



## **3 John**

**translationNotes**

v11

# Copyrights & Licensing

## License:

This work is made available under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), which means

You are free:

- Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
- Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.

Under the following conditions:

- Attribution — You must attribute the work as follows: “Original work available at <http://unfoldingword.org>.” Attribution statements in derivative works should not in any way suggest that we endorse you or your use of this work.
- ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.

Use of trademarks: **unfoldingWord** is a trademark of Distant Shores Media and may not be included on any derivative works created from this content. Unaltered content from <http://unfoldingword.org> must include the **unfoldingWord** logo when distributed to others. But if you alter the content in any way, you must remove the **unfoldingWord** logo before distributing your work.

This work is still being revised, if you have comments or questions please email them to [help@door43.org](mailto:help@door43.org)

**Version:** 11

**Published:** 2017-11-29

## Table of Contents

<b>Copyrights &amp; Licensing</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>translationNotes</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction to 3 John	4
3 John 1:1-4	6
3 John 1:5-8	8
3 John 1:9-10	10
3 John 1:11-12	12
3 John 1:13-15	14
<b>translationQuestions</b>	<b>16</b>
3 John 1	16
<b>translationWords</b>	<b>18</b>
beloved	18
brother, brothers	20
children, child	22
church, churches, Church	24
elder, elders	26
evil, wicked, wickedness	27
face, faces, faced, facing, facial, facedown	29
faithful, faithfulness, unfaithful, unfaithfulness	31
Gentile, Gentiles	33
God	34
good, goodness	37
imitate, imitator, imitators	39
joy, joyful, joyfully, joyfulness, enjoy, enjoys, enjoyed, enjoying, enjoyment, rejoice, re- joices, rejoiced, rejoicing	40
love, loves, loving, loved	42
peace, peaceful, peacefully, peaceable, peacemakers	45
pray, prayer, prayers, prayed	47
receive, receives, received, receiving, receiver	49
soul, souls	51
testimony, testify, witness, witnesses, eyewitness, eyewitnesses	53
true, truth, truths	56
walk, walks, walked, walking	58
works, deeds, work, acts	60
worthy, worth, unworthy, worthless	62
<b>translationAcademy</b>	<b>64</b>
Active or Passive	64
Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information	67
Ellipsis	71
Exclusive and Inclusive “We”	73
Forms of You	75

*Table of Contents*

---

How to Translate Names . . . . .	76
Idiom . . . . .	80
Inclusive “We” . . . . .	82
Metaphor . . . . .	83
Metonymy . . . . .	90
Personification . . . . .	92
Reflexive Pronouns . . . . .	94

## translationNotes

### Introduction to 3 John

#### Part 1: General Introduction

##### Outline of the Book of 3 John

1. Introduction (1:1)
2. Encouragement and instructions to show hospitality (1:2-8)
3. Diotrephes and Demetrius (1:9-12)
4. Conclusion (1:13-14)

##### Who wrote the Book of 3 John?

The letter does not give the name of the author. The author only identified himself as “the elder” (1:1). The letter was probably written by the Apostle John near the end of his life.

##### What is the Book of 3 John about?

John wrote this letter to a believer named Gaius. He instructed Gaius to be hospitable to fellow believers who were traveling through his area.

##### How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, “3 John” or “Third John.” Or they may choose a clearer title, such as “The Third Letter from John” or “The Third Letter John Wrote.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

#### Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

##### What is hospitality?

Hospitality was an important concept in the ancient Near East. It was important to be friendly towards foreigners or outsiders and provide help to them if they needed it. In 2 John, John discouraged Christians from showing hospitality to false teachers. In 3 John, John encouraged Christians to show hospitality to faithful teachers.

#### Part 3: Important Translation Issues

##### How does the author use family relationships in his letter?

The author used the terms “brother” and “children” in a way that can be confusing. The scriptures often used the term “brothers” to refer to Jews. But in this letter, John used the word to refer to

Christians. Also, John called some believers his “children.” These are believers he taught to obey Christ.

John also used the term “Gentile” in a way that could be confusing. The scriptures often used the term “Gentile” to refer to people who are not Jews. But in this letter, John used the word to refer to those who did not believe in Jesus.

**3 John 1:1-4****UDB:**

<sup>1</sup> You know me as the chief Elder. I am writing this letter to you, my dear friend Gaius, whom I truly love. <sup>2</sup> Dear friend, I ask God that things may go well for you in every way, and that you may be physically healthy just as you are healthy in respect to God. <sup>3</sup> I am very happy because some fellow believers have come here and told me that you live in accordance with the true message about Christ. They said that you are behaving in a manner that is consistent with God's truth. <sup>4</sup> I am very happy when I hear that people whom I helped to believe in Christ are living in a way that matches God's truth!

**ULB:**

<sup>1</sup> The elder to beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

<sup>2</sup> Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be healthy, just as it is well with your soul. <sup>3</sup> For I rejoiced greatly when brothers came and bore witness to your truth, just as you walk in truth. <sup>4</sup> I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children walk in the truth.

**translationNotes****General Information:**

This is a personal letter from John to Gaius. All instances of "you" and "your" refer to Gaius and are singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

**The elder**

This refers to John, the apostle and disciple of Jesus. He refers to himself as "elder" either because of his old age or because he is a leader in the church. The name of the author can be made explicit: "I, John the elder, am writing." (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

**Gaius**

This is a fellow believer to whom John is writing this letter. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

**whom I love in truth**

"whom I truly love"

**all may go well with you and that you may be healthy**

"you may do well in all things and be healthy"

**just as it is well with your soul**

“just as you are doing well spiritually”

**brothers came**

“fellow believers came.” These people were probably all male.

**you walk in truth**

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. AT: “you are living your life according to God’s truth” (See: [Metaphor](#))

**my children**

John speaks of those he taught to believe in Jesus as though they were his children. This emphasizes his love and concern for them. It could also be that he himself led them to the Lord. AT: “my spiritual children” (See: [Metaphor](#))

**translationWords**

- [elder, elders](#)
- [beloved](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [true, truth, truths](#)
- [pray, prayer, prayers, prayed](#)
- [soul, souls](#)
- [joy, joyful, joyfully, joyfulness, enjoy, enjoys, enjoyed, enjoying, enjoyment, rejoice, rejoices, rejoiced, rejoicing](#)
- [testimony, testify, witness, witnesses, eyewitness, eyewitnesses](#)
- [walk, walks, walked, walking](#)
- [joy, joyful, joyfully, joyfulness, enjoy, enjoys, enjoyed, enjoying, enjoyment, rejoice, rejoices, rejoiced, rejoicing](#)
- [children, child](#)

**Links:**

- [Introduction to 3 John](#)
- [3 John 1 translationQuestions](#)



### 3 John 1:5-8

#### UDB:

<sup>5</sup> Dear friend, you are serving Jesus loyally whenever you do things to help fellow believers, even strangers whom you do not know, who are traveling around doing God's work. <sup>6</sup> Some of them have reported before the congregation here how you have showed that you love them. You should continue to help such people do their work in a way that honors God.

<sup>7</sup> When those fellow believers went out to tell people about Jesus, they received no money from people who do not believe in Christ. <sup>8</sup> So we who believe in Christ ought to give food and money to such people as these, to work with them to help others know God's true message.

#### ULB:

<sup>5</sup> Beloved, you practice faithfulness whenever you work for the brothers and for strangers <sup>6</sup> who have borne witness of your love in the presence of the church. You do well to send them off on their journey in a manner worthy of God, <sup>7</sup> because it was for the sake of the name that they went out, taking nothing from the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup> We therefore should welcome such as these, so that we will be fellow workers for the truth.

#### translationNotes

##### Connecting Statement:

John's purpose in writing this letter is to compliment Gaius in the way he took care of traveling Bible teachers; then he talks about two people, one evil and one good.

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to John and those with him, and possibly includes all believers. (See: [Inclusive "We"](#))

##### Beloved

Here this is used as a term of endearment for fellow believers.

##### you practice faithfulness

"you are doing what is faithful to God" or "you are being loyal to God"

##### work for the brothers and for strangers

"help fellow believers and those you do not know"

**strangers who have borne witness of your love in the presence of the church**

“strangers who have told the believers in the church about how you have loved them”

**You do well to send them**

John is thanking Gaius for his normal practice of helping these believers.

**because it was for the sake of the name that they went out**

Here “the name” refers to Jesus. AT: “for they have gone out to tell people about Jesus” (See: [Metonymy](#))

**taking nothing**

receiving no gifts or help

**the Gentiles**

Here “Gentiles” does not just mean people who are not Jewish. It implies people who do not trust in Jesus.

**so that we will be fellow workers for the truth**

“so that we will cooperate with them in announcing God’s truth to people”

**translationWords**

- [beloved](#)
- [faithful, faithfulness, unfaithful, unfaithfulness](#)
- [works, deeds, work, acts](#)
- [brother, brothers](#)
- [testimony, testify, witness, witnesses, eyewitness, eyewitnesses](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [church, churches, Church](#)
- [worthy, worth, unworthy, worthless](#)
- [God](#)
- [Gentile, Gentiles](#)
- [true, truth, truths](#)

**Links:**

- [Introduction to 3 John](#)
- [3 John 1 translationQuestions](#)

**3 John 1:9-10****UDB:**

<sup>9</sup> I wrote a letter to your group of believers to tell them to help those other believers. However, Diotrephes does not accept my letter, because he wants to dominate you. <sup>10</sup> So when I arrive there I will publicly tell everyone what he does: He tells others evil nonsense about us in order to harm us by what he says. He is not content with only doing that, but he himself also refuses to welcome the fellow believers who are traveling around doing God's work. And those who want to welcome them—he stops them by making them leave the congregation.

**ULB:**

<sup>9</sup> I wrote something to the congregation, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not receive us. <sup>10</sup> So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. Not satisfied with that, he not only refused to welcome the brothers himself, but he also stops those who want to welcome them and puts them out of the church.

**translationNotes****General Information:**

The word “us” refers to John and those with him and does not include Gaius. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive “We”](#))

**congregation**

This refers to Gaius and the group of believers who met together to worship God.

**Diotrephes**

He was a member of the congregation. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

**who loves to be first among them**

“who loves to be the most important one among them” or “who loves to act as though he's their leader”

**talking wicked nonsense against us**

“and how he says evil things about us that certainly are not true”

**refused to welcome the brothers**

“did not welcome the fellow believers”

**stops those who want to welcome them**

“stops those who want to welcome the believers”

**puts them out of the church**

“he forces them to leave the congregation”

**translationWords**

- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [receive, receives, received, receiving, receiver](#)
- [works, deeds, work, acts](#)
- [evil, wicked, wickedness](#)
- [brother, brothers](#)

**Links:**

- [Introduction to 3 John](#)
- [3 John 1 translationQuestions](#)

**3 John 1:11-12****UDB:**

<sup>11</sup> Dear friend, do not imitate a bad example like that. Instead, keep imitating good examples. Remember that people who do good deeds truly belong to God. Anyone who keeps doing what is bad has never seen God.

<sup>12</sup> All the believers who know Demetrius say that he is a good person. If the truth were a person, he would say the same thing! We also say he is a good person, and you know that what we say about him is true.

**ULB:**

<sup>11</sup> Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. The one who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God. <sup>12</sup> Demetrius is borne witness to by all and by the truth itself. We also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.

**translationNotes****General Information:**

Here “we” refers to John and those with him and does not include Gaius. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive “We”](#))

**Beloved**

Here this is used as a term of endearment for fellow believers. See how you translated this in [3 John 1:5](#).

