



unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

1 John

Version 53

[en]

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Date: 2021-09-17

Version: 53

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Literal Text

Date: 2021-08-23

Version: 30

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

Date: 2021-07-30

Version: 29

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Hebrew Bible

Date: 2021-09-07

Version: 2.1.23

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Greek New Testament

Date: 2021-09-14

Version: 0.22

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy

Date: 2021-06-28

Version: 22

Published by: unfoldingWord®

unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Date: 2021-06-23

Version: 25

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

1 John

Introduction to 1 John

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the book of 1 John

This is a letter that the apostle John wrote to challenge and correct false teachings that were leading followers of Jesus to believe wrong things and live in wrong ways. At that time, the letter form had distinct opening and closing sections. The main body of the letter came in between.

Opening of Letter (1:1-4)

Main Body of Letter (1:5-5:12)

- Genuine believers obey God and love one another (1:5-2:17)
- It is false teaching to deny that Jesus is the Messiah (2:18-2:27)
- Genuine children of God do not sin (2:28-3:10)
- Genuine believers help one another sacrificially (3:11-18)
- Genuine believers have confidence in prayer (3:19-24)
- It is false teaching to deny that Jesus became human (4:1-6)
- Genuine believers love one another as God has loved them (4:7-21)
- It is false teaching to deny that Jesus is the Son of God (5:1-12)

Closing of Letter (5:13-21)

Who wrote the book of 1 John?

The author of this letter does not give his name. However, since early Christian times, the church has widely considered the apostle John to be the author. He wrote the Gospel of John, and there are many similarities between the content of that book and this letter. If John did write this letter, he probably did so near the end of his life.

To whom was the book of 1 John written?

The author wrote this letter to people whom he addresses as “beloved” and, figuratively, as “my little children.” This probably means believers in various churches located in the area where John was then living.

What is the book of 1 John about?

False teachers were encouraging followers of Jesus to believe wrong things and to live in wrong ways. John wanted to challenge and correct those false teachings so that the people who received his letter would continue to believe the truth they had been taught and live in right ways. The false teachers were saying that these people were not saved; John wanted to assure them that they were saved.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, “1 John” or “First John.” They may also choose a different title, such as “The First Letter from John” or “The First Letter John Wrote.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Who were the people whom John spoke against?

The false teachers John was challenging seem to have held beliefs similar to what would later become known as Gnosticism. Those false teachers believed that the physical world was evil. They thought that God would not become human, since they considered the physical body to be evil, so they denied that Jesus was God come to earth in human form. (See: [evil](#), [wicked](#), [unpleasant](#))

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

“sin”

In chapter 1, John says that we should not deny that we have sinned. Rather, if we confess our sin, God will forgive us. In chapter 2, John says that he is writing this letter so that the recipients will not sin, but he adds that if they do sin, Jesus will advocate on their behalf. But in chapter 3, John says that everyone who has been begotten from God and who remains in God does not commit sin and is not able to sin. And in chapter 5, John says that we should not pray for people who are sinning certain ways, although we should pray for people who are sinning in other ways. This may seem confusing and contradictory.

However, the explanation is that the people whose teachings John was writing to challenge and correct were saying that it did not matter what people did in their bodies. This was because they thought physical matter was evil, and so they thought God did not care about it. In effect, they were saying that there was no such thing as sin. So John needed to say, in chapter 1, that sin is real and that everyone has sinned. Some of the believers may have been deceived by the false teaching and committed sins, so John also needed to reassure them that if they repented and confessed their sins, God would forgive them. John says similar things in chapter 2. Then in chapter 3 he explains that the new nature that believers have as children of God is one that does not want to sin and that does not enjoy sinning. So they should recognize that those who excuse or condone sin are not truly children of God, and that as children of God themselves, they can become more and more obedient and free from sin. Finally, in chapter 5, John warns that if a person sins wantonly and continually, this likely means that they have rejected Jesus and are not influenced by the Holy Spirit. He says that in that case, it may not be effective to pray for them. But he then encourages his readers that if a person sins occasionally but feels remorse, he is influenced by the Spirit, and so the prayers of other believers will help him repent and live in a right way again. (See: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [faith](#) and [forgive](#), [forgiven](#), [forgiveness](#), [pardon](#), [pardoned](#))

“remain”

In this letter, John often uses the word “remain” (which could also be translated as “reside” or “abide”) as a spatial metaphor. John speaks of a believer becoming more faithful to Jesus and knowing Jesus better as if the word of Jesus “remained” in the believer. He speaks of a person being spiritually joined to someone else as if that person “remained” in the other person: He writes that Christians “remain” in Christ and in God, and he says that the Father “remains” in the Son, the Son “remains” in the Father, the Son “remains” in believers, and the Holy Spirit “remains” in believers.

Translators may find it difficult to represent these ideas in their own languages if they try to use exactly the same words and expressions each time. For example, in [2:6](#), when John speaks of a believer “remaining” in God, he intends to express the idea of that believer being spiritually unified with God. Accordingly, UST speaks of the believer being “in union with God.” To give another example, for the statement in [2:13](#) that “the word of God remains in you,” UST says, “you continue to obey what God commands.” This shows how other expressions can be found that accurately communicate the various ideas that John is expressing through the term “remain.”

“appear”

In several places in this letter, John uses a term that ULT usually translates as “appear.” This is actually a passive verbal form in Greek, but as is often the case with such forms in that language, it can have an active meaning. When it has an active meaning, it is important to recognize that it does not simply mean “seemed to be there,” as the word “appeared” might suggest. Rather, it means “was there.” This is illustrated well by the use of the term in another New Testament book, 2 Corinthians, in which Paul writes in [5:10](#) that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” Clearly this does not mean that we must only seem to be present there. Rather, we must actually be there.

Throughout the epistle, it is a subtle matter of interpretation to decide whether John is using the term “appear” in an active sense or in a passive sense. For example, in [1:2](#), John applies the term twice to the “Word of life,” that is, to Jesus. But it is not clear whether he is saying that Jesus himself “appeared,” that is, he came to earth, or that he “was made apparent” (made visible), with the emphasis on the idea that God revealed Jesus to the world and in the process revealed himself to the world through Jesus. At each place where John uses this term, notes will call attention to it and discuss what it likely means in that context.

“the world”

John also uses the term “world” in a variety of senses in this letter. It can mean the earth, something material, the people who live in the world, the people who do not honor God, or the values of the people who do not honor God. Notes will address the meaning of the term “world” in each instance where John uses it.

“to know”

The verb “to know” is used in two different ways in this letter. Sometimes it is used about knowing a fact, as in [3:2](#), [3:5](#), and [3:19](#). Sometimes it means to experience and understand someone or something, as in [3:1](#), [3:6](#), [3:16](#), and [3:20](#). Sometimes John uses it in two different senses in the same sentence, as in [2:3](#), “in this we know that we have known him.” Your languages may have different words for these different meanings, and it would be appropriate to use them in your translation.

Major textual issues in the text of the book of 1 John

When ancient manuscripts of the Bible differ, ULT puts the readings that scholars consider to be most accurate in its text, but it puts other possibly accurate readings in footnotes. The introductions to each chapter will discuss places where the ancient manuscripts differ in significant ways, and notes will address those places again where they occur in the book. If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using the readings found in that version. If not, we recommend that you follow the readings in the ULT text. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

1 John 1

1 John 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Opening of the letter (1:1-4)

Genuine believers obey God and love one another (1:5-10, continues through 2:17)

Important translation issues in this chapter

Like many Greek compositions of this time, for stylistic purposes this letter begins with a very long sentence. It goes from the beginning of [1:1](#) to the middle of [1:3](#). The parts of this sentence are not in the order that is customary in many languages. The direct object comes first, and it is very long, made up of many different clauses. The subject and verb do not come until near the end. And in the middle, there is a long digression. So it will be a challenge to translate.

