical Ethics", "History of Salvation", and "The Bible and World Religions") have been removed in the personal size edition. While these articles are of good quality, they take up about 150 pages and thus add more bulk to an already large book. The personal size edition is without these articles making the book far more manageable. - I cannot verify the page thickness on both editions but they feel quite similar to my fingers and are both thick enough to not make bleed-through much of an issue. - The concordance has been somewhat reduced in the personal size but still includes enough words to be useful. - The wonderful articles contained throughout the Bible such as the introduction to the Pentateuch, Wisdom Literature, the Gospels, and NT theology among others have all been retained. This was a wise decision since these articles are quite pertinent to the study and interpretation of the Bible itself and are a significant element of the study tools found in the Bible. All the notes remain the same in both editions and have not been reduced at all. The amount of cross references also appear to remain the same. - The dimensions of the new edition make it a worthwhile purchase for ESV SB owners if they desire to carry the study Bible around. The dimensions of the personal size are almost exactly the same as my ESV Reference Bible (except for the thickness). It is also much lighter. You can comfortably hold the Bible in one hand. - The font size of the Bible text is 7.7 which is still quite comfortable. The study note size is 6.3 which is a bit more difficult but it is a fair trade off for the size of the book and the amount of content one receives. The amount of notes and study tools in such a small size is astounding. I'd highly recommend this study Bible and especially the personal size as a

great resource for studying the sacred Scriptures. The notes and other study helps (while imperfect) are quite helpful in the study of the Word. The study notes and helps should never become a replacement for one's own diligent and prayerful examination of the text but they should instead support this task. This study Bible is a good choice as a companion as one seeks to fulfill that task. Thank you to Crossway for providing me with a review copy!

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