**do not imitate what is evil**

“do not copy the evil things that people do”

**but what is good**

There are words left out but they are understood. AT: “but imitate the good things that people do” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

**is of God**

“belongs to God”

**has not seen God**

“does not belong to God” or “does not believe in God”

**Demetrius is borne witness to by all**

This can be stated in active form. AT: “All who know Demetrius bear witness of him” or “Every believer who knows Demetrius speaks well of him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**Demetrius**

This is probably a man whom John wants Gaius and the congregation to welcome when he comes to visit. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

**by the truth itself**

“the truth itself speaks well of him.” Here “truth” is described as a person speaking. AT: “everyone who knows the truth knows he is a good person” (See: [Personification](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Reflexive Pronouns](#))

**We also bear witness**

What John is confirming is implied and can be made specific here. AT: “We also speak well of Demetrius” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

**translationWords**

- [beloved](#)
- [imitate, imitator, imitators](#)
- [evil, wicked, wickedness](#)
- [good, goodness](#)
- [God](#)
- [testimony, testify, witness, witnesses, eyewitness, eyewitnesses](#)
- [true, truth, truths](#)
- [testimony, testify, witness, witnesses, eyewitness, eyewitnesses](#)

**Links:**

- [Introduction to 3 John](#)
- [3 John 1 translationQuestions](#)

### 3 John 1:13-15

**UDB:**

<sup>13</sup> When I began to write this letter, I had much more that I intended to tell you. But now I do not want to say it in a letter. <sup>14</sup> Instead, I expect to come and see you soon. Then we will talk directly with one another. <sup>15</sup> May God give his peace to you. The friends here send you greetings. Please give our greetings to all our friends there, personally and by name.

**ULB:**

<sup>13</sup> I had many things to write to you, but I do not wish to write them to you with pen and ink. <sup>14</sup> But I expect to see you soon, and we will speak face to face. <sup>15</sup> May peace be with you. The friends greet you. Greet our friends there by name.

**translationNotes****General Information:**

This is the end of John's letter to Gaius. He gives some final remarks and closes with a greeting.

**I do not wish to write them to you with pen and ink**

John does not wish to write these other things at all. He is not saying that he would write them with something other than pen and ink.

**face to face**

"Face to face" here is an idiom, meaning "in person." AT: "in person" (See: [Idiom](#))

**May peace be with you**

"May God give you peace"

**The friends greet you**

"The friends here greet you"

**Greet our friends there by name**

"Greet each of the believers there for me"

**translationWords**

- [face, faces, faced, facing, facial, facedown](#)
- [peace, peaceful, peacefully, peaceable, peacemakers](#)

**Links:**

- [Introduction to 3 John](#)
- [3 John 1 translationQuestions](#)



## translationQuestions

### 3 John 1

**By what title does the author John introduce himself in this letter?**

John introduces himself as the elder. [1:1]

**What relationship does John have with Gaius, the one receiving this letter?**

John loves Gaius in truth. [1:1]

**For what does John pray concerning Gaius?**

John prays that Gaius would prosper in all things and be in health, as his soul prospers. [1:2]

**What is John's greatest joy?**

John's greatest joy is to hear that his children walk in the truth. [1:4]

**Who did Gaius welcome and then send out on their journey?**

Gaius welcomed and then sent out on their journey some who were going out for the sake of the Name. [1:6]

**Who did Gaius welcome and then send out on their journey?**

Gaius welcomed and then sent out on their journey some who were going out for the sake of the Name. [1:7]

**Who did Gaius welcome and then send out on their journey?**

Gaius welcomed and then sent out on their journey some who were going out for the sake of the Name. [1:8]

**Why does John say believers should welcome brothers such as these?**

John says believers should welcome them so that they may be fellow-workers for the truth. [1:8]

**What does Diotrephes love?**

Diotrephes loves to be first among the congregation. [1:9]

**What is Diotrephes' attitude toward John?**

Diotrephes does not receive John. [1:9]

**What will John do if he comes to Gaius and the congregation?**

If John comes he will remember Diotrephes' evil deeds. [1:10]

**What does Diotrephes do with the brothers going forth for the Name?**

Diotrephes does not receive the brothers. [1:10]

**What does Diotrephes do with those who receive the brothers going forth for the Name?**

Diotrephes forbids them from receiving the brothers, and drives them out of the congregation. [1:10]

**What does John tell Gaius to imitate?**

John tells Gaius to imitate good. [1:11]

**What does John hope to do in the future?**

John hopes to come and speak with Gaius face to face. [1:14]

## translationWords

### beloved

#### Definition:

The term “beloved” is an expression of affection that describes someone who is loved and dear to someone else.

- The term “beloved” literally means “loved (one)” or “(who is) loved.”
- God refers to Jesus as his “beloved Son.”
- In their letters to Christian churches, the apostles frequently address their fellow believers as “beloved.”

#### Translation Suggestions:

- This term could also be translated as “loved” or “loved one” or “well-loved,” or “very dear.”
- In the context of talking about a close friend, this could be translated as “my dear friend” or “my close friend.” In English it is natural to say “my dear friend, Paul” or “Paul, who is my dear friend.” Other languages may find it more natural to order this in a different way.
- Note that the word “beloved” comes from the word for God’s love, which is unconditional, unselfish, and sacrificial.

(See also: [love](#))

#### Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 04:14-16
- 1 John 03:1-3
- 1 John 04:7-8
- Mark 01:9-11
- Mark 12:6-7
- [Revelation 20:9-10](#)
- Romans 16:6-8
- Song of Solomon 01:12-14

#### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H157, H1730, H2532, H3033, H3039, H4261, G25, G27, G5207

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:1-4
- 3 John 1:5-8
- 3 John 1:11-12

## **brother, brothers**

### **Definition:**

The term “brother” usually refers to a male person who shares at least one biological parent with another person.

- In the Old Testament, the term “brothers” is also used as a general reference to relatives, such as members of the same tribe, clan, or people group.
- In the New Testament, the apostles often used “brothers” to refer to fellow Christians, including both men and women, since all believers in Christ are members of one spiritual family, with God as their heavenly Father.
- A few times in the New Testament, the apostles used the term “sister” when referring specifically to a fellow Christian who was a woman, or to emphasize that both men and women are being included. For example, James emphasizes that he is talking about all believers when he refers to “a brother or sister who is in need of food or clothing.”

### **Translation Suggestions:**

- It is best to translate this term with the literal word that is used in the target language to refer to a natural or biological brother, unless this would give wrong meaning.
- In the Old Testament especially, when “brothers” is used very generally to refer to members of the same family, clan, or people group, possible translations could include “relatives” or “clan members” or “fellow Israelites.”
- In the context of referring to a fellow believer in Christ, this term could be translated as “brother in Christ” or “spiritual brother.”
- If both males and females are being referred to and “brother” would give a wrong meaning, then a more general kinship term could be used that would include both males and females.
- Other ways to translate this term so that it refers to both male and female believers could be “fellow believers” or “Christian brothers and sisters.”
- Make sure to check the context to determine whether only men are being referred to, or whether both men and women are included.

(See also: apostle, God the Father, sister, spirit)

### **Bible References:**

- Acts 07:26-28
- Genesis 29:9-10
- Leviticus 19:17-18
- Nehemiah 03:1-2
- Philippians 04:21-23
- **Revelation 01:9-11**

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H251, H252, H264, H1730, H2992, H2993, H2994, H7453, G80, G81, G2385, G2455, G2500, G4613, G5360, G5569

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:5-8
- 3 John 1:9-10

## children, child

### Definition:

In the Bible, the term “child” is often used to generally refer to someone who is young in age, including an infant. The term “children” is the plural form and it also has several figurative uses.

- In the Bible, disciples or followers are sometimes called “children.”
- Often the term “children” is used to refer to a person’s descendants.
- The phrase “children of” can refer to being characterized by something. Some examples of this would be:
  - children of the light
  - children of obedience
  - children of the devil
- This term can also refer to people who are like spiritual children. For example, “children of God” refers to people who belong to God through faith in Jesus.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “children” could be translated as “descendants” when it is referring to a person’s great-grandchildren or great-great-grandchildren, etc.
- Depending on the context, “children of” could be translated as, “people who have the characteristics of” or “people who behave like.”
- If possible, the phrase, “children of God” should be translated literally since an important biblical theme is that God is our heavenly Father. A possible translation alternate would be, “people who belong to God” or “God’s spiritual children.”
- When Jesus calls his disciples “children,” this could also be translated as, “dear friends” or “my beloved disciples.”
- When Paul and John refer to believers in Jesus as “children,” this could also be translated as “dear fellow believers.”
- The phrase, “children of the promise” could be translated as, “people who have received what God promised them.”

(See also: descendant, promise, son, spirit, believe, [beloved](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 John 02:27-29
- [3 John 01:1-4](#)
- Galatians 04:19-20
- Genesis 45:9-11
- Joshua 08:34-35
- Nehemiah 05:4-5

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H1069, H1121, H1123, H1129, H1323, H1397, H1580, H2029, H2030, H2056, H2138, H2145, H2233, H2945, H3173, H3205, H3206, H3208, H3211, H3243, H3490, H4392, H5271, H5288, H5290, H5759, H5764, H5768, H5953, H6185, H7908, H7909, H7921, G730, G815, G1025, G1064, G1471, G3439, G3515, G3516, G3808, G3812, G3813, G3816, G5040, G5041, G5042, G5043, G5044, G5206, G5207, G5388

**Uses:**

- [3 John 1:1-4](#)



## **church, churches, Church**

### **Definition:**

In the New Testament, the term “church” refers to a local group of believers in Jesus who regularly met together to pray and hear God’s word preached. The term “the Church” often refers to all Christians.

- This term literally refers to a “called out” assembly or congregation of people who meet together for a special purpose.
- When this term is used to refer to all believers everywhere in the whole body of Christ, some Bible translations capitalize the first letter (“Church”) to distinguish it from the local church.
- Often the believers in a particular city would meet together in someone’s home. These local churches were given the name of the city such as the “church at Ephesus.”
- In the Bible, “church” does not refer to a building.

### **Translation Suggestions:**

- The term “church” could be translated as a “gathering together” or “assembly” or “congregation” or “ones who meet together.”
- The word or phrase that is used to translate this term should also be able to refer to all believers, not just one small group.
- Make sure that the translation of “church” does not just refer to a building.
- The term used to translate “assembly” in the Old Testament could also be used to translate this term.
- Also consider how it is translated in a local or national Bible translation. (See: How to Translate Unknowns.)

(See also: assembly, believe, Christian)

### **Bible References:**

- 1 Corinthians 05:11-13
- 1 Thessalonians 02:14-16
- 1 Timothy 03:4-5
- Acts 09:31-32
- Acts 14:23-26
- Acts 15:39-41
- Colossians 04:15-17
- Ephesians 05:22-24
- Matthew 16:17-18
- Philippians 04:14-17

**Examples from the Bible stories:**

- **43:12** About 3,000 people believed what Peter said and became disciples of Jesus. They were baptized and became part of the **church** at Jerusalem.
- **46:09** Most of the people in Antioch were not Jews, but for the first time, very many of them also became believers. Barnabas and Saul went there to teach these new believers more about Jesus and to strengthen the **church**.
- **46:10** So the **church** in Antioch prayed for Barnabas and Saul and placed their hands on them. Then they sent them off to preach the good news of Jesus in many other places.
- **47:13** The good news of Jesus kept spreading, and the **Church** kept growing.
- **50:01** For almost 2,000 years, more and more people around the world have been hearing the good news about Jesus the Messiah. The **Church** has been growing.

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: G1577

**Uses:**

- **3 John 1:5-8**

## elder, elders

### Definition:

Elders are spiritually mature men who have responsibilities of spiritual and practical leadership among God's people.

- The term "elder" came from the fact that elders were originally older men who, because of their age and experience, had greater wisdom.
- In the Old Testament, the elders helped lead the Israelites in matters of social justice and the Law of Moses.
- In the New Testament, Jewish elders continued to be leaders in their communities and also were judges for the people.
- In the early Christian churches, Christian elders gave spiritual leadership to the local assemblies of believers.
- Elders in these churches included young men who were spiritually mature.
- This term could be translated as "older men" or "spiritually mature men leading the church."

### Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:1-3
- 1 Timothy 03:1-3
- 1 Timothy 04:14-16
- Acts 05:19-21
- Acts 14:23-26
- Mark 11:27-28
- Matthew 21:23-24

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H1419, H2205, H7868, G1087, G3187, G4244, G4245, G4850

### Uses:

- [3 John 1:1-4](#)

## evil, wicked, wickedness

### Definition:

The terms “evil” and “wicked” both refer to anything that is opposed to God’s holy character and will.