One approach that might work well in your language would be to create a verse bridge that includes all of 1:1-3. You could break up this long sentence into several smaller sentences, repeating the subject and verb for clarity. This would allow you to present the parts of the sentence in an order that might be more customary in your language and that your readers might understand better. For example:

“So that you will have fellowship with us, we are declaring to you what we have seen and heard. We are declaring to you what was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched. It has to do with the Word of life. Indeed, the life appeared, and we have seen it, and we are testifying to it. Yes, we are announcing to you the eternal life that was with the Father and that appeared to us.”

If you take this approach, another way to translate the second sentence would be, “We are declaring to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and our hands have touched.”

Another approach that could also work well, and which would not require a verse bridge, would be to leave the phrases in their present order, but to divide the sentence into three parts at the verse divisions. If you do that, you could also put your translation of the phrase “regarding the Word of life” at the beginning rather than the end of [1:1](#) and present it as a topical introduction to the letter. Otherwise, your readers might not get the sense that this is a letter until they reached [1:4](#), where John formally states his purpose for writing.

The notes to [1:1-4](#) provide further specific suggestions for how to translate this long opening sentence. (See: [Verse Bridges](#))

Important textual issues in this chapter

In [1:4](#), the most accurate ancient manuscripts read “so that our joy may be fulfilled.” ULT follows that reading. However, some other ancient manuscripts read “your joy” instead of “our joy.” If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using whichever reading is found in that version. If a translation does not already exist, we recommend that you follow the reading in the ULT text. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

1 John 1:1

What was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched (ULT)

He existed before there was anything else. We apostles listened to him as he taught. We saw him personally. We looked at him and touched him. {So we can testify that he was a real human being (UST)}

See the discussion in the General Notes to this chapter for how to translate the long sentence in 1:1-3. If you follow the suggestion to translate the phrase “regarding the Word of life” as a topical introduction to this letter, you will already have indicated that the four clauses in this verse refer to a person, Jesus. You could therefore introduce them with the personal pronouns “who” and “whom.”

Alternate translation: “He is the one who has existed from all eternity, whom we heard speak, whom we saw with our own eyes, and whom we looked at and touched with our own hands” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

from the beginning (ULT)
before there was anything else (UST)

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the eternal existence of Jesus. Alternate translation: “from all eternity” (See: [Idiom](#))

we have heard ... we have seen ... our ... we have looked at ... our

In most cases in this letter, the first-person plural pronouns are inclusive, and so if your language marks that distinction, use the inclusive form in your translation. John is speaking of what both he and the recipients know, or of things that are true of both him and the recipients. However, in a few cases, the first-person pronouns are exclusive, since John is telling the recipients what he and his fellow apostles saw and heard from Jesus. These notes will identify all such places, and in them you should use the exclusive forms, if your language marks that distinction. Here the pronouns **we** and **our** are exclusive, since John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to the earthly life of Jesus. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

which we have heard (ULT)
We apostles listened to him as he taught (UST)

The implication is that what John and the other eyewitnesses **heard** was Jesus speaking. Alternate translation: “whom we heard speak” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹ What was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our [hands](#) have touched, regarding the Word [of life](#)—

UST

¹ I, John, am writing to you about Jesus, the Word of God, [the one who gives life](#). He existed before there was anything else. We apostles listened to him as he taught. We saw him personally. We looked at him and [touched](#) him. [{So we can testify that he was a real human being.}](#)

which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at (ULT)
We saw him personally. We looked at him...him (UST)

These two phrases mean the same thing. John is likely using the repetition for emphasis. You could combine these phrases into an emphatic expression if that would be clearer for your readers. Alternate translation: “whom we saw clearly ourselves” (See: [Parallelism](#))

we have seen with our eyes...our hands have touched (ULT)
We saw...personally...touched...So we can testify that he was a real human being (UST)

In your language, it might seem that these phrases express unnecessary extra information. If so, you could abbreviate them. However, your language may have its own way of using such extra information for emphasis, and you could also do that in your translation. Alternate translation: “whom we saw ... touched” or “whom we saw with our own eyes ... touched with our own hands” (See: [When to Keep Information Implicit](#))

we have seen with our eyes...our hands have touched (ULT)
We saw...personally...touched...So we can testify that he was a real human being (UST)

The implications of what John is saying are that Jesus must have been a real human being, even though the false teachers are denying this. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly, as UST does. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

regarding the Word of life (ULT)
I, John, am writing to you about Jesus, the Word of God, the one who gives life (UST)

As the General Notes to this chapter suggest, you could put your translation of this phrase, **regarding the Word of life**, at the beginning of this verse and present it as a sentence of its own as a topical introduction to the letter, as UST does. Alternate translation: “We are writing to you about Jesus, the Word of life”

regarding the Word of life (ULT)
I, John, am writing to you about Jesus, the Word of God, the one who gives life (UST)

Letter writers of this time typically began by giving their own names. That is the case for most of the letters in the New Testament. This letter is an exception, but if it would be helpful to your readers, you could supply John’s name here, as UST does. As noted above, John uses the plural pronoun “we” because he is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to Jesus’ earthly life. But it may be more natural in your language for him to refer to himself with a singular pronoun, and if so, you could do that in your translation. Alternate translation: “I, John, am writing to you about Jesus, the Word of life” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

the Word of life (ULT)
Jesus, the Word of God, the one who gives life (UST)

Here, **the Word of life** is implicitly a description of Jesus. As the General Introduction explains, there are many similarities between this letter and the Gospel of John. That gospel begins by saying about Jesus, “In the beginning

was the Word.” So it is likely that when John speaks in this letter of **the Word of life** that “was from the beginning,” he is also speaking about Jesus. ULT indicates this by capitalizing **Word** to indicate that this is a title for Jesus. Alternate translation: “Jesus, the Word of God, who gives life” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

of life (ULT) **the one who gives life (UST)**

This could be referring either to the life that Jesus has or to the life that Jesus gives. But since John is writing this letter to reassure believers, it seems more likely that this expression is referring to the **life** that “the Word” (Jesus) gives to those who believe. Alternate translation: “who gives life to everyone who believes in him” (See: [Possession](#))

of life (ULT) **the one who gives life (UST)**

In this letter, John uses **life** in different ways, either to refer literally to physical life or figuratively to spiritual life. Here the reference is to spiritual life. Alternate translation: “of spiritual life” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [hands](#)
- [of life](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the one who gives life](#)
- [touched...So we can testify that he was a real human being](#)

1 John 1:2

indeed, the life appeared (ULT) Because he came here to the earth (UST)

See the discussion of the term “appear” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. This could mean: (1) John may be emphasizing how Jesus came to this earth. (UST brings this out by saying “he came here to the earth.”) In that case, this would be a situation in which a Greek passive verbal form has an active meaning. As the General Notes to this chapter suggest, it may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “Indeed, the life came right here” (2) John may be emphasizing how God revealed Jesus to the world and thereby revealed himself to the world through Jesus. To bring out that emphasis, you could translate this with a passive verbal form or, if your language does not use passive forms, you could use an active form and say who did the action. Alternate translation: “Indeed, the life was made visible” or “Indeed, God made the life visible” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the life (ULT) he (UST)

John is speaking figuratively of Jesus, whom he calls the “Word of life” in the previous verse by referring to the **life** that is associated with him. In this case it seems to describe the **life** that Jesus embodies rather than the **life** that he gives. Alternate translation: “Jesus” or “Jesus, who is life” (See: [Metonymy](#))

we have seen it...we are testifying to it...we are announcing...to us (ULT) we saw him...we are proclaiming him...clearly...we are proclaiming him... clearly...to us (UST)

John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to the earthly life of Jesus, so the pronouns **we** and **us** are exclusive in this verse. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

to you (ULT) to you (UST)

As the General Introduction explains, John is writing this letter to believers in various churches, and so the pronouns **you**, “your,” and “yourselves” are plural throughout the entire letter. (See: [Forms of You](#))

we have seen it, and we are testifying to it (ULT)

If you decided to use personal pronouns in 1:1, you could use them in these cases as well. Alternate translation: “we have seen him, and we are testifying that we saw him” (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

ULT

² —indeed, the **life** appeared, and we have seen it, and **we are testifying to it**, yes, **we are announcing** to you the **eternal life** that was with the **Father** and appeared to us—

UST

² Because **he** came here to the earth and we saw him, **we are proclaiming him** to you **clearly**. The **one who has always existed**, who had been with **his Father in heaven**, came here to us.

we are testifying to it, yes, we are announcing to you (ULT)
we are proclaiming him to you clearly (UST)

These two phrases mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine these phrases, as UST does. (See: [Parallelism](#))

the eternal life (ULT)
The one who has always existed (UST)

As earlier in the verse, John is speaking figuratively of Jesus by referring to the **life** that is associated with him. Alternate translation: “Jesus, who is eternal life” or “Jesus, who has always been alive” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the Father (ULT)
his Father in heaven (UST)

The title **the Father** is an important title for God. Alternate translation: “God the Father” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

and appeared to us (ULT)

See how you translated **appeared** earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: “and came right to us” or “and was made visible to us” or “and whom God made visible to us” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- life
- life
- we are testifying to it
- we are announcing
- eternal
- Father

Translation Words - UST

- he
- one who has...existed
- we are proclaiming him...clearly
- we are proclaiming him...clearly
- always
- his Father in heaven

1 John 1:3

what we have seen and heard, we declare also to you, so you also will have fellowship with us (ULT)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could move the last clause to the beginning of the verse, since that clause gives the reason for the action that the rest of the verse describes. For clarity, you could also place the direct-object clause **what we have seen and heard** after the subject and verb **we declare ... to you**. In that case, you would not need to translate **also** after **declare**. As the General Notes to this chapter suggest, it may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "So that you also will have fellowship with us, we are declaring to you what we have seen and heard" (See: [Connect – Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

what we have seen and heard (ULT) what we saw and heard {from Jesus (UST)

John is referring implicitly to the way that he and the other eyewitnesses had **seen and heard** Jesus when he was alive on earth. Alternate translation: "what we saw and heard of Jesus when he was alive on earth" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

we have seen...we declare...us (ULT) we saw...we are proclaiming...us (UST)

John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to the earthly life of Jesus, so the pronouns **we** and **us** are exclusive. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

you also will have fellowship with us...fellowship is...our...with the Father and with his Son (ULT)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **fellowship** with a concrete noun such as "friends" and an adjective such as "close." Alternate translation: "so that you can be close friends with us ... we are all close friends with God the Father and with his Son Jesus" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

fellowship is...our (ULT) you will share life...as we do (UST)

The word **our** is likely inclusive, since John is speaking of how the believers to whom he is writing will have fellowship with him and the others on whose behalf he is writing. So if your language marks that distinction, you should translate the term as inclusive. Even if your language does not mark that distinction, you can indicate in your translation that the term applies both to John and to the people he is writing to. Alternate translation: "we are all close friends" (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

ULT

³ what we have seen and heard, **we declare** also to you, so you also will have **fellowship** with us. And indeed, our **fellowship is** with the **Father** and with his **Son, Jesus Christ**.

UST

³ We want you **to share life** with us, and so **we are proclaiming** to you what we saw and heard {from Jesus}. {If you believe in him,} **you will share life**, as we do, with **God our Father** and his **Son Jesus the Messiah**.

the Father...his Son (ULT) **God our Father...his Son (UST)**

These are important titles. Alternate translation: "God the Father ... his Son Jesus" (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- we declare
- fellowship
- fellowship is
- Father
- Son
- Jesus
- Christ

Translation Words - UST

- to share life
- you will share life
- we are proclaiming
- God our Father
- Son
- Jesus
- the Messiah

1 John 1:4

we are writing these things (ULT)

I am writing to you about these things (UST)

As the General Notes to this chapter explain, here John is formally stating his purpose for writing. If you decided in 1:1 that it would be more natural in your language for him to refer to himself with a singular pronoun in such a context, you could do the same thing in this instance. Alternate translation: "I, John, am writing these things" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

we...our (ULT)

to you...we...together (UST)

If you use the plural pronoun **we**, it would be exclusive, since John is speaking of himself and the other eyewitnesses on whose behalf he is writing. However, the term **our** is likely inclusive, since John probably means that he wants both himself and his readers to have joy in the shared fellowship with one another and with the Father and the Son that he describes in the previous verse. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

so that our joy may be fulfilled (ULT)

so that {you will recognize that they are true, and that as a result} we will be completely joyful together (UST)

See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to follow the reading of ULT and say **our joy** or to follow the reading of some other versions and say "your joy." The note below discusses a translation issue related to the variant reading "your joy," for those who decide to use it. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

so that our joy may be fulfilled (ULT)

so that {you will recognize that they are true, and that as a result} we will be completely joyful together (UST)

If you follow the variant reading "your joy," the word "your" would be plural, as in the rest of this letter, since it would refer to a group of believers. (See: [Forms of You](#))

so that our joy may be fulfilled (ULT)

so that {you will recognize that they are true, and that as a result} we will be completely joyful together (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **joy** with an adjective such as "happy." Alternate translation: "so that we will be completely happy" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁴ And we are writing these things so that our **joy** may be fulfilled. ^[1]

UST

⁴ I am writing to you about these things so that {you will recognize that they are true, and that as a result} we will be completely **joyful** together.

so that our joy may be fulfilled (ULT)

so that {you will recognize that they are true, and that as a result} we will be completely joyful together (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “so that we will be completely happy” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

so that our joy may be fulfilled (ULT)

so that {you will recognize that they are true, and that as a result} we will be completely joyful together (UST)

The implications are that John and his readers will be completely happy together if his readers recognize the truth of what he is writing to them about. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly, as UST does. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- joy

Translation Words - UST

- joyful

1 John 1:5

we have heard (ULT)

we heard (UST)

The pronoun **we** is exclusive, since John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to the earthly life of Jesus. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

from him (ULT)

from Jesus (UST)

The pronoun **him** refers to Jesus in this first instance in the verse, since John is speaking of the message that he and the other eyewitnesses heard from Jesus. Alternate translation: "from Jesus" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

God is light, and darkness is not in him at all (ULT)

God always does what is right and never, ever does anything wrong (UST)

These two phrases mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: "God is entirely light" or, if you represent these metaphors non-figuratively (see next two notes), "God is completely holy" (See: [Parallelism](#))

God is light (ULT)

God always does what is right (UST)

John often uses **light** figuratively in this letter to mean what is holy, right, and good. Here, in reference to God, it indicates holiness. Alternate translation: "God is holy" (See: [Metaphor](#))

darkness is not in him at all (ULT)

never, ever does anything wrong (UST)

John often uses the word **darkness** figuratively in this letter to mean what is evil. Alternate translation: "God is not evil at all" (See: [Metaphor](#))

darkness is not in him at all (ULT)

never, ever does anything wrong (UST)

John is using a double negative in Greek for emphasis. In English it would come out "darkness is not in him not at all." In Greek the second negative does not cancel the first negative to create a positive meaning. In English the meaning would inaccurately be positive, which is why ULT uses only one negative and says "darkness is not in him at all." But if your language uses double negatives for emphasis that do not cancel one another, it would be appropriate to use that construction in your translation. (See: [Double Negatives](#))

ULT

⁵ And this is the message that we have heard from him and **are announcing** to you, that **God is light**, and **darkness** is not in him at all.