- While “evil” may describe a person’s character, “wicked” may refer more to a person’s behavior. However, both terms are very similar in meaning.
- The term “wickedness” refers to the state of being that exists when people do wicked things.
- The results of evil are clearly shown in how people mistreat others by killing, stealing, slandering and being cruel and unkind.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the terms “evil” and “wicked” can be translated as “bad” or “sinful” or “immoral.”
- Other ways to translate these could include “not good” or “not righteous” or “not moral.”
- Make sure the words or phrases that are used to translate these terms fit the context that is natural in the target language.

(See also: disobey, sin, **good**, righteous, demon)

### Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:10-11
- 1 Timothy 06:9-10
- **3 John 01:9-10**
- Genesis 02:15-17
- Genesis 06:5-6
- Job 01:1-3
- Job 08:19-20
- Judges 09:55-57
- Luke 06:22-23
- Matthew 07:11-12
- Proverbs 03:7-8
- Psalms 022:16-17

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **02:04** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand good and **evil** like he does.”

- **03:01** After a long time, many people were living in the world. They had become very **wicked** and violent.
- **03:02** But Noah found favor with God. He was a righteous man living among **wicked** people.
- **04:02** God saw that if they all kept working together to do **evil**, they could do many more sinful things.
- **08:12** "You tried to do **evil** when you sold me as a slave, but God used the **evil** for good!"
- **14:02** They (Canaanites) worshiped false gods and did many **evil** things.
- **17:01** But then he (Saul) became a **wicked** man who did not obey God, so God chose a different man who would one day be king in his place.
- **18:11** In the new kingdom of Israel, all the kings were **evil**.
- **29:08** The king was so angry that he threw the **wicked** servant into prison until he could pay back all of his debt.
- **45:02** They said, "We heard him (Stephen) speak **evil** things about Moses and God!"
- **50:17** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, **evil**, pain, or death.

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H205, H605, H1100, H1681, H1942, H2154, H2162, H2617, H3415, H4209, H4849, H5753, H5766, H5767, H5999, H6001, H6090, H7451, H7455, H7489, H7561, H7562, H7563, H7564, G92, G113, G459, G932, G987, G988, G1426, G2549, G2551, G2554, G2555, G2556, G2557, G2559, G2560, G2635, G2636, G4151, G4189, G4190, G4191, G5337

**Uses:**

- **3 John 1:9-10**
- **3 John 1:11-12**

## face, faces, faced, facing, facial, facedown

### Definition:

The word “face” literally refers to the front part of a person’s head. This term also has several figurative meanings.

- The expression “your face” is often a figurative way of saying “you.” Similarly, the expression “my face” often means “I” or “me.”
- In a physical sense, to “face” someone or something means to look in the direction of that person or thing.
- To “face each other” means to “look directly at each other.”
- Being “face to face” means that two people are seeing each other in person, at a close distance.
- When Jesus “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,” it means that he very firmly decided to go.
- To “set one’s face against” people or a city means to firmly decide to no longer support, or to reject that city or person.
- The expression “face of the land” refers to the surface of the earth and often is a general reference to the whole earth. For example, a “famine covering the face of the earth” refers to a widespread famine affecting many people living on earth.
- The figurative expression “do not hide your face from your people” means “do not reject your people” or “do not desert your people” or “do not stop taking care of your people.”

### Translation Suggestions:

- If possible, it is best to keep the expression or use an expression in the project language that has a similar meaning.
- The term to “face” could be translated as to “turn toward” or to “look at directly” or to “look at the face of.”
- The expression “face to face” could be translated as “up close” or “right in front of” or “in the presence of.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “before his face” could be translated as “ahead of him” or “in front of him” or “before him” or “in his presence.”
- The expression “set his face toward” could be translated as “began traveling toward” or “firmly made up his mind to go to.”
- The expression “hide his face from” could be translated as “turn away from” or “stop helping or protecting” or “reject.”
- To “set his face against” a city or people could be translated as “look at with anger and condemn” or “refuse to accept” or “decide to reject” or “condemn and reject” or “pass judgment on.”
- The expression “say it to their face” could be translated as “say it to them directly” or “say it to them in their presence” or “say it to them in person.”
- The expression “on the face of the land” could also be translated as “throughout the land” or “over the whole earth” or “living throughout the earth.”

**Bible References:**

- Deuteronomy 05:4-6
- Genesis 33:9-11

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H600, H639, H5869, H6440, H8389, G3799, G4383, G4750

**Uses:**

- [3 John 1:13-15](#)

## faithful, faithfulness, unfaithful, unfaithfulness

### Definition:

To be “faithful” to God means to consistently live according to God’s teachings. It means to be loyal to him by obeying him. The state or condition of being faithful is “faithfulness.”

- A person who is faithful can be trusted to always keep his promises and to always fulfill his responsibilities to other people.
- A faithful person perseveres in doing a task, even when it is long and difficult.
- Faithfulness to God is the consistent practice of doing what God wants us to do.

The term “unfaithful” describes people who do not do what God has commanded them to do. The condition or practice of being unfaithful is “unfaithfulness.”

- The people of Israel were called “unfaithful” when they began to worship idols and when they disobeyed God in other ways.
- In marriage, someone who commits adultery is “unfaithful” to his or her spouse.
- God used the term “unfaithfulness” to describe Israel’s disobedient behavior. They were not obeying God or honoring him.

### Translation Suggestions:

- In many contexts, “faithful” can be translated as “loyal” or “dedicated” or “dependable.”
- In other contexts, “faithful” can be translated by a word or phrase that means “continuing to believe” or “persevering in believing and obeying God.”
- Ways that “faithfulness” could be translated could include “persevering in believing” or “loyalty” or “trustworthiness” or “believing and obeying God.”
- Depending on the context, “unfaithful” could be translated as “not faithful” or “unbelieving” or “not obedient” or “not loyal.”
- The phrase “the unfaithful” could be translated as “people who are not faithful (to God)” or “unfaithful people” or “those who disobey God” or “people who rebel against God.”
- The term “unfaithfulness” could be translated as “disobedience” or “disloyalty” or “not believing or obeying.”
- In some languages, the term “unfaithful” is related to the word for “unbelief.”

(See also: adultery, believe, disobey, faith, believe)

### Bible References:

- Genesis 24:49
- Leviticus 26:40-42
- Numbers 12:6-8
- Joshua 02:14



- Judges 02:16-17
- 1 Samuel 02:9
- Psalm 012:1
- Proverbs 11:12-13
- Isaiah 01:26
- Jeremiah 09:7-9
- Hosea 05:5-7
- Luke 12:45-46
- Luke 16:10-12
- Colossians 01:7-8
- 1 Thessalonians 05:23-24
- **3 John 01:5-8**

#### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **08:05** Even in prison, Joseph remained **faithful** to God, and God blessed him.
- **14:12** Even so, God was still **faithful** to His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- **15:13** The people promised to remain **faithful** to God and follow his laws.
- **17:09** David ruled with justice and **faithfulness** for many years, and God blessed him. However, toward the end of his life he sinned terribly against God.
- **18:04** God was angry with Solomon and, as a punishment for Solomon's **unfaithfulness**, he promised to divide the nation of Israel into two kingdoms after Solomon's death.
- **35:12** "The older son said to his father, 'All these years I have worked **faithfully** for you!'"
- **49:17** But God is **faithful** and says that if you confess your sins, he will forgive you.
- **50:04** If you remain **faithful** to me to the end, then God will save you."

#### Word Data:

- Strong's: H529, H530, H539, H540, H571, H898, H2181, H4603, H4604, H4820, G569, G571, G4103

#### Uses:

- **3 John 1:5-8**

## Gentile, Gentiles

### Facts:

The term “Gentile” refers to anyone who is not a Jew. Gentiles are people who are not descendants of Jacob.

- In the Bible, the term “uncircumcised” is also used figuratively to refer to Gentiles because many of them did not circumcise their male children as the Israelites did.
- Because God chose the Jews to be his special people, they thought of the Gentiles as outsiders who could never be God’s people.
- The Jews were also called “Israelites” or “Hebrews” at different times in history. They referred to anyone else as a “Gentile.”
- Gentile could also be translated as “not a Jew” or “non-Jewish” or “not an Israelite” (Old Testament) or “non-Jew.”
- Traditionally, Jews would neither eat with nor associate with Gentiles, which at first caused problems within the early church.

(See also: Israel, Jacob, Jew)

### Bible References:

- Acts 09:13-16
- Acts 14:5-7
- Galatians 02:15-16
- Luke 02:30-32
- Matthew 05:46-48
- Matthew 06:5-7
- Romans 11:25

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1471, G1482, G1484, G1672### Uses:
- [3 John 1:5-8](#)

## God

### Facts:

In the Bible, the term “God” refers to the eternal being who created the universe out of nothing. God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God’s personal name is “Yahweh.”

- God has always existed; he existed before anything else existed, and he will continue to exist forever.
- He is the only true God and has authority over everything in the universe.
- God is perfectly righteous, infinitely wise, holy, sinless, just, merciful, and loving.
- He is a covenant-keeping God, who always fulfills his promises.
- People were created to worship God and he is the only one they should worship.
- God revealed his name as “Yahweh,” which means “he is” or “I am” or “the One who (always) exists.”
- The Bible also teaches about false “gods,” which are nonliving idols that people wrongly worship.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “God” could include “Deity” or “Creator” or “Supreme Being.”
- Other ways to translate “God” could be “Supreme Creator” or “Infinite Sovereign Lord” or “Eternal Supreme Being.”
- Consider how God is referred to in a local or national language. There may also already be a word for “God” in the language being translated. If so, it is important to make sure that this word fits the characteristics of the one true God as described above.
- Many languages capitalize the first letter of the word for the one true God, to distinguish it from the word for a false god.
- Another way to make this distinction would be to use different terms for “God” and “god.”
- The phrase “I will be their God and they will be my people” could also be translated as “I, God, will rule over these people and they will worship me.”

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: create, false god, God the Father, Holy Spirit, false god, Son of God, Yahweh)

### Bible References:

- 1 John 01:5-7
- 1 Samuel 10:7-8
- 1 Timothy 04:9-10
- Colossians 01:15-17
- Deuteronomy 29:14-16
- Ezra 03:1-2

- Genesis 01:1-2
- Hosea 04:11-12
- Isaiah 36:6-7
- James 02:18-20
- Jeremiah 05:4-6
- John 01:1-3
- Joshua 03:9-11
- Lamentations 03:40-43
- Micah 04:4-5
- Philippians 02:5-8
- Proverbs 24:11-12
- Psalms 047:8-9

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **01:01 God** created the universe and everything in it in six days.
- **01:15 God** made man and woman in his own image.
- **05:03** "I am **God** Almighty. I will make a covenant with you."
- **09:14 God** said, "I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, 'I AM has sent me to you.' Also tell them, 'I am Yahweh, the **God** of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name forever.'"
- **10:02** Through these plagues, **God** showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's gods.
- **16:01** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the true **God**.
- **22:07** You, my son, will be called the prophet of the **Most High God** who will prepare the people to receive the Messiah!"
- **24:09** There is only one **God**. But John heard **God** the Father speak, and saw Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit when he baptized Jesus.
- **25:07** "Worship only the Lord your **God** and only serve him."
- **28:01** "There is only one who is good, and that is **God**."
- **49:09** But **God** loved everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with **God** forever.
- **50:16** But some day **God** will create a new heaven and a new earth that will be perfect.

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H136, H305, H410, H426, H430, H433, H2486, H2623, H3068, H3069, H3863, H4136, H6697, G112, G516, G932, G935, G1096, G1140, G2098, G2124, G2128, G2150, G2152, G2153, G2299, G2304, G2305, G2312, G2313, G2314, G2315, G2316, G2317, G2318, G2319, G2320, G3361, G3785, G4151, G5207, G5377, G5463, G5537, G5538

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:5-8
- 3 John 1:11-12

## good, goodness

### Definition:

The word “good” has different meanings depending on the context. Many languages will use different words to translate these different meanings.

- In general, something is good if it fits with God’s character, purposes, and will.
- Something that is “good” could be pleasing, excellent, helpful, suitable, profitable, or morally right.
- Land that is “good” could be called “fertile” or “productive.”
- A “good” crop could be a “plentiful” crop.
- A person can be “good” at what they do if they are skillful at their task or profession, as in, the expression, “a good farmer.”
- In the Bible, the general meaning of “good” is often contrasted with “evil.”
- The term “goodness” usually refers to being morally good or righteous in thoughts and actions.
- The goodness of God refers to how he blesses people by giving them good and beneficial things. It also can refer to his moral perfection.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The general term for “good” in the target language should be used wherever this general meaning is accurate and natural, especially in contexts where it is contrasted to evil.
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “kind” or “excellent” or “pleasing to God” or “righteous” or “morally upright” or “profitable.”
- “Good land” could be translated as “fertile land” or “productive land”; a “good crop” could be translated as a “plentiful harvest” or “large amount of crops.”
- The phrase “do good to” means to do something that benefits others and could be translated as “be kind to” or “help” or “benefit” someone.
- To “do good on the Sabbath” means to “do things that help others on the Sabbath.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate the term “goodness” could include “blessing” or “kindness” or “moral perfection” or “righteousness” or “purity.”

(See also: [evil](#), holy, profit, righteous)

### Bible References:

- Galatians 05:22-24
- Genesis 01:11-13
- Genesis 02:9-10
- Genesis 02:15-17
- James 03:13-14
- Romans 02:3-4

**Examples from the Bible stories:**

- **01:04** God saw that what he had created was **good**.
- **01:11** God planted the tree of the knowledge of **good** and evil.”
- **01:12** Then God said, ”It is not **good** for man to be alone.”
- **02:04** ”God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand **good** and evil like he does.”
- **08:12** ”You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, but God used the evil for **good!**”
- **14:15** Joshua was a **good** leader because he trusted and obeyed God.
- **18:13** Some of these kings were **good** men who ruled justly and worshiped God.
- **28:01** ”**Good** teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?” Jesus said to him, ”Why do you call me ’**good?**’ There is only one who is **good**, and that is God.”

**Word Data:**

- Strong’s: H117, H145, H155, H202, H239, H410, H1580, H1926, H1935, H2532, H2617, H2623, H2869, H2895, H2896, H2898, H3190, H3191, H3276, H3474, H3788, H3966, H4261, H4399, H5232, H5750, H6287, H6643, H6743, H7075, H7368, H7399, H7443, H7999, H8231, H8232, H8233, H8389, H8458, G14, G15, G18, G19, G515, G744, G865, G979, G1380, G2095, G2097, G2106, G2107, G2108, G2109, G2114, G2115, G2133, G2140, G2162, G2163, G2174, G2293, G2565, G2567, G2570, G2573, G2887, G2986, G3140, G3617, G3776, G4147, G4632, G4674, G4851, G5223, G5224, G5358, G5542, G5543, G5544

**Uses:**

- **3 John 1:11-12**

## imitate, imitator, imitators

### Definition:

The terms “imitate” and “imitator” refers to copying someone else by acting exactly like that person does.

- Christians are taught to imitate Jesus Christ by obeying God and loving others, just as Jesus did.
- The apostle Paul told the early church to imitate him, just as he imitated Christ.

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “imitate” could be translated as “do the same things as” or “follow his example.”
- The expression “be imitators of God” could be translated as “be people who act like God does” or “be people who do the kinds of things God does.”
- “You became imitators of us” could be translated as “You followed our example” or “You are doing the same kinds of godly things that you saw us do.”

### Bible References:

- [3 John 01:11-12](#)
- Matthew 23:1-3

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H310, H6213, G1096, G2596, G3401, G3402, G4160

### Uses:

- [3 John 1:11-12](#)



## **joy, joyful, joyfully, joyfulness, enjoy, enjoys, enjoyed, enjoying, enjoyment, rejoice, rejoices, rejoiced, rejoicing**

### **Definition:**

Joy is a feeling of delight or deep satisfaction that comes from God. The related term “joyful” describes a person who feels very glad and is full of deep happiness.

- A person feels joy when he has a deep sense that what he is experiencing is very good.
- God is the one who gives true joy to people.
- Having joy does not depend on pleasant circumstances. God can give people joy even when very difficult things are happening in their lives.
- Sometimes places are described as joyful, such as houses or cities. This means that the people who live there are joyful.

The term “rejoice” means to be full of joy and gladness.

- This term often refers to being very happy about the good things that God has done.
- It could be translated as “be very happy” or “be very glad” or “be full of joy.”
- When Mary said “my soul rejoices in God my Savior,” she meant “God my Savior has made me very happy” or “I feel so joyful because of what God my Savior has done for me.”

### **Translation Suggestions:**

- The term “joy” could also be translated as “gladness” or “delight” or “great happiness.”
- The phrase, “be joyful” could be translated as “rejoice” or “be very glad” or it could be translated “be very happy in God’s goodness.”
- A person who is joyful could be described as “very happy” or “delighted” or “deeply glad.”
- A phrase such as “make a joyful shout” could be translated as “shout in a way that shows you are very happy.”
- A “joyful city” or “joyful house” could be translated as “city where joyful people live” or “house full of joyful people” or “city whose people are very happy.” (See: [metonymy](#))

### **Bible References:**

- Nehemiah 08:9-10
- Psalm 048:1-3
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- Matthew 02:9-10
- Luke 15:6-7
- Luke 19:37-38
- John 03:29-30
- Acts 16:32-34

- Romans 05:1-2
- Romans 15:30-32
- Galatians 05:22-24
- Philippians 04:10-13
- 1 Thessalonians 01:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 05:15-18
- Philemon 01:4-7
- James 01:1-3
- 3 John 01:1-4

#### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **33:07** "The rocky ground is a person who hears God's word and accepts it with **joy**."
- **34:04** "The kingdom of God is also like hidden treasure that someone hid in a field.. Another man found the treasure and then buried it again. He was so filled with **joy**, that he went and sold everything he had and used the money to buy that field."
- **41:07** The women were full of fear and great **joy**. They ran to tell the disciples the good news.

#### Word Data:

- Strong's: H1523, H1524, H1525, H1750, H2302, H2304, H2305, H2654, H2898, H4885, H5937, H5938, H5947, H5965, H5970, H6342, H6670, H7440, H7442, H7444, H7445, H7797, H7832, H8055, H8056, H8057, H8342, H8643, G20, G21, G2165, G2167, G2620, G2744, G2745, G3685, G4640, G4796, G4913, G5463, G5479

#### Uses:

- 3 John 1:1-4
- 3 John 1:1-4

## love, loves, loving, loved

### Definition:

To love another person is to care for that person and do things that will benefit him. There are different meanings for “love” some languages may express using different words:

1. The kind of love that comes from God is focused on the good of others even when it doesn't benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do. God himself is love and is the source of true love.
2. Jesus showed this kind of love by sacrificing his life in order to rescue us from sin and death. He also taught his followers to love others sacrificially.
3. When people love others with this kind of love, they act in ways that show they are thinking of what will cause the others to thrive. This kind of love especially includes forgiving others.
4. In the ULB, the word “love” refers to this kind of sacrificial love, unless a Translation Note indicates a different meaning.
5. Another word in the New Testament refers to brotherly love, or love for a friend or family member.
6. This term refers to natural human love between friends or relatives.
7. The term can also be used in such contexts as, “They love to sit in the most important seats at a banquet.” This means that they “like very much” or “greatly desire” to do that.
8. The word “love” can also refer to romantic love between a man and a woman.
9. In the figurative expression “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated,” the term “loved” refers to God's choosing of Jacob to be in a covenant relationship with him. This could also be translated as “chosen.” Although Esau was also blessed by God, he wasn't given the privilege of being in the covenant. The term “hated” is used figuratively here to mean “rejected” or “not chosen.”

### Translation Suggestions:

- Unless indicated otherwise in a Translation Note, the word “love” in the ULB refers to the kind of sacrificial love that comes from God.
- Some languages may have a special word for the kind of unselfish, sacrificial love that God has. Ways to translate this might include, “devoted, faithful caring” or “care for unselfishly” or “love from God.” Make sure that the word used to translate God's love can include giving up one's own interests to benefit others and loving others no matter what they do.
- Sometimes the English word “love” describes the deep caring that people have for friends and family members. Some languages might translate this with a word or phrase that means, “like very much” or “care for” or “have strong affection for.”
- In contexts where the word “love” is used to express a strong preference for something, this could be translated by “strongly prefer” or “like very much” or “greatly desire.”
- Some languages may also have a separate word that refers to romantic or sexual love between a husband and wife.

- Many languages must express “love” as an action. So for example, they might translate “love is patient, love is kind” as, “when a person loves someone, he is patient with him and kind to him.”

(See also: covenant, death, sacrifice, save, sin)

### Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
- 1 John 03:1-3
- 1 Thessalonians 04:9-12
- Galatians 05:22-24
- Genesis 29:15-18
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Jeremiah 02:1-3
- John 03:16-18
- Matthew 10:37-39
- Nehemiah 09:32-34
- Philippians 01:9-11
- Song of Solomon 01:1-4

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:02** The law expert replied that God’s law says, “**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And **love** your neighbor as yourself.”
- **33:08** “The thorny ground is a person who hears God’s word, but, as time passes, the cares, riches, and pleasures of life choke out his **love** for God.”
- **36:05** As Peter was talking, a bright cloud came down on top of them and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son whom I **love**.”
- **39:10** “Everyone who **loves** the truth listens to me.”
- **47:01** She (Lydia) **loved** and worshiped God.
- **48:01** When God created the world, everything was perfect. There was no sin. Adam and Eve **loved** each other, and they **loved** God.
- **49:03** He (Jesus) taught that you need to **love** other people the same way you love yourself.
- **49:04** He (Jesus) also taught that you need to **love** God more than you **love** anything else, including your wealth.
- **49:07** Jesus taught that God **loves** sinners very much.
- **49:09** But God **loved** everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with God forever.
- **49:13** God **loves** you and wants you to believe in Jesus so he can have a close relationship with you.

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H157, H158, H159, H160, H2245, H2617, H2836, H3039, H4261, H5689, H5690, H5691, H7355, H7356, H7453, H7474, G25, G26, G5360, G5361, G5362, G5363, G5365, G5367, G5368, G5369, G5377, G5381, G5382, G5383, G5388

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:1-4
- 3 John 1:5-8
- 3 John 1:9-10

## peace, peaceful, peacefully, peaceable, peacemakers

### Definition:

The term “peace” refers to a state of being or a feeling of having no conflict, anxiety, or fearfulness. A person who is “peaceful” feels calm and assured of being safe and secure.

- “Peace” can also refer to a time when people groups or countries are not at war with each other. These people are said to have “peaceful relations.”
- To “make peace” with a person or a group of people means to take actions to cause fighting to stop.
- A “peacemaker” is someone who does and says things to influence people to live at peace with each other.
- To be “at peace” with other people means being in a state of not fighting against those people.
- A good or right relationship between God and people happens when God saves people from their sin. This is called having “peace with God.”
- The greeting “grace and peace” was used by the apostles in their letters to their fellow believers as a blessing.
- The term “peace” can also refer to being in a good relationship with other people or with God.

### Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 05:1-3
- Acts 07:26-28
- Colossians 01:18-20
- Colossians 03:15-17
- Galatians 05:22-24
- Luke 07:48-50
- Luke 12:51-53
- Mark 04:38-39
- Matthew 05:9-10
- Matthew 10:11-13

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **15:06** God had commanded the Israelites not to make a **peace** treaty with any of the people groups in Canaan.
- **15:12** Then God gave Israel **peace** along all its borders.
- **16:03** Then God provided a deliverer who rescued them from their enemies and brought **peace** to the land.
- **21:13** He (Messiah) would die to receive the punishment for other people’s sin. His punishment would bring **peace** between God and people.

- **48:14** David was the king of Israel, but Jesus is the king of the entire universe! He will come again and rule his kingdom with justice and **peace**, forever.
- **50:17** Jesus will rule his kingdom with **peace** and justice, and he will be with his people forever.

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H5117, H7961, H7962, H7965, H7999, H8001, H8002, H8003, H8252, G269, G31514, G1515, G1516, G1517, G1518, G2272

**Uses:**

- **3 John 1:13-15**

## pray, prayer, prayers, prayed

### Definition:

The terms “pray” and “prayer” refer to talking with God. These terms are used to refer to people trying to talk to a false god.