UST

⁵ The message that we heard from Jesus and **are proclaiming** to you is this: **God always does what is right** and never, ever **does anything wrong**.

in him (ULT) **does anything wrong (UST)**

In this second instance in the verse, the pronoun **him** refers to God, the immediate antecedent. Alternate translation: "in God" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- are announcing
- God
- light
- darkness

Translation Words - UST

- are proclaiming
- God
- always does what is right
- does anything wrong

1 John 1:6

If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we are lying and we are not doing the truth (ULT)

John is using a hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the importance of consistency between their words and their actions. Alternate translation: “Suppose we say that we have fellowship with him, but we walk in darkness. Then we are lying and are not doing the truth” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

If we say that we have fellowship with him (ULT)

If we claim that we share life with God (UST)

If your language does not use abstract nouns, see how you expressed the idea behind the abstract noun **fellowship** in [1:3](#). Alternate translation: “If we say that we are close friends with God” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

with him (ULT)

with God (UST)

The pronoun **him** refers to God, the antecedent from the previous verse. Alternate translation: “with God” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

and (ULT)

but (UST)

John is using the word **and** to introduce a contrast between what would be expected of a person who claims to have fellowship with God and what such a person might hypothetically do. Alternate translation: “but” (See: [Connect – Contrast Relationship](#))

walk in darkness (ULT)

we conduct our lives in an evil manner (UST)

John is using the word **walk** figuratively to mean how a person lives and behaves. Alternate translation: “do what is evil” (See: [Metaphor](#))

walk in darkness (ULT)

we conduct our lives in an evil manner (UST)

As in [1:5](#), John is using the word **darkness** figuratively to mean evil. Alternate translation: “do what is evil” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ If we say that we have **fellowship** with him and **walk in darkness**, we are lying and we are not doing the **truth**.

UST

⁶ If we claim that **we share life** with God, but **we conduct our lives in an evil manner**, we are lying. We are not living **truthfully**.

we are lying and we are not doing the truth (ULT)

These two phrases mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: “we are really not truthful at all” (See: [Parallelism](#))

we are not doing the truth (ULT)

We are not living truthfully (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **truth** with the concrete noun “message” from the previous verse, since that seems to be what John means by the term in this case. Alternate translation: “we are not living according to the message we heard” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- fellowship
- walk
- darkness
- truth

Translation Words - UST

- we share life
- we conduct our lives
- an evil manner
- truthfully

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another (ULT)

But if we live in a pure manner, as God is pure in every way, then we can share life with each other (UST)

John is using another hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the value and benefits of living a life that is holy, as God is holy. Alternate translation: “But suppose we walk in the light as he is in the light. Then we have fellowship with one another” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

we walk in the light (ULT)

we live in a pure manner (UST)

John is using the word **walk** figuratively to mean how a person lives and behaves. Alternate translation: “we do what is right” (See: [Metaphor](#))

we walk in the light (ULT)

we live in a pure manner (UST)

As in [1:5](#), John is using the word **light** figuratively to mean what is holy, right, and good. Alternate translation: “do what is holy” or “do what is right” (See: [Metaphor](#))

as he is in the light (ULT)

as God is pure in every way (UST)

The pronoun **he** refers to God. Alternate translation: “as God is in the light” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

as he is in the light (ULT)

as God is pure in every way (UST)

John is using the word **light** figuratively to mean what is holy. Alternate translation: “as God is holy” (See: [Metaphor](#))

we have fellowship with one another (ULT)

then we can share life with each other (UST)

If your language does not use abstract nouns, see how you expressed the idea behind the abstract noun **fellowship** in [1:3](#). Alternate translation: “we are close friends with one another” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁷ But if **we walk** in the **light as** he is in the **light**, we have **fellowship** with one another, and the **blood of Jesus** his **Son** cleanses us from all **sin**.

UST

⁷ But if **we live in a pure manner, as** God is **pure in every way, then we can share life** with each other. Then **God forgives us and accepts us** because his **Son Jesus** died for us.

the blood of Jesus (ULT) **because...Jesus died for us (UST)**

This could mean: (1) John may be referring literally to the **blood** that Jesus offered as a sacrifice for sin. (2) John may be using the word **blood** figuratively to mean the sacrificial death of Jesus, by association with the **blood** that Jesus shed when he died. Alternate translation: “the death of Jesus” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin (ULT) **God forgives us and accepts us because his Son Jesus died for us (UST)**

John is speaking figuratively of **sin** as if it made a person dirty and of the **blood** of Jesus as if it made a person clean. Alternate translation: “takes away all our sin” (See: [Metaphor](#))

of Jesus his Son (ULT) **his Son Jesus (UST)**

Son is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [we walk](#)
- [light](#)
- [light](#)
- [as](#)
- [fellowship](#)
- [blood](#)
- [of Jesus](#)
- [Son](#)
- [cleanses](#)
- [sin](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [we live](#)
- [a pure manner](#)
- [pure in every way](#)
- [as](#)
- [then we can share life](#)
- [God forgives us and accepts us](#)
- [God forgives us and accepts us](#)
- [because...died for us](#)
- [Son](#)
- [Jesus](#)

1 John 1:8

If we say that we have no sin, we are leading ourselves astray, and the truth is not in us (ULT)

John is using another hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the importance of consistency between their words and their actions. Alternate translation: “Suppose we say that we have no sin. Then we are leading ourselves astray, and the truth is not in us” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

we have no sin (ULT) we do not commit sin (UST)

Alternate translation: “we never sin”

we are leading ourselves astray (ULT) we are fooling ourselves (UST)

John speaks figuratively of those who say this as if they were guides who were leading people—themselves, actually—in the wrong direction. Alternate translation: “we are deceiving ourselves” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the truth is not in us (ULT) We are refusing to believe the true things {that God says about us (UST)

John speaks figuratively of the **truth** as if it were an object that could be inside believers. Alternate translation: “we do not believe that what God says is true” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the truth is not in us (ULT) We are refusing to believe the true things {that God says about us (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **truth** with an adjective such as “true.” Alternate translation: “we do not believe that what God says is true” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [sin](#)
- [we are leading...astray](#)
- [truth](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [sin](#)
- [we are fooling](#)
- [true things {that God says about us](#)

ULT

⁸ If we say that we have no [sin](#), [we are leading](#) ourselves [astray](#), and the [truth](#) is not in us.

UST

⁸ If we say that we do not commit [sin](#), [we are fooling](#) ourselves. We are refusing to believe the [true things {that God says about us}](#).

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous (ULT)

But God always does what he says he will do, and what he does is always right...if we admit to him that we have sinned (UST)

John is using another hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the value and benefits of living in holiness. Alternate translation: "Suppose we confess our sins. Then he is faithful and righteous" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

he is faithful...that he should forgive (ULT)
But God always does what he says he will do... So...he will forgive (UST)

The pronoun **he** refers to God in both instances in this verse. Alternate translation: "God is faithful ... and God will forgive" (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

that he should forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (ULT)

So...he will forgive us for our sins and will free us from {the guilt of} everything we have done wrong (UST)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. John is likely using them together for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine them, especially if it might be confusing for your readers if you put both phrases in. Alternate translation: "and he will completely forgive us of what we have done wrong" (See: [Parallelism](#))

he should forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (ULT)
he will forgive us for our sins and will free us from {the guilt of} everything we have done wrong (UST)

As in [1:7](#), John is speaking figuratively of **sins** as if they made a person dirty and of God's forgiveness as if it made a person clean. Alternate translation: "he should not hold against us anything that we have done wrong" (See: [Metaphor](#))

all unrighteousness (ULT)
the guilt of} everything we have done wrong (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **unrighteousness** with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "anything that we have done wrong" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

⁹ If **we confess** our **sins**, he is **faithful** and **righteous**, that **he should forgive** us **our sins** and **cleanse** us from all **unrighteousness**.

UST

⁹ **But God always does what he says he will do**, and **what he does is always right**. So if **we admit to him** that we **have sinned**, **he will forgive** us **for our sins** and **will free** us from **{the guilt of}** everything **we have done wrong**.