- People can pray silently, talking to God with their thoughts, or they can pray aloud, speaking to God with their voice. Sometimes prayers are written down, such as when David wrote his prayers in the Book of Psalms.
- Prayer can include asking God for mercy, for help with a problem, and for wisdom in making decisions.
- Often people ask God to heal people who are sick or who need his help in other ways.
- People also thank and praise God when they are praying to him.
- Praying includes confessing our sins to God and asking him to forgive us.
- Talking to God is sometimes called “communing” with him as our spirit communicates with his spirit, sharing our emotions and enjoying his presence.
- This term could be translated as “talking to God” or “communicating with God.” The translation of this term should be able to include praying that is silent.

(See also: false god, forgive, praise)

### Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 03:8-10
- Acts 08:24
- Acts 14:23-26
- Colossians 04:2-4
- John 17:9-11
- Luke 11:1
- Matthew 05:43-45
- Matthew 14:22-24

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **06:05** Isaac **prayed** for Rebekah, and God allowed her to get pregnant with twins.
- **13:12** But Moses **prayed** for them, and God listened to his **prayer** and did not destroy them.
- **19:08** Then the prophets of Baal **prayed** to Baal, “Hear us, O Baal!”
- **21:07** Priests also **prayed** to God for the people.
- **38:11** Jesus told his disciples to **pray** that they would not enter into temptation.
- **43:13** The disciples continually listened to the teaching of the apostles, spent time together, ate together, and **prayed** with each other.
- **49:18** God tells you to **pray**, to study his word, to worship him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.



**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H559, H577, H1156, H2470, H3863, H3908, H4994, H6279, H6293, H6419, H6739, H7592, H7878, H7879, H7881, H8034, H8605, G154, G1162, G1189, G1783, G2065, G2171, G2172, G3870, G4335, G4336

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:1-4

## receive, receives, received, receiving, receiver

### Definition:

The term “receive” generally means to get or accept something that is given, offered, or presented.

- To “receive” can also mean to suffer or experience something, as in “he received punishment for what he did.”
- There is also a special sense in which we can “receive” a person. For example, to “receive” guests or visitors means to welcome them and treat them with honor in order to build a relationship with them.
- To “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” means we are given the Holy Spirit and welcome him to work in and through our lives.
- To “receive Jesus” means to accept God’s offer of salvation through Jesus Christ.
- When a blind person “receives his sight” means that God has healed him and enabled him to see.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “receive” could be translated as “accept” or “welcome” or “experience” or “be given.”
- The expression “you will receive power” could be translated as “you will be given power” or “God will give you power” or “power will be given to you (by God)” or “God will cause the Holy Spirit to work powerfully in you.”
- The phrase “received his sight” could be translated as “was able to see” or “became able to see again” or “was healed by God so that he was able to see.”

(See also: Holy Spirit, Jesus, lord, save)

### Bible References:

- 1 John 05:9-10
- 1 Thessalonians 01:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 04:1-2
- Acts 08:14-17
- Jeremiah 32:33-35
- Luke 09:5-6
- Malachi 03:10-12
- Psalms 049:14-15

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no sin. He would die to **receive** the punishment for other people’s sin. His punishment would bring peace

between God and people.

- **45:05** As Stephen was dying, he cried out, "Jesus, **receive** my spirit."
- **49:06** He (Jesus) taught that some people will receive him and be saved, but others will not.
- **49:10** When Jesus died on the cross, he **received** your punishment.
- **49:13** God will save everyone who believes in Jesus and **receives** him as their Master.

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H1878, H2505, H3557, H3947, H6901, H6902, H8254, G308, G324, G353, G354, G568, G588, G618, G1183, G1209, G1523, G1653, G1926, G2210, G2865, G2983, G3028, G3335, G3336, G3549, G3858, G3880, G3970, G4327, G4355, G4356, G4687, G4732, G5264, G5274, G5562

**Uses:**

- **3 John 1:9-10**

## soul, souls

### Definition:

The soul is the inner, invisible, and eternal part of a person. It refers to the non-physical part of a person.

- The terms “soul” and “spirit” may be two different concepts, or they may be two terms that refer to the same concept.
- When a person dies, his soul leaves his body.
- The word “soul” is sometimes used figuratively to refer to the whole person. For example, “the soul who sins” means “the person who sins” and “my soul is tired” means, “I am tired.”

### Translation Suggestions:

- The term “soul” could also be translated as “inner self” or “inner person.”
- In some contexts, “my soul” could be translated as “I” or “me.”
- Usually the phrase “the soul” can be translated as “the person” or “he” or “him,” depending on the context.
- Some languages might only have one word for the concepts “soul” and “spirit.”
- In Hebrews 4:12, the figurative phrase “dividing soul and spirit” could mean “deeply discerning or exposing the inner person.”

(See also: spirit)

### Bible References:

- 2 Peter 02:7-9
- Acts 02:27-28
- Acts 02:40-42
- Genesis 49:5-6
- Isaiah 53:10-11
- James 01:19-21
- Jeremiah 06:16-19
- Jonah 02:7-8
- Luke 01:46-47
- Matthew 22:37-38
- Psalms 019:7-8
- [Revelation 20:4](#)

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H5082, H5315, H5397, G5590

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:1-4

**testimony, testify, witness, witnesses, eyewitness, eyewitnesses****Definition:**

When a person gives “testimony” he makes a statement about something he knows, claiming that the statement is true. To “testify” is to give “testimony.”

- Often a person “testifies” about something he has experienced directly.
- A witness who gives “false testimony” does not tell the truth about what happened.
- Sometimes the term “testimony” refers to a prophecy that a prophet has stated.
- In the New Testament, this term was often used to refer to how Jesus’ followers testified about the events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

The term “witness” refers to a person who has personally experienced something that happened. Usually a witness is also someone who testifies about what they know is true. The term “eyewitness” emphasizes that the person was actually there and saw what happened.

- To “witness” something means to see it happen.
- At a trial, a witness “gives witness” or “bears witness.” This has the same meaning as “testify.”
- Witnesses are expected to tell the truth about what they have seen or heard.
- A witness who does not tell the truth about what happened is called a “false witness.” He is said to “give false witness” or to “bear false witness.”
- The expression “be a witness between” means that something or someone will be evidence that a contract has been made. The witness will make sure each person does what he has promised to do.

**Translation Suggestions:**

- The term “testify” or “give testimony” could also be translated as, “tell the facts” or “tell what was seen or heard” or “tell from personal experience” or “give evidence” or “tell what happened.”
- Ways to translate “testimony” could include, “report of what happened” or “statement of what is true” or “evidence” or “what has been said” or “prophecy.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony to them” could be translated as, to “show them what is true” or to “prove to them what is true.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony against them” could be translated as, “which will show them their sin” or “exposing their hypocrisy” or “which will prove that they are wrong.”
- To “give false testimony” could be translated as “say false things about” or “state things that are not true.”
- The term “witness” or “eyewitness” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person seeing it” or “the one who saw it happen” or “those who saw and heard (those things).”
- Something that is “a witness” could be translated as “guarantee” or “sign of our promise” or “something that testifies that this is true.”

- The phrase “you will be my witnesses” could also be translated as “you will tell other people about me” or “you will teach people the truth that I taught you” or “you will tell people what you have seen me do and heard me teach.”
- To “witness to” could be translated as to “tell what was seen” or to “testify” or to “state what happened.”
- To “witness” something could be translated as to “see something” or to “experience something happen.”

(See also: ark of the covenant, guilt, judge, prophet, **testimony**, **true**)

### Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 31:27-29
- Micah 06:3-5
- Matthew 26:59-61
- Mark 01:43-44
- John 01:6-8
- John 03:31-33
- Acts 04:32-33
- Acts 07:44-46
- Acts 13:30-31
- Romans 01:8-10
- 1 Thessalonians 02:10-12
- 1 Timothy 05:19-20
- 2 Timothy 01:8-11
- 2 Peter 01:16-18
- 1 John 05:6-8
- **3 John 01:11-12**
- **Revelation 12:11-12**

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **39:02** Inside the house, the Jewish leaders put Jesus on trial. They brought many **false witnesses** who lied about him.
- **39:04** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted, “We do not need any more **witnesses**. You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your judgment?”
- **42:08** “It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in Jerusalem, and then go to all people groups everywhere. You are **witnesses** of these things.”
- **43:07** “We are **witnesses** to the fact that God raised Jesus to life again.”

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H5707, H5713, H5715, H5749, H6030, H8584, G267, G1263, G1957, G2649, G3140, G3141, G3142, G3143, G3144, G4303, G4828, G4901, G5575, G5576, G5577, G6020

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:1-4
- 3 John 1:5-8
- 3 John 1:11-12
- 3 John 1:11-12



## true, truth, truths

### Definition:

The term “truth” refers to one or more concepts that are facts, events that actually happened, and statements that were actually said. Such concepts are said to be “true.”

- True things are real, genuine, actual, rightful, legitimate, and factual.
- The truth is an understanding, belief, fact, or statement that is true.
- To say that a prophecy “came true” or “will come true” mean that it actually happened as predicted or that it will happen that way.
- Truth includes the concept of acting in a way that is reliable and faithful.
- Jesus revealed God’s truth in the words that he spoke.
- God’s word is truth. It tells about things that actually happened and teaches what is true about God and about everything he has made.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context and what is being described, the term “true” could also be translated by “real” or “factual” or “correct” or “right” or “certain” or “genuine.”
- Ways to translate the term “truth” could include “what is true” or “fact” or “certainty” or “principle.”
- The expression “come true” could also be translated as “actually happen” or “be fulfilled” or “happen as predicted.”
- The expression “tell the truth” or “speak the truth” could also be translated as “say what is true” or “tell what really happened” or “say things that are reliable.”
- To “accept the truth” could be translated as “believe what is true about God.”
- In an expression such as “worship God in spirit and in truth,” the expression “in truth” could also be translated by “faithfully obeying what God has taught us.”

(See also: believe, [faithful](#), fulfill, obey, prophet, understand)

### Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 05:6-8
- 1 John 01:5-7
- 1 John 02:7-8
- [3 John 01:5-8](#)
- Acts 26:24-26
- Colossians 01:4-6
- Genesis 47:29-31
- James 01:17-18
- James 03:13-14
- James 05:19-20

- Jeremiah 04:1-3
- John 01:9
- John 01:16-18
- John 01:49-51
- John 03:31-33
- Joshua 07:19-21
- Lamentations 05:19-22
- Matthew 08:8-10
- Matthew 12:15-17
- Psalm 026:1-3
- Revelation 01:19-20
- Revelation 15:3-4

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **02:04** The snake responded to the woman, "That is not **true**! You will not die."
- **14:06** Immediately Caleb and Joshua, the other two spies, said, "It is **true** that the people of Canaan are tall and strong, but we can certainly defeat them!"
- **16:01** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the **true** God.
- **31:08** They worshiped Jesus, saying to him, "**Truly**, you are the Son of God."
- **39:10** "I have come to earth to tell the **truth** about God. Everyone who loves the **truth** listens to me." Pilate said, "What is **truth**?"

### Word Data:

- Strong's: H199, H389, H403, H529, H530, H543, H544, H551, H571, H935, H3321, H3330, H6237, H6656, H6965, H7187, H7189, G225, G226, G227, G228, G230, G1103, G3303, G3483, G3689, G4103, G4137

### Uses:

- 3 John 1:1-4
- 3 John 1:5-8
- 3 John 1:11-12

## walk, walks, walked, walking

### Definition:

The term “walk” is often used in a figurative sense to mean “live.”

- “Enoch walked with God” means that Enoch lived in a close relationship with God.
- To “walk by the Spirit” means to be guided by the Holy Spirit so that we do things that please and honor God.
- To “walk in” God’s commands or God’s ways means to “live in obedience to” his commands, that is, to “obey his commands” or “do his will.”
- When God says he will “walk among” his people, it means that he is living among them or closely interacting with them.
- To “walk contrary to” means to live or behave in a way that is against something or someone.
- To “walk after” means to seek or pursue someone or something. It can also mean to act in the same way as someone else.

### Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate “walk” literally, as long as the correct meaning will be understood.
- Otherwise, figurative uses of “walk” could also be translated by “live” or “act” or “behave.”
- The phrase “walk by the Spirit” could be translated by, “live in obedience to the Holy Spirit” or “behave in a way that is pleasing to the Holy Spirit” or “do things that are pleasing to God as the Holy Spirit guides you.”
- To “walk in God’s commands” could be translated by “live by God’s commands” or “obey God’s commands.”
- The phrase “walked with God” could be translated as, “lived in close relationship with God by obeying and honoring him.”

(See also: Holy Spirit, honor)

### Bible References:

- 1 John 01:5-7
- 1 Kings 02:1-4
- Colossians 02:6-7
- Galatians 05:25-26
- Genesis 17:1-2
- Isaiah 02:5-6
- Jeremiah 13:8-11
- Micah 04:2-3

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H1869, H1979, H1980, H1981, H3212, H4108, H4109, G1330, G1704, G3716, G4043, G4198, G4748

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:1-4

## **works, deeds, work, acts**

### **Definition:**

In the Bible, the terms “works,” “deeds,” and “acts” are used to refer generally to things that God or people do.

- The term “work” refers to doing labor or anything that is done to serve other people.
- God’s “works” and the “work of his hands” are expressions that refer to all the things he does or has done, including creating the world, saving sinners, providing for the needs of all creation and keeping the entire universe in place. The terms “deeds” and “acts” are also used to refer to God’s miracles in expressions such as “mighty acts” or “marvelous deeds.”
- The works or deeds that a person does can be either good or evil.
- The Holy Spirit empowers believers to do good works, which are also called “good fruit.”
- People are not saved by their good works; they are saved through faith in Jesus.
- A person’s “work” can be what he does to earn a living or to serve God. The Bible also refers to God as “working.”

### **Translation Suggestions:**

- Other ways to translate “works” or “deeds” could be “actions” or “things that are done.”
- When referring to God’s “works” or “deeds” and the “work of his hands,” these expressions could also be translated as “miracles” or “mighty acts” or “amazing things he does.”
- The expression “the work of God” could be translated as “the things that God is doing” or “the miracles God does” or “the amazing things that God does” or “everything God has accomplished.”
- The term “work” can just be the singular of “works” as in “every good work” or “every good deed.”
- The term “work” can also have the broader meaning of “service” or “ministry.” For example, the expression “your work in the Lord” could also be translated as, “what you do for the Lord.”
- The expression “examine your own work” could also be translated as “make sure what you are doing is God’s will” or “make sure that what you are doing pleases God.”
- The expression “the work of the Holy Spirit” could be translated as “the empowering of the Holy Spirit” or “the ministry of the Holy Spirit” or “the things that the Holy Spirit does.”

(See also: fruit, Holy Spirit, miracle)

### **Bible References:**

- 1 John 03:11-12
- Acts 02:8-11
- Daniel 04:36-37
- Exodus 34:10-11

- Galatians 02:15-16
- James 02:14-17
- Matthew 16:27-28
- Micah 02:6-8
- Romans 03:27-28
- Titus 03:4-5

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H4566, H4567, H4611, H4659, H5949, G2041

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:5-8
- 3 John 1:9-10

## worthy, worth, unworthy, worthless

### Definition:

The term “worthy” describes someone or something that deserves respect or honor. To “have worth” means to be valuable or important. The term “worthless” means to not have any value.

- Being worthy is related to being valuable or having importance
- To be “unworthy” means to not be deserving of any special notice.
- To not feel worthy means to feel less important than someone else or to not feel deserving of being treated with honor or kindness.
- The term “unworthy” and the term “worthless” have related, but different meanings. To be “unworthy” means to not be deserving of any honor or recognition. To be “worthless” means to not have any purpose or value.

### Translation Suggestions:

- “Worthy” could be translated as “deserving” or “important” or “valuable.”
- The word “worth” could be translated as “value” or “importance.”
- The phrase to “have worth” could also be translated as to “be valuable” or to “be important.”
- The phrase “is worth more than” could be translated as “is more valuable than.”
- Depending on the context, the term, “unworthy” could also be translated as “unimportant” or “dishonorable” or “undeserving.”
- The term “worthless” could be translated as “with no value” or “with no purpose” or “worth nothing.”

(See also: honor)

### Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 22:3-4
- 2 Thessalonians 01:11-12
- Acts 13:23-25
- Acts 25:25-27
- Acts 26:30-32
- Colossians 01:9-10
- Jeremiah 08:18-19
- Mark 01:7-8
- Matthew 03:10-12
- Philippians 01:25-27

**Word Data:**

- Strong's: H117, H639, H1929, H3644, H4242, H4373, H4392, H4592, H4941, H6994, H7939, G514, G515, G516, G2425, G2661, G2735

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:5-8



## translationAcademy

### Active or Passive

This page answers the question: *What do active and passive mean, and how do I translate passive sentences?*

Some languages have both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences, the subject is the one that receives the action. Here are some examples with their subjects underlined:

- **ACTIVE:** My father built the house in 2010.
- **PASSIVE:** The house was built in 2010.

Translators whose languages do not have passive sentences will need to know how they can translate passive sentences that they find in the Bible. Other translators will need to decide when to use a passive sentence and when to use the active form.

### Description

Some languages have both active and passive forms of sentences.

- In the **ACTIVE** form, the subject does the action and is always mentioned.
- In the **PASSIVE** form, the action is done to the subject, and the one who does the action is *not always* mentioned.

In the examples of active and passive sentences below, we have underlined the subject.

- **ACTIVE:** My father built the house in 2010.
- **PASSIVE:** The house was built by my father in 2010.
- **PASSIVE:** The house was built in 2010. (This does not tell who did the action.)

### Reasons this is a translation issue

All languages have active forms. Some languages have passive forms, and some do not. The passive form is not used for the same purposes in all of the languages that have it.

### Purposes for the passive

- The speaker is talking about the person or thing the action was done to, not about the person who did the action.
- The speaker does not want to tell who did the action.
- The speaker does not know who did the action.

### Translation Principles Regarding the Passive

- Translators whose language does not use passive forms will need to find another way to express the idea.
- Translators whose language has passive forms will need to understand why the passive is used in a particular sentence in the Bible and decide whether or not to use a passive form for that purpose in his translation of the sentence.

### Examples from the Bible

And their shooters shot at your soldiers from off the wall, and some of the king's servants were killed, and your servant Uriah the Hittite was killed too. (2 Samuel 11:24 ULB)

This means that the enemy's shooters shot and killed some of the king's servants, including Uriah. The point is what happened to the king's servants and Uriah, not who shot them. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on the king's servants and Uriah.

In the morning when the men of the town got up, the altar of Baal was broken down ... (Judges 6:28 ULB)

The men of the town saw what had happened to the altar of Baal, but they did not know who broke it down. The purpose of the passive form here is to communicate this event from the perspective of the men of the town.

It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea (Luke 17:2 ULB)

This describes a situation in which a person ends up in the sea with a millstone around his neck. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on what happens to this person. Who does these things to the person is not important.

### Translation Strategies

If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies you might consider.

1. Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who or what did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.
2. Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who or what did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."
3. Use a different verb.

### Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.

2. **A loaf of bread was given him every day from the street of the bakers.** (Jeremiah 37:21 ULB)
  - The king's servants gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.
3. Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."
4. **It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.** (Luke 17:2 ULB)
  - It would be better for him if they were to put a millstone around his neck and throw him into the sea.
  - It would be better for him if someone were to put a heavy stone around his neck and throw him into the sea.
5. Use a different verb in an active sentence.
6. **A loaf of bread was given him every day from the street of the bakers.** (Jeremiah 37:21 ULB)
  - He received a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:11-12

## Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

This page answers the question: *How can I be sure that my translation communicates the assumed knowledge and implicit information along with the explicit information of the original message?*

- **Assumed knowledge** is whatever a speaker assumes his audience knows before he speaks and gives them some kind of information. The speaker gives the audience information in two ways:
- **Explicit information** is what the speaker states directly.
- **Implicit information** is what the speaker does not state directly because he expects his audience to be able to learn it from what he says.

### Description

When someone speaks or writes, he has something specific that he wants people to know or do or think about. He normally states this directly. This is **explicit information**.

The speaker assumes that his audience already knows certain things that they will need to think about in order to understand this information. Normally he does not tell people these things, because they already know them. This is called **assumed knowledge**.

The speaker does not always directly state everything that he expects his audience to learn from what he says. Information that he expects people to learn from what he says even though he does not state it directly is **implicit information**.

Often, the audience understands this **implicit information** by combining what they already know (**assumed knowledge**) with the **explicit information** that the speaker tells them directly.

### Reasons this is a translation issue

All three kinds of information are part of the speaker's message. If one of these kinds of information is missing, then the audience will not understand the message. Because the target translation is in a language that is very different than the biblical languages and made for an audience that lives in a very different time and place than the people in the Bible, many times the **assumed knowledge** or the **implicit information** is missing from the message. In other words, modern readers do not know everything that the original speakers and hearers in the Bible knew. When these things are important for understanding the message, you can include this information in the text or in a footnote.

### Examples from the Bible

Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20 ULB)

Jesus did not say what foxes and birds use holes and nests for, because he assumed that the scribe would have known that foxes sleep in holes in the ground and birds sleep in their nests. This is **assumed knowledge**.

Jesus did not directly say here “I am the Son of Man” but, if the scribe did not already know it, then that fact would be **implicit information** that he could learn because Jesus referred to himself that way. Also, Jesus did not state explicitly that he travelled a lot and did not have a house that he slept in every night. That is **implicit information** that the scribe could learn when Jesus said that he had nowhere to lay his head.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the mighty deeds had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. (Matthew 11:21, 22 ULB)

Jesus assumed that the people he was speaking to knew that Tyre and Sidon were very wicked, and that the day of judgment is a time when God will judge every person. Jesus also knew that the people he was talking to believed that they were good and did not need to repent. Jesus did not need to tell them these things. This is all **assumed knowledge**.

An important piece of **implicit information** here is that because the people he was speaking to did not repent, they would be judged more severely than the people of Tyre and Sidon would be judged.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat. (Matthew 15:2 ULB)

One of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating. People thought that in order to be righteous, they had to follow all the traditions of the elders. This was **assumed knowledge** that the Pharisees who were speaking to Jesus expected him to know. By saying this, they were accusing his disciples of not following the traditions, and thus not being righteous. This is **implicit information** that they wanted him to understand from what they said.

### **Translation Strategies**

If readers have enough assumed knowledge to be able to understand the message, along with any important implicit information that goes with the explicit information, then it is good to leave that knowledge unstated and leave the implicit information implicit. If the readers do not understand the message because one of these is missing for them, then follow these strategies:

1. If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.
2. If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.

- **Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."** (Matthew 8:20 ULB) - Assumed knowledge was that the foxes slept in their holes and birds slept in their nests.
  - Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes to live in, and the birds of the sky have nests to live in, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head and sleep."
- **it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you** (Matthew 11:22 ULB) - Assumed knowledge was that the people of Tyre and Sidon were very, very wicked. This can be stated explicitly.
  - ... it will be more tolerable for those cities Tyre and Sidon, whose people were very wicked, at the day of judgment than for you
    - ◇ Or:
  - ... it will be more tolerable for those wicked cities Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you
- **Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.** (Matthew 15:2 ULB) - Assumed knowledge was that one of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating, which they must do to be righteous. It was not to remove germs from their hands to avoid sickness, as a modern reader might think.
  - Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For they do not go through the ceremonial handwashing ritual of righteousness when they eat.

2. If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

- **Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."** (Matthew 8:19, 20 ULB) - Implicit information is that Jesus himself is the Son of Man. Other implicit information is that if the scribe wanted to follow Jesus, he would have to live like Jesus without a house.
  - Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have no home to rest in. If you want to follow me, you will live as I live."
- **it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you** (Matthew 11:22 ULB) - Implicit information is that God would not only judge the people; he would punish them. This can be made explicit.
  - At the day of judgment, God will punish Tyre and Sidon, cities whose people were very wicked, less severely than he will punish you

- At the day of judgment, God will punish you more severely than Tyre and Sidon, cities whose people were very wicked.

Modern readers may not know some of the things that the people in the Bible and the people who first read it knew. This can make it hard for them to understand what a speaker or writer says, and to learn things that the speaker left implicit. Translators may need to state some things explicitly in the translation that the original speaker or writer left unstated or implicit.