Translation Words - ULT

- we confess
- sins
- our sins (2)
- faithful
- righteous
- unrighteousness
- he should forgive
- cleanse

Translation Words - UST

- But God always does what he says he will do
- what he does is always right
- the guilt of...we have done wrong
- we admit to him
- that...have sinned
- for our sins (2)
- he will forgive
- will free

1 John 1:10

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar (ULT)

Because God says that everyone has sinned,} if we say that we do not sin, we are speaking as if God were a liar (UST)

John is using another hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the serious implications of not living in holiness. Alternate translation: "Suppose we say that we have not sinned. Then we are calling God a liar" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

him...his (ULT)

God were...God (UST)

The pronouns **him** and **his** refer to God in this verse. Alternate translation: "God ... God's" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

we make him a liar (ULT)

we are speaking as if God were a liar (UST)

Be sure that it is clear in your translation that God would not actually be a **liar** in this case. Rather, a person who claimed to be without sin would be calling God a liar, since God has said that everyone is a sinner. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "that is the same as calling God a liar, because God has said that we have all sinned" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

his word is not in us (ULT)

We are rejecting what God has said about us (UST)

John is using the term **word** figuratively to mean what God has said by using words. Alternate translation: "we do not believe what God has said" (See: [Metonymy](#))

his word is not in us (ULT)

We are rejecting what God has said about us (UST)

As he did about the "truth" in [1:8](#), John is speaking figuratively of God's **word** as if it were an object that could be inside believers. Alternate translation: "we do not believe what God has said" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [we have...sinned](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [we do...sin](#)

ULT

10 If we say that [we have](#) not [sinned](#), we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1:4 ^[1], some ancient manuscripts read .

UST

10 {Because God says that everyone has sinned,} if we say that [we do](#) not [sin](#), we are speaking as if God were a liar! We are rejecting what God has said about us!

1 John 2

1 John 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Genuine believers obey God and love one another (2:1-17, continuing from 1:5)

It is false teaching to deny that Jesus is the Messiah (2:18-2:27)

Genuine children of God do not sin (2:28-29, continues through 3:10)

In order to show that John is writing something like poetry in in [2:12-14](#), some translations set the statements in those verses farther to the right than the rest of the text, and they begin a new line at the start of each statement.

Special concepts in this chapter

Antichrist

In [2:18](#) and [2:22](#), John writes both about a specific person called the Antichrist and about many people who will be “antichrists.” The word “antichrist” means “opposed to Christ.” The Antichrist is a person who will come just before the return of Jesus and imitate Jesus’ work, but he will do that for evil purposes. Before that person comes, there will be many other people who work against Christ. They too are called “antichrists,” but as a description rather than as a name. (See: [antichrist](#) and [last day, latter days](#) and [evil, wicked, unpleasant](#))

Important textual issues in this chapter

In [2:20](#), some ancient manuscripts read “you all know,” and that is the reading that ULT follows. However, other ancient manuscripts read “you know all things.” It seems more likely, based on everything else in the letter, that “you all know” is the correct original reading, since John is countering the claim of false teachers to know more than other believers. The reading “you know all things” seems to have arisen because copyists felt a need to have an object for the verb “know.” Nevertheless, if a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using whichever reading is found in that version. If a translation does not already exist, we recommend that you follow the reading in the ULT text. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

1 John 2:1

My little children (ULT)

You who are as dear to me as my own children (UST)

Here and in several other places in the book, John uses the diminutive form of the word **children** as an affectionate form of address. Alternate translation: "My dear children"

My little children (ULT)

You who are as dear to me as my own children (UST)

John is also using the word **children** figuratively to describe the believers to whom he is writing. They are under his spiritual care, and so he regards them as if they were his own children. You could translate this in a non-figurative way, or you could represent the metaphor as a simile, as UST does. Alternate translation: "You dear believers who are under my care" (See: [Metaphor](#))

I am writing these things (ULT)

I am writing this (UST)

Alternate translation: "I am writing this letter"

And (ULT)

But (UST)

John is using the word **And** to introduce a contrast between what he hopes to achieve by writing, that these believers will not sin, and what might happen, that one of them might sin. Alternate translation: "But" (See: [Connect - Contrast Relationship](#))

if anyone should sin, we have an advocate with the Father (ULT)

if any of you does sin, {remember that...pleads with the Father {and asks him to forgive us (UST)

John is describing a hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: "suppose someone does sin. Then we have an advocate with the Father" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ (ULT)

remember that} Jesus the Messiah...pleads with the Father {and asks him to forgive us (UST)

John assumes that his readers will know that an **advocate** is someone who takes a person's side and pleads on his behalf. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus Christ will take our side and ask God the Father to forgive us" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹ My **little children**, I am writing these things to you so that **you may not sin**. And if anyone **should sin**, we have an advocate with the **Father, Jesus Christ the righteous**.

UST

¹ **You who are as dear to me as my own children**, I am writing this to you to keep you from **sinning**. But if any of you **does sin**, {remember that} **Jesus the Messiah, the righteous one**, pleads with the **Father** {and asks **him** to forgive us}.

the Father (ULT)
the Father...him (UST)

This is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "God the Father" (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

the righteous (ULT)
the righteous one (UST)

John is using the adjective **righteous** as a noun in order to indicate a specific type of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "the one who is righteous" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- little children
- you may...sin
- should sin
- Father
- Jesus
- Christ
- the righteous

Translation Words - UST

- You who are as dear to me as...children
- you...sinning
- does sin
- Jesus
- the Messiah
- the righteous one
- Father...him

1 John 2:2

he (ULT) Jesus (UST)

The pronoun **he** refers to Jesus, the antecedent in the previous verse.
Alternate translation: "Jesus" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world (ULT)

The abstract noun **propitiation** refers to something that someone does for someone else or gives to someone else so that he will no longer be angry. If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "because of Jesus, God is no longer angry about our sins, and not only about ours, but also about those of the whole world" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the whole world (ULT) all the sins that people everywhere have committed (UST)

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it figuratively refers to the people living in the world.
Alternate translation: "everyone in the world" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [the propitiation](#)
- [sins](#)
- [the...world](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [the one who makes God no longer angry](#)
- [sins](#)
- [the sins that people everywhere have committed](#)

ULT

² And he is [the propitiation](#) for our [sins](#), and not for ours only, but also for the whole [world](#).

UST

² Jesus is [the one who makes God no longer angry](#) with us for our [sins](#). And this is true not just of our sins, but of all [the sins that people everywhere have committed](#)!

1 John 2:3

in this we know that we have known him, if we keep his commandments (ULT)

If we obey what God commands us to do...we can be sure that we have come to know God (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “if we obey what he has commanded, then we can be assured that we have a close relationship with him” (See: [Connect – Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

in this we know that (ULT)
we can be sure that (UST)

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: “this is how we know that” (See: [Idiom](#))

we know that we have known him (ULT)
we can be sure...that we have come to know God (UST)

John is using the word **know** in two different senses. See the discussion of the word **know** in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. If your language has different words for these different senses, it would be appropriate to use them here. Alternate translation: “we can be assured that we have a close relationship with him”

him...his (ULT)
God...God (UST)

In this verse, the pronouns **him** and **his** refer to God, the one who has given the commandments that people must obey. Alternate translation: “God ... God’s” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

if we keep his commandments (ULT)
If we obey what God commands us to do (UST)

Here, **keep** is an idiom that means “obey.” Alternate translation: “if we obey what he has commanded” (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [we know](#)
- [we have known](#)
- [we keep](#)
- [commandments](#)

ULT

³ And in this [we know](#) that [we have known](#) him, if [we keep](#) his commandments.

UST

³ If [we obey what God commands us to do](#), then [we can be sure that we have come to know](#) God.