**Uses:**

- [3 John 1:1-4](#)
- [3 John 1:11-12](#)

## Ellipsis

This page answers the question: *What is ellipsis?*

### Description

Ellipsis is what happens when a speaker or writer leaves one or more words out of a sentence because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and fill in the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. The information that is omitted has usually already been stated in a preceding sentence or phrase.

... the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5)

This is ellipsis because “sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause.

### Reason this is a translation issue

Readers who see incomplete sentences or phrases may not know what the missing information is if they do not use ellipsis in their language.

### Examples from the Bible

... when the blind man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, that I might receive my sight.” (Luke 18:40-41 ULB)

The man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite and not directly ask Jesus for healing. He knew that Jesus would understand that the only way he could receive his sight would be for Jesus to heal him.

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young ox. (Psalm 29:6 ULB)

The writer wants his words to be few and to make good poetry. He did not say that Yahweh makes Sirion skip like a young ox because he knew that his readers could fill in the information themselves.

### Translation Strategies

If ellipsis would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

1. Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.



**Examples of Translation Strategies Applied**

1. Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.
2. ... **the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.** (Psalm 1:5)
  - ... the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and sinners will not stand in the assembly of the righteous
3. ... **when the blind man was near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight."** (Luke 18:40-41)
  - ... when the blind man was near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, I want you to heal me that I might receive my sight."
4. **He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young ox.** (Psalm 29:6)
  - He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and he makes Sirion skip like a young ox.

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:11-12
- 3 John 1:11-12

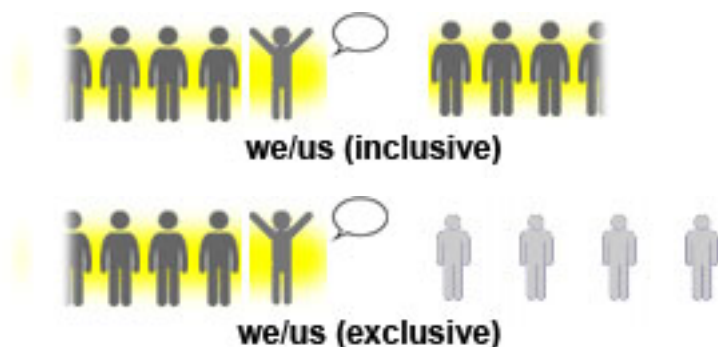
## Exclusive and Inclusive “We”

This page answers the question: *What is exclusive and inclusive “we”?*

### Description

Some languages have more than one form of “we:” an **inclusive** form that means “I and you” and an **exclusive** form that means “I and someone else but not you.” The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for “us,” “our,” “ours,” and “ourselves.” Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these. Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for these words will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form to use.

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive “we” and the exclusive “we” refer to.



### Reason this is a translation issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for “we.” Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of “we” will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form of “we” to use.

### Examples from the Bible

They said, “We have no more than five loaves of bread and two fish, unless we went and bought food for all this crowd of people.” (Luke 9:13 ULB)

In the first clause, the disciples are telling Jesus how much food they have among them, so this “we” could be the inclusive form or the exclusive form. In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food, so that “we” would be the exclusive form, since Jesus would not go to buy food.

we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us (1 John 1:2 ULB)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have exclusive forms of “we” and “us” would use the exclusive forms in this verse.

... the shepherds said one to each other, “Let us now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULB)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said “us,” they were including the people they were speaking to - one another.

Now it happened on one of those days that Jesus and his disciples entered into a boat, and he said to them, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” Then they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULB)

When Jesus said “us,” he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so this would be the inclusive form.

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:9-10
- 3 John 1:11-12

## Forms of You

This page answers the question: *What are the different forms of you?*

### Singular, Dual, and Plural

Some languages have more than one word for “you” based on how many people the word “you” refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some have other forms that refer to three or four people.

You may also want to watch the video at [http://ufw.io/figs\\_younum](http://ufw.io/figs_younum).

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of “you” even though he is speaking to a crowd.

- Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups

### Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of “you” based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

You may also want to watch the video at [http://ufw.io/figs\\_youform](http://ufw.io/figs_youform).

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- Forms of “You” - Formal or Informal

### Uses:

- [3 John 1:1-4](#)

## How to Translate Names

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

### Description

The Bible has names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

### Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to. But sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

It was this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULB)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name “Melchizedek” means “king of righteousness,” and also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2 ULB)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title, because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

### Reasons this is a translation issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see Borrow Words.
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

**Examples from the Bible**

You went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. The leaders of Jericho fought against you, along with the Amorites (Joshua 24:11 ULB)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

she said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; (Genesis 16:13-14 ULB)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beerlahairoi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

She named him Moses and said, “Because I drew him from the water.” (Exodus 2:11 ULB)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

Saul was in agreement with his death (Acts 8:1 ULB)

It came about in Iconium that Paul and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULB)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

**Translation Strategies**

1. If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
2. If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
3. Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
4. If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
5. Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

**Examples of Translation Strategies Applied**

1. If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

- **You went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. The leaders of Jericho fought against you, along with the Amorites** (Joshua 24:11 ULB)
    - You went over the Jordan River and came to the city of Jericho. The leaders of Jericho fought against you, along with the tribe of the Amorites
  - **Shortly after, some Pharisees came and said to him, "Go and leave here because Herod wants to kill you."** (Luke 13:31 ULB)
    - Shortly after, some Pharisees came and said to him, "Go and leave here because King Herod wants to kill you."
2. If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
- **She named him Moses and said, "Because I drew him from the water."** (Exodus 2:11 ULB)
    - She named him Moses, which sounds like 'drawn out,' and said, "Because I drew him from the water."
3. Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
- **... she said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore the well was called Beerlahairoi;** (Genesis 16:13-14 ULB)
    - ... she said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore the well was called Well of the Living One who sees me;
4. If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called "Saul" before Acts 13 and "Paul" after Acts 13. You could translate his name as "Paul" all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.
5. **... a young man named Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULB)
- ... a young man named Paul<sup>1</sup>
  - The footnote would look like:
    - <sup>[1]</sup>Most versions say Saul here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called Paul.
6. **But Saul, who is also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit;** (Acts 13:9)
- But Saul, who is also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit;
7. Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write "Saul" where the source text has "Saul" and "Paul" where the source text has "Paul."
8. **a young man named Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULB)

- a young man named Saul
- The footnote would look like:
  - <sup>[1]</sup>This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

**9. But Saul, who is also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)**

- But Saul, who is also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

**10. It came about in Iconium that Paul and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULB)**

- It came about in Iconium that Paul<sup>1</sup> and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue
- The footnote would look like:
  - <sup>[1]</sup>This is the man that was called Saul before Acts 13.

**Uses:**

- Introduction to 3 John
- 3 John 1:1-4
- 3 John 1:9-10
- 3 John 1:11-12



## Idiom

This page answers the question: *What are idioms and how can I translate them?*

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg (This means, “You are telling me a lie”)
- Do not push the envelope (This means, “Do not take a matter to its extreme”)
- This house is under water (This means, “The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value”)
- We are painting the town red (This means, “We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely”)

### Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51 ULB)

The words “set his face” is an idiom that means “decided.”

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. (Luke 7:6 ULB)

The phrase “enter under my roof” is an idiom that means “enter my house.”

Let these words go deeply into your ears. (Luke 9:44 ULB)

This idiom means “Listen carefully and remember what I say.”

**Purpose:** An idiom is created in a culture probably somewhat by accident when someone describes something in an unusual way. But, when that unusual way communicates the message powerfully and people understand it clearly, other people start to use it. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

### Reasons this is a translation issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

### Examples from the Bible

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your flesh and bone."  
(1 Chronicles 11:1 ULB)

This means, "We and you belong to the same race, the same family."

the children of Israel went out with a high hand. (Exodus 14:8 ASV)

This means, "The Israelites went out defiantly."

the one who lifts up my head (Psalm 3:3 ULB)

This means, "the one who helps me."

### Translation Strategies

If the idiom would be clearly understood in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

1. Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
2. Use a different idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

### Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
2. **Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your flesh and bone."**  
( 1 Chronicles 11:1 ULB)
  - ...Look, we all belong to the same nation.
3. **he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem.** (Luke 9:51 ULB)
  - He started to travel to Jerusalem, determined to reach it.
4. **I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.** (Luke 7:6 ULB)
  - I am not worthy that you should enter my house.
5. Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.
6. **Let these words go deeply into your ears** (Luke 9:44 ULB)
  - Be all ears when I say these words to you.
7. **"My eyes grow dim from grief** (Psalm 6:7 ULB)
  - I am crying my eyes out

### Uses:

- 3 John 1:13-15

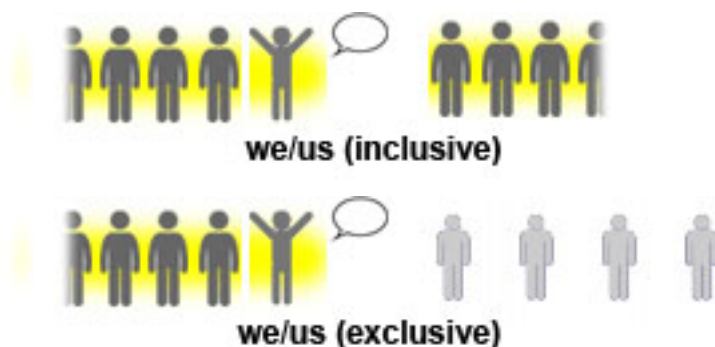
## Inclusive “We”

This page answers the question: *What is inclusive “we”?*

### Description

Some languages have more than one form of “we”: an **inclusive** form that means “I and you” and an **exclusive** form that means “I and someone else but not you.” The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for “us,” “our,” “ours,” and “ourselves.” Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these.

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive “we” and the exclusive “we” refer to.



**Reason this is a translation issue** - The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for “we.” Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of “we” will need to understand what the speaker meant so they can decide which form of “we” to use.

### Examples from the Bible

... the shepherds said one to each other, “Let us now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULB)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said “us,” they were including the people they were speaking to - one another.

Now it happened on one of those days that Jesus and his disciples entered into a boat, and he said to them, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” Then they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULB)

When Jesus said “us,” he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to.

### Uses:

- [3 John 1:5-8](#)

## Metaphor

This page answers the question: *What is a metaphor and how can I translate a sentence that has one?*

### Description

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which one concept (the “image”) stands for another concept (the “topic”). That is, the topic is spoken of as if it were the image. For example, someone might say,

- The girl I love is a red rose.

Here the topic is “the girl I love,” and the image is “a red rose.” The girl is spoken of as if she were a red rose.

Anything in a language can serve as a metaphor. For example, verb forms can be used in unusual ways, as in,

- The Apostle Paul tells us that Christians will rise to life again.

In this case, the English present tense form “tells” is a metaphor for the past tense form “told,” because the Apostle Paul lived long ago.

Sometimes speakers use metaphors that are very common in their language. However, sometimes speakers use metaphors that are uncommon, and even some metaphors that are unique.

Speakers most often use metaphors in order to strengthen their message, to express their feelings better, to say something that is hard to say in any other way, or to help people remember their message.

### Kinds of Metaphors

There are several kinds of metaphors: “live” metaphors, “dead” metaphors, and patterned metaphors.

#### Live Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept. People also easily recognize them as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. For example,

For you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.  
(Malachi 4:2 ULB)

Here God speaks about his salvation as if it were the sun rising in order to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. He also speaks of the sun’s rays as if they were wings. Also, he speaks of these wings as if they were bringing medicine that would heal his people.

Here is another example: Jesus said, ‘Go and tell that fox...,’ where “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was referring to Herod either as a very evil, cunning person or as a king who was only pretending to be great.

### Dead Metaphors

A dead metaphor is a metaphor that has been used so much in the language that its speakers no longer regard it as one concept standing for another. Examples in English are “table leg,” “family tree,” “leaf” meaning a page in a book, and “crane” meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads. English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples in Biblical Hebrew are probably “heal” meaning “repair,” and “sick” meaning “spiritually powerless because of sin.”

### Patterned Pairs of Concepts acting as Metaphors

Many ways of metaphorical speaking depend on pairs of concepts, where one underlying concept frequently stands for a different underlying concept. For example, in English, the direction UP often stands for the concept of MORE. Because of this pair of underlying concepts, we can make sentences such as “The price of gasoline is going *up*,” “A *highly* intelligent man,” and also the opposite kind of idea: “The heat is going *down*,” and “The stock market *took a tumble*.”