Translation Words - UST

- we obey
- what...commands us to do
- we can be sure
- we have come to know

1 John 2:4

The one who says, “I know him,” and does not keep his commandments is a liar

John is describing a hypothetical situation in order to challenge his readers. Alternate translation: “Suppose someone says, ‘I have a close relationship with God,’ but he does not obey what God has commanded. Then that person is a liar” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

The one who says (ULT) If someone says (UST)

Alternate translation: “Anyone who says” or “The person who says”

I know him (ULT) I am living in relationship with God (UST)

As in the second instance in [2:3](#), John is using the word **know** in a specific sense. Alternate translation: “I have a close relationship with God”

him...his (ULT) God...God (UST)

In this verse, the pronouns **him** and **his** refer to God, the one who has given the commandments that people must obey. Alternate translation: “God ... God’s” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

and (ULT) but (UST)

John is using the word **and** to introduce a contrast between what such a person might say and what his conduct actually indicates to be true. Alternate translation: “but” (See: [Connect – Contrast Relationship](#))

does not keep (ULT) that person does not obey (UST)

In this instance, the word **keep** is an idiom that means “obey.” Alternate translation: “does not obey” or “disobeys” (See: [Idiom](#))

is a liar, and the truth is not in this one (ULT)

These two phrases mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: “is certainly not speaking the truth” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

⁴ The one who says, “I know him,” and does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in this one.

UST

⁴ If someone says, “I am living in relationship with God,” but that person does not obey what God has commanded, he is a liar. He is not conducting his life according to God’s true message.

and the truth is not in this one (ULT)

John is speaking figuratively of the **truth** as if it were an object that could be inside someone. Alternate translation: "and such a person is not speaking the truth" (See: [Metaphor](#))

and the truth is not in this one (ULT)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **truth** with an adjective such as "true." Alternate translation: "and what such a person says is not true" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [I know](#)
- [does...keep](#)
- [commandments](#)
- [truth](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [I am living in relationship with](#)
- [that person does...obey](#)
- [what...has commanded](#)
- [God's true message](#)

1 John 2:5

But whoever keeps his word, in this one truly the love of God has been perfected (ULT)

But if someone obeys what God has commanded, that person loves God in every way (UST)

John is suggesting another hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: "But suppose someone keeps his word. Then the love of God truly has been perfected in that person." (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

keeps his word (ULT)

obeys what God has commanded (UST)

John is using the term **word** figuratively to mean what God has commanded by using words. Alternate translation: "obeys what God has commanded" (See: [Metonymy](#))

keeps his word (ULT)

obeys what God has commanded (UST)

In this instance, the word **keep** is an idiom that means "obey." Alternate translation: "obeys what God has commanded" (See: [Idiom](#))

his...him (ULT)

God...joined with God (UST)

The pronouns **his** and **him** in this verse refer to God. Alternate translation: "God's ... God" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

in this one truly the love of God has been perfected (ULT)

that person loves God in every way (UST)

The phrase **the love of God** could mean: (1) It may refer to a person loving God. Alternate translation: "that person indeed loves God completely" (2) It may refer to God loving people. Alternate translation: "God's love has achieved its purpose in that person's life" (See: [Possession](#))

in this one truly the love of God has been perfected (ULT)

that person loves God in every way (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use an active verbal form in place of the passive verbal form **has been perfected**. The person or thing doing the action will depend on how you decide to translate the phrase **the love of God** (see previous note). Alternate translation: "that person indeed loves God completely" or "God's love has achieved its purpose in that person's life" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

⁵ But whoever **keeps** his word, in this one **truly** the **love of God has been perfected**. In this **we know** that we are in him:

UST

⁵ But if someone **obeys** what God has commanded, that person **loves God in every way**. This is how **we can be sure** that we are joined with God:

we are in him (ULT) **we are joined with God (UST)**

John is speaking figuratively as if believers could be inside of God. This expression describes having a close relationship. Alternate translation: “we have a close relationship with God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- keeps
- truly
- love
- of God
- has been perfected
- we know

Translation Words - UST

- obeys
- loves
- God
- in every way
- in every way
- we can be sure

1 John 2:6

he remains in him (ULT) he shares life with God (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remainw” in Part 3 of the Introduction to this book. Here to remain in God means about the same thing as to have “fellowship with God” in 1:3 and 1:6. Alternate translation: “he is close friends with God” or “he has a close relationship with God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he remains in him (ULT) he shares life with God (UST)

John once again speaks figuratively as if believers could be inside of God. Alternate translation: “he is close friends with God” or “he has a close relationship with God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

in him (ULT) with God (UST)

The pronoun **him** refers to God. Alternate translation: “in God” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

ought, just as that one walked, also to walk himself (ULT) then he should conduct his life as Jesus did {when he was here on earth (UST)

As in 1:6 and 1:7, John is using the word **walk** figuratively to mean how a person lives and behaves. Alternate translation: “must live as Jesus lived” or “must obey God just as Jesus did” (See: [Metaphor](#))

that one (ULT) Jesus (UST)

John is using this demonstrative pronoun to refer to Jesus, and specifically to Jesus when he lived on earth. Alternate translation: “Jesus” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [just as](#)
- [walked](#)
- [to walk](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [did {when he was here on earth](#)
- [conduct...life](#)
- [as](#)

ULT

⁶ the one who says he remains in him ought, [just as](#) that one [walked](#), also to [walk](#) himself.

UST

⁶ If anyone says that he shares life with God, then he should [conduct](#) his [life as](#) Jesus [did {when he was here on earth}](#).

1 John 2:7

Beloved (ULT)

Dear friends (UST)

This is another term of affection by which John addresses the believers to whom he is writing. It involves using the adjective **Beloved** as a noun in order to indicate a specific group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "You people whom I love" or "Dear friends" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

from the beginning (ULT)

since you first believed in Jesus (UST)

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the time when the people to whom he is writing first believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "ever since you first believed in Jesus" (See: [Idiom](#))

the word that you heard (ULT)

part of the message that you have always heard {about him} (UST)

John is using **word** figuratively to refer to the message that these believers heard, which was communicated through words. Alternate translation: "the message that you heard" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the word that you heard (ULT)

part of the message that you have always heard {about him} (UST)

The implication is that the specific **word** or message that John is describing is the commandment Jesus gave to believers that they should love one another. See the Gospel of John [13:34](#) and [15:12](#). John indicates this explicitly in this letter in [3:23](#) and [4:21](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly at this point as well. Alternate translation: "the commandment Jesus gave that we should love one another" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Beloved](#)
- [a...commandment](#)
- [an...commandment](#) (2)
- [commandment](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Dear friends](#)
- [to do something](#)
- [to do something](#) (2)
- [This](#)

ULT

⁷ [Beloved](#), I am not writing a new [commandment](#) to you, but an old [commandment](#), which you have had from the beginning. The old [commandment](#) is the word that you heard.

UST

⁷ [Dear friends](#), I am not writing to tell you [to do something](#) new. Instead, I am writing to tell you [to do something](#) you have known you should do since you first believed in Jesus. [This](#) is part of the message that you have always heard {about him}.

1 John 2:8

Again (ULT)

However, seen another way (UST)

John is using the term **Again** idiomatically. Alternate translation: “On the other hand” (See: [Idiom](#))

I am writing a new commandment to you (ULT)

I am actually telling you to do something new...new (UST)

John is referring to the same **commandment** as in [2:7](#), the commandment that Jesus gave to love one another, which the believers have had all along. So he does not mean that he is now writing a **new** and different commandment, but rather that this same commandment, which he called “old” there, can also be considered **new** in a certain sense. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what **commandment** John is referring to, and you could give the likely reason why it can be considered **new**. Alternate translation: “the commandment I am writing to you, to love one another, is, in a sense, a new commandment, because it is characteristic of a new way of life” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is going away and the true light is already shining (ULT)

It is...because what the Messiah did was new, and what you are doing is new. That is because you are ceasing to do evil and you are doing more and more good (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could reverse the order of these clauses, since the second clause gives the reason for the result that the first clause describes. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “Because the darkness is going away and the true light is already shining, this commandment is true in Jesus and in you” (See: [Connect - Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

which is true in him and in you (ULT)

It is...because what the Messiah did was new, and what you are doing is new (UST)

Since Jesus consistently obeyed the commandment to love, it is likely that John is emphasizing that believers are doing the same thing themselves. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could bring out this implicit emphasis in your translation. If you do not put the next clause before this one, as the previous note suggests, it may still be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “Jesus truly obeyed this commandment, and you are now truly obeying it as well” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁸ Again, I am writing a new **commandment** to you, which is **true** in him and in you, because the **darkness** is going away and the **true light** is already shining.

UST

⁸ However, seen another way, I am actually telling you **to do something new**. It is new **because** what the Messiah did **was new**, and what you are doing **is new**. That is because **you are ceasing to do evil** and **you are doing more and more good**.

which is true in him and in you (ULT)**It is...because what the Messiah did was new, and what you are doing is new (UST)**

John is speaking figuratively as if this commandment were **true** inside of Jesus and these believers. Alternate translation: "Jesus truly obeyed this commandment, and you are now truly obeying it as well" (See: [Metaphor](#))

him (ULT)**what the Messiah did (UST)**

The pronoun **him** refers to Jesus. John is using him as the supreme example of loving others. Alternate translation: "Jesus" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

the darkness is going away and the true light is already shining (ULT)**you are ceasing to do evil and you are doing more and more good (UST)**

As in [1:5](#), John is using the word **darkness** figuratively to mean evil and the word **light** figuratively to mean what is holy, right, and good. The **shining** of the light figuratively represents its influence. Alternate translation: "what is evil is going away and what is genuinely good is becoming influential instead" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the true light (ULT)**you are doing more and more good (UST)**

Since John calls God "the True One" in [5:20](#), he may be referring to God's goodness and holiness when he says **the true light**. Alternate translation: "the goodness of God" or "the holiness of God" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [a...commandment](#)
- [true](#)
- [true](#)
- [darkness](#)
- [light](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [to do something](#)
- [because...was new...is new](#)
- [you are doing more and more good](#)
- [you are ceasing to do evil](#)
- [you are doing more and more good](#)

1 John 2:9

**The one who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness until now (ULT)
If someone says that he is doing what God wants, but he hates any of his fellow believers, then he is still doing what God does not want (UST)**

John is suggesting a further hypothetical situation in order to challenge his readers. Alternate translation: "Suppose someone says he is in the light, but he hates his brother. Then that person is still in the darkness." (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

**he is in the light (ULT)
he is doing what God wants (UST)**

As in [1:5](#), John is using the word **light** figuratively to mean what is holy, right, and good. Alternate translation: "he does what is right" (See: [Metaphor](#))

**and (ULT)
but (UST)**

John is using the word **and** to introduce a contrast between what such a person might say and what his conduct actually indicates to be true. Alternate translation: "but" (See: [Connect – Contrast Relationship](#))

**his brother (ULT)
any of his fellow believers (UST)**

John is using the term **brother** figuratively to mean someone who shares the same faith. Alternate translation: "a fellow believer" (See: [Metaphor](#))

**his brother (ULT)
any of his fellow believers (UST)**

Although the term **brother** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "a fellow believer" (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

**is in the darkness (ULT)
then he is...doing what God does not want (UST)**

As in [1:5](#), John is using the word **darkness** figuratively to mean what is wrong or evil. Alternate translation: "is doing what is wrong" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁹ The one who says he is in the **light** and hates his **brother** is in the **darkness** until now.

UST

⁹ If someone says that he is doing **what God wants**, but he hates **any of his fellow believers**, then he is still doing **what God does not want**.

until now (ULT)
still (UST)

Alternate translation: "still"

Translation Words - ULT

- light
- brother
- darkness

Translation Words - UST

- what God wants
- any of...fellow believers
- what God does not want

1 John 2:10

The one who loves his brother remains in the light (ULT)

But if someone loves his fellow believers, then he is truly doing what God wants (UST)

John is suggesting a further hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: "Suppose someone does love his fellow believers. Then he is genuinely doing what is right" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

his brother (ULT)

his fellow believers (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:9. Alternate translation: "a fellow believer" (See: [Metaphor](#))

his brother (ULT)

his fellow believers (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this in the plural, since John likely does not have a specific individual in view, as he does in 2:9. Rather, John is speaking of loving all believers. Alternate translation: "his fellow believers" (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

remains in the light (ULT)

then he is truly doing what God wants (UST)

John is using the word **light** figuratively to mean what is holy, right, and good. Alternate translation: "is genuinely doing what is right" (See: [Metaphor](#))

remains in the light (ULT)

then he is truly doing what God wants (UST)

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the word seems to describe behavior that is recognized to be genuine because it is consistent. Alternate translation: "is genuinely doing what is right" (See: [Metaphor](#))

a stumbling-block is not in him (ULT)

He will not be led to sin {as he would be if he hated a fellow believer (UST)

John is using the term **stumbling-block**, which means something that a person would trip over, figuratively to mean something that would cause a person to sin. Alternate translation: "nothing will cause him to sin" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁰ The one **who loves** his **brother** remains in the **light** and **a stumbling-block** is not in him.

UST

¹⁰ But if someone **loves** his **fellow believers**, then he is truly doing **what God wants**. He will not be **led to sin** {as he would be if he hated a fellow believer}.

a stumbling-block is not in him (ULT)**He will not be led to sin {as he would be if he hated a fellow believer (UST)**

John speaks of this **stumbling-block** being **in** or inside a person because it represents the hatred for a fellow believer that he describes in [2:9](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this explicitly. Alternate translation: "he has no hatred inside of him that will cause him to sin" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [who loves](#)
- [brother](#)
- [light](#)
- [a stumbling-block](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [loves](#)
- [fellow believers](#)
- [what God wants](#)
- [led to sin {as he would be if he hated a fellow believer](#)

1 John 2:11

his brother (ULT) a fellow believer (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:9. Alternate translation: “a fellow believer” (See: [Metaphor](#))

is in the darkness and walks in the darkness (ULT)

These two phrases mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: “keeps on doing what is wrong” (See: [Parallelism](#))

is in the darkness (ULT) is not doing what God wants (UST)

As in 1:5, John is using the word **darkness** figuratively to mean what is wrong or evil. Alternate translation: “does what is wrong” (See: [Metaphor](#))

walks in the darkness (ULT) He is conducting his life in the wrong way (UST)

John is using the word **walks** figuratively to mean how a person lives and behaves. Alternate translation: “conducts his life in wrong ways” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes (ULT) he does not understand how he should live, because the wrong things he is doing are keeping him from understanding (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “because the darkness has blinded his eyes, he does not know where he is going” (See: [Connect – Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

he does not know where he is going (ULT) he does not understand how he should live (UST)

This is a continuation of the metaphor of walking as a figurative description of how a person lives and behaves. Alternate translation: “he does not know the right way to live” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹¹ But the one who hates his **brother** is in the **darkness** and **walks** in the **darkness**, and **he does** not **know** where he is going, because the **darkness** has blinded his eyes.

UST

¹¹ But anyone who hates a fellow **believer** is **not doing what God wants**. **He is conducting his life** in the **wrong way**. But **he does** not **understand** how he should live, because the **wrong things he is doing** are keeping him from understanding.

**because the darkness has blinded his eyes (ULT)
because the wrong things he is doing are keeping him from understanding (UST)**

John is using blindness figuratively to mean a loss of moral sense. Alternate translation: “because evil intentions are keeping him from knowing right and wrong” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- brother
- darkness
- darkness (2)
- darkness
- walks
- he does...know

Translation Words - UST

- believer
- not doing what God wants
- wrong way (2)
- wrong things he is doing
- He is conducting his life
- he does...understand

1 John 2:12

little children (ULT) whom I love as though you were my own children (UST)

John uses the term **little children** in [2:1](#) and in several other places in this letter to refer to all of the believers to whom he is writing. See the explanation of it in two of the notes to [2:1](#). UST takes the term to mean that in this case as well. However, it is also possible that in this case the term has a more specialized meaning and that it refers to only some of the believers, since it seems to represent only one of three groups of believers that John addresses twice in [2:12-14](#). Moreover, the next time John addresses this first group, in [2:14](#), he uses a different word that means “young children.” So in this context, the term could figuratively be describing new believers, that is, those who have just put their faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. Alternate translation: “new believers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹² I am writing to you, [little children](#), because your [sins have been forgiven](#) because of his [name](#).