Patterned pairs of concepts are constantly used for metaphorical purposes in the world’s languages, because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, people like to speak of abstract qualities, such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities, as if they were objects that could be seen or held, as if they were body parts, or as if they were events that could be watched as they happened.

When these metaphors are used in normal ways, it is rare that the speaker and audience regard them as figurative speech. Examples of metaphors in English that go unrecognized are:

- “Turn the heat *up*.” MORE is spoken of as UP.
- “Let us *go ahead* with our debate.” DOING WHAT WAS PLANNED is spoken of as WALKING or ADVANCING.
- “You *defend* your theory well.” ARGUMENT is spoken of as WAR.
- “A *flow* of words” WORDS are spoken of as LIQUIDS.

English speakers do not view them as unusual expressions, so it would be wrong to translate them into other languages in a way that would lead people to pay special attention to them as figurative speech.

For a description of important patterns of this kind of metaphor in biblical languages, please see [Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#) and the pages it will direct you to.

### Parts of a Metaphor

When talking about metaphors, it can be helpful to talk about their parts. A metaphor has three parts.

1. **Topic** - The thing someone speaks of is called the topic.

2. **Image** - The thing he calls it is the image.
3. **Points of Comparison** - The ways in which the author claims that the topic and image are similar in some manner are their points of comparison.

In the metaphor below, the speaker describes the woman he loves as a red rose. The woman (his “love”) is the **topic**, and “red rose” is the **image**. Beauty and delicacy are the points of comparison that the speaker sees as similarities between both the topic and image. Note, however, that a rose’s beauty is not identical to a woman’s beauty. Neither are the two kinds of delicacy the same. So these points of comparison are not built upon identical characteristics, but rather upon characteristics that are seen by the writer as similar in some way.

- My love is a red, red rose.

Often, as in the metaphor above, the speaker explicitly states the **topic** and the **image**, but he does not state the points of comparison. The speaker leaves it to the hearer to think of those points of comparison. Because the hearers must do that, the speaker’s message tends to be more powerful.

Also in the Bible, normally the **topic** and the **image** are stated clearly, but not the points of comparison. The writer hopes that the audience will understand the points of comparison that are implied.

Jesus said to them. “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 6:35 ULB)

In this metaphor, Jesus called himself the bread of life. The **topic** is “I,” and the **image** is “bread.” Bread is a food that people ate all the time. The point of comparison between bread and Jesus is that people needed bread every day for nourishment. In a similar way, people need Jesus every day in order to live spiritually.

Note that this metaphor is really several metaphors. The first metaphor is that bread is used to represent Jesus. The second metaphor, which is inside the first one, is that physical life represents the spiritual life, which consists of living with God forever. The third metaphor is that eating bread represents benefitting from Jesus, who enables us to live with God forever.

### Purposes of Metaphor

- One purpose of metaphor is to teach people about something that they do not know (the **topic**) by showing that it is like something that they already do know (the **image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something has a particular quality or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about one thing as they would feel about the other.

### Reasons this is a translation issue

- People may not recognize that something is a metaphor. In other words, they may mistake a metaphor for a literal statement, and thus misunderstand it.

- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image, and so not be able to understand the metaphor.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know the points of comparison that the speaker is thinking of and wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.

### Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of a metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning of a metaphor more clear to the target audience than you think it was to the original audience.

### Examples from the Bible

Listen to this word, you cows of Bashan, (Amos 4:1 ULB)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria (the topic is “you”) with as if they were cows (the image). Amos does not say what points of comparison between these women and the cows he has in mind, but from the context it seems that he means that both the women and the cows are fat and interested only in eating.

Note, however, that Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows, for he speaks to them as human beings.

And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the clay. You are our potter; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULB)

The example above has two related metaphors. The topics are “we” and “you,” and the images are “clay and ”potter.” The intended point of comparison between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish: the potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people Israel. The point of comparison between the potter’s clay and “us” is that both the clay and the people of Israel are made into something different from what they were before.

Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” The disciples reasoned among themselves and said, “It is because we took no bread.” (Matthew 16:6-7 ULB)

Jesus used a metaphor here, but his disciples did not realize it. When he said “yeast,” they thought he was talking about bread, but “yeast” was the image in his metaphor, and the topic was the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples (the original audience) did not understand what Jesus meant, it would not be good to state clearly here what Jesus meant.

## Translation Strategies

If people would understand the metaphor in the same way that the original readers probably understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it.

If people do not or would not understand it, here are some other strategies.

1. If the metaphor is a common expression of a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language, express the main idea in the simplest way preferred by your language. (See Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns for lists of some of these patterned pairs of concepts.)
2. If the metaphor seems to be a “live” metaphor, you can translate it literally if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.
3. If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.” See Simile.
4. If the target audience would not know the image, see Translate Unknowns for ideas on how to translate that image.
5. If the target audience would not use that image for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
6. If the target audience would not know what the topic is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)
7. If the target audience will not know the intended points of comparison between the image and topic, then state them clearly.
8. If none of these strategies is satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If the metaphor is a common expression of a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language, express the main idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.
2. **Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, fell at his feet.** (Mark 5:22 ULB)
  - Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, immediately bowed down in front of him.
3. If the metaphor seems to be a “live” metaphor, you can translate it literally if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.
4. **It was because of your hard hearts that he wrote you this law,** (Mark 10:5 ULB)
  - It was because of your hard hearts that he wrote you this law,

There is no change to this one - but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.



1. If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.”
2. **And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the clay. You are our potter; and we all are the work of your hand.** (Isaiah 64:8 ULB)
  - And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are like clay. You are like a potter; and we all are the work of your hand.
3. If the target audience would not know the **image**, see Translate Unknowns for ideas on how to translate that image.
4. **Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick a goad.** (Acts 26:14 ULB)
  - Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against a pointed stick.
5. If the target audience would not use that **image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
6. **And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the clay. You are our potter; and we all are the work of your hand.** (Isaiah 64:8 ULB)
  - ”And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the wood. You are our carver; and we all are the work of your hand.”
  - ”And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the string. You are the weaver; and we all are the work of your hand.”
7. If the target audience would not know what the **topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)
8. **Yahweh lives; may my rock be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.** (Psalm 18:46 ULB)
  - Yahweh lives; He is my rock. May he be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.
9. If the target audience will not know the intended points of comparison between the image and the topic, then state them clearly.
10. **Yahweh lives; may my rock be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.** (Psalm 18:46 ULB)
  - Yahweh lives; may he be praised because he is the rock under which I can hide from my enemies. May the God of my salvation be exalted.
11. **Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick a goad.** (Acts 26:14 ULB)
  - Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? You fight against me and hurt yourself like an ox that kicks against its owner’s pointed stick.
12. If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.
13. **I will make you become fishers of men.** (Mark 1:17 ULB)
  - I will make you become people who gather men.
  - Now you gather fish. I will make you gather people.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see *Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns*.

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:1-4
- 3 John 1:1-4

## Metonymy

This page answers the question: *What is a metonymy?*

### Description

**Metonymy** is a figure of speech in which a thing or idea is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A **metonym** is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something it is associated with.

and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7 ULB)

The blood represents Christ's death.

He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. (Luke 22:20 ULB)

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

### Metonymy can be used

- to a shorter way of referring to something
- to make an abstract idea more meaningful by referring to it with the name of a physical object associated with it

### Reason this is a translation issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not used to metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

### Examples from the Bible

The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David. (Luke 1:32 ULB)

A throne represents the authority of a king. "Throne" is a metonym for "kingly authority," "kingship" or "reign." This means that God would make him become the king that would follow King David.

Immediately his mouth was opened (Luke 1:64 ULB)

The mouth here represents the power to speak. This means that he was able to talk again.

... who warned you to flee from the wrath that is coming? (Luke 3:7 ULB)

The word "wrath" or "anger" is a metonym for "punishment." God was extremely angry with the people, and as a result, he would punish them.

## Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here are some options.

1. Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
2. Use only the name of the thing the metonym represents.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
2. **He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.** (Luke 22:20 ULB)
  - "He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "The wine in this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."
3. Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.
4. **The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David.** (Luke 1:32 ULB)
  - "The Lord God will give him the kingly authority of his father, David."
  - "The Lord God will make him king like his ancestor, King David."
5. **who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?** (Luke 3:7 ULB)
  - "who warned you to flee from God's coming punishment?"

To learn about some common metonymies, see Biblical Imagery - Common Metonymies.

## Uses:

- [3 John 1:5-8](#)

## Personification

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

### Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1 ULB)

Or sin:

sin crouches at the door (Genesis 4:7 ULB)

People also do this because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things, such as wealth, as if they were like relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24 ULB)

### Reasons this is a translation issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

### Examples from the Bible

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24 ULB)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

Does not Wisdom call out? Does not Understanding raise her voice? (Proverbs 8:1 ULB)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they are a woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

### Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

1. Add words or phrases to make it clear.
2. Use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentences is not to be understood literally.
3. Find a way to translate it without the personification.

**Examples of Translation Strategies Applied**

1. Add words or phrases to make it clear.
2. ... **sin crouches at the door** (Genesis 4:7 ULB) - God speaks of sin as a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.
  - ... sin is at your door, waiting to attack you
3. Use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentences is not to be understood literally.
4. ... **sin crouches at the door** (Genesis 4:7 ULB) - This can be translated with the word “as.”
  - ... sin is crouching at the door, just as a wild animal does waiting to attack a person.
5. Find a way to translate it without the personification.
6. ... **even the winds and the sea obey him** (Matthew 8:27 ULB) - The men speak of the “wind and the sea as if they are able to hear” and obey Jesus as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.
  - He even controls the winds and the sea.

**Note:** We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics.)

**Uses:**

- [3 John 1:11-12](#)

## Reflexive Pronouns

This page answers the question: *What are reflexive pronouns?*

### Description

All languages have ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. English does this by using **Reflexive pronouns**. These are pronouns that refer to someone or something that has already been mentioned in a sentence. In English the reflexive pronouns are: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, and themselves. Other languages may have other ways to show this.

### Reason this is a translation issue

- Languages have different ways of showing that the same person fills two different roles in a sentence. For those languages, translators will need to know how to translate the English reflexive pronouns.
- The reflexive pronouns in English also have other functions.

### Uses of Reflexive Pronouns

- To show that the same person or things fills two different roles in a sentence
- To emphasize a person or thing in the sentence
- To show that someone did something alone
- To show that someone or something was alone

### Examples from the Bible

Reflexive pronouns are used to show the same person or thing fills two different roles in a sentence.

If I should testify about myself alone, my testimony would not be true. (John 5:31 ULB)

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover in order to purify themselves. (John 11:55 ULB)

Reflexive pronouns are used to emphasize a person or thing in the sentence.

Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were (John 4:2 ULB)

So they left the crowd, taking Jesus with them, since he was already in the boat. Other boats were also with him. And a violent windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already full. But Jesus himself was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. (Mark 4:36-38 ULB)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone did something alone.

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain by himself. (John 6:15 ULB)

Reflexive pronouns are used to show that someone or something was alone.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up in its place by itself. (John 20:6-7 ULB)

### Translation Strategies

If a reflexive pronoun would have the same function in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other strategies.

1. In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
2. In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
3. In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it.
4. In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”
5. In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

### Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. In some languages people put something on the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.
2. **If I should testify about myself alone, my testimony would not be true.** (John 5:31)
  - “If I should self-testify alone, my testimony would not be true.”
3. **Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover in order to purify themselves.** (John 11:55)
  - “Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover in order to self-purify.”
4. In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.
5. **He himself took our sickness and bore our diseases.** (Matthew 8:17 ULB)
  - “It was he who took our sickness and bore our diseases.”
6. **Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were.** (John 4:2)
  - “It was not Jesus who was baptizing, but his disciples were.”



7. In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it. English adds the reflexive pronoun.
8. **Now Jesus said this to test Philip, for he himself knew what he was going to do.** (John 6:6)
9. In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”
10. **When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again up the mountain by himself.** (John 6:15)
  - “When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again alone up the mountain.”
11. In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.
12. **He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up in its place by itself.** (John 20:6-7 ULB)
  - “He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up and lying in it’s own place.”

**Uses:**

- 3 John 1:11-12