UST

¹² I am writing to you, [whom I love as though you were my own children](#), because [God has forgiven](#) your [sins](#) because of [what Jesus has done for you](#).

your sins have been forgiven (ULT) God has forgiven your sins (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could say this with an active form, and you could say who has done the action. Alternate translation: “God has forgiven your sins” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

because of his name (ULT) because of what Jesus has done for you (UST)

The pronoun **his** refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: “because of the name of Jesus” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

because of his name (ULT) because of what Jesus has done for you (UST)

John is using the **name** of Jesus figuratively to represent who Jesus is and what he has done. Alternate translation: “because of what Jesus has done for you” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [little children](#)
- [sins](#)
- [have been forgiven](#)
- [name](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [whom I love as though you were my own children](#)
- [God has forgiven](#)
- [sins](#)
- [what...has done for you](#)

1 John 2:13

fathers (ULT) who have been believers longer than the others (UST)

If “little children” figuratively means “new believers” in [2:12](#), then the term **fathers** is likely a figurative description of another group of believers. It could mean one of two things. Alternate translation: (1) “mature believers” (2) “church leaders” (See: [Metaphor](#))

you know (ULT) you are acquainted with (UST)

As in [2:4](#), John is using the word **know** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “you have a close relationship with”

the one who is from the beginning (ULT) God, who has been alive from all eternity (UST)

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the eternal existence of God. Alternate translation: “God, who has always existed” (See: [Idiom](#))

young men (ULT) believers who have become steadfast in your faith (UST)

This is likely a figurative description of a third group of believers. It probably refers to people who have become strong in their faith, even if they are not yet as mature as those in the second group, since **young men** are in the time of life when they are strong and vigorous. Alternate translation: “strong believers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

young men (ULT) believers who have become steadfast in your faith (UST)

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is likely using the word figuratively in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “strong believers” (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

you have overcome the evil one (ULT) Satan, that evil being, has tried to tempt you to do wrong, but you have successfully resisted (UST)

John speaks figuratively of these strong believers refusing to do what the devil wants as if they had defeated him in a struggle. Alternate translation: “you refuse to do what the devil wants” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹³ I am writing to you, **fathers**, because **you know** the one who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the **evil one**. ^[1]

UST

¹³ I am also writing to you **who have been believers longer than the others**. I am writing because **you are acquainted with** God, who has been alive from all eternity. I am also writing to you **believers who have become steadfast in your faith**. I am writing because **Satan, that evil being**, has tried to tempt you to do wrong, but you have successfully resisted.

the evil one (ULT)
Satan, that evil being (UST)

John is using the adjective **evil** as a noun in order to indicate a specific being. ULT adds **one** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “the one who is evil” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

the evil one (ULT)
Satan, that evil being (UST)

John is speaking figuratively of the devil by association with the way that he is **evil**. Alternate translation: “the devil” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [fathers](#)
- [you know](#)
- [evil one](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [who have been believers longer than the others](#)
- [you are acquainted with](#)
- [Satan, that evil being](#)

1 John 2:14

I have written to you, young children, because you know the Father (ULT)

Yes, I have written to you, whom I love as though you were my own little children, because you are acquainted with God the Father (UST)

This sentence means basically the same thing as the sentence in 2:12. The next two sentences in this verse mean basically the same thing as the two sentences in 2:13. John is using repetition for emphasis and for poetic effect. For those reasons, it would be appropriate to translate all of these sentences separately and not combine them with the ones in the previous two verses, even if you combine parallel statements with similar meanings elsewhere in the book. (See: [Parallelism](#))

I have written to you, young children, because you know the Father (ULT)

Yes, I have written to you, whom I love as though you were my own little children, because you are acquainted with God the Father (UST)

In some Bibles, this sentence comes at the end of 2:13 instead of at the beginning of this verse. The verse divisions were introduced to the Bible many centuries after its books were written, and their purpose is only to help readers find things easily. So the placement of this sentence, either at the start of this verse or at the end of the previous one, does not create any significant difference in meaning. If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using the placement in that version. If not, we recommend that you follow the placement in the ULT text. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

I have written to you (ULT)

Yes, I have written to you (UST)

By saying **I have written**, John is expressing himself slightly differently than in 2:12-13, where he says, “I am writing.” The difference is likely only for emphasis, as John looks back at what he has just said and indicates that he is saying it again. However, if your language distinguishes between the present and present perfect tenses, it would be appropriate to show the difference in your translation. (See: [Verbs](#))

young children (ULT)

whom I love as though you were my own little children (UST)

While this is a different term from “little children” in 2:12, figuratively it means the same thing. Alternate translation: “new believers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁴ I have written to you, [young children](#), because [you know](#) the [Father](#). I have written to you, fathers, because [you know](#) the one who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are [strong](#), and the [word of God](#) remains in you, and you have overcome the [evil one](#). ^[2]

UST

¹⁴ Yes, I have written to you, [whom I love as though you were my own little children](#), because [you are acquainted with God the Father](#). I have written to you who have been believers longer than the others because [you are acquainted with](#) God, who has been alive from all eternity. And I have written to you believers who have become steadfast in your faith because you are [spiritually strong](#). I have also written to you because you continue to obey [what God commands](#), and because while [Satan, that evil being](#), has tried to tempt you to do wrong, you have successfully resisted.

you know (ULT)
you are acquainted with (UST)

As in 2:4, John is using the word **know** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “you have a close relationship with”

the Father (ULT)
God the Father (UST)

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: “God the Father” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

fathers (ULT)
who have been believers longer than the others (UST)

The term **fathers** likely has the same figurative meaning as in 2:13. Alternate translation: (1) “mature believers” (2) “church leaders” (See: [Metaphor](#))

you know (ULT)
you are acquainted with (UST)

As in 2:4, John is using the word **know** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “you have a close relationship with”

the one who is from the beginning (ULT)
God, who has been alive from all eternity (UST)

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the eternal existence of God. Alternate translation: “God, who has always existed” (See: [Idiom](#))

young men (ULT)
believers who have become steadfast in your faith (UST)

The term **young men** likely has the same figurative meaning as in 2:13. Alternate translation: “strong believers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

young men (ULT)
believers who have become steadfast in your faith (UST)

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is likely using the word figuratively in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “strong believers” (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

you are strong (ULT)
you are spiritually strong (UST)

John is using the word **strong** not literally to describe believers’ physical strength, but figuratively to describe to their faithfulness to Jesus. Alternate translation: “you are faithful to Jesus” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the word of God remains in you (ULT)
you continue to obey what God commands (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the word seems to describe behavior that is recognized to be genuine because it is consistent. Alternate translation: “you genuinely obey what God has commanded” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the word of God remains in you (ULT)
you continue to obey what God commands (UST)

John is using the term **word** figuratively to refer to what God has commanded using words. Alternate translation: “what God has commanded” (See: [Metonymy](#))

you have overcome the evil one (ULT)
while Satan, that evil being, has tried to tempt you to do wrong, you have successfully resisted (UST)

John speaks figuratively of these strong believers refusing to do what the devil wants as if they had defeated him in a struggle. Alternate translation: “you refuse to do what the devil wants” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the evil one (ULT)
Satan, that evil being (UST)

John is using the adjective **evil** as a noun in order to indicate a specific being. ULT adds **one** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “the one who is evil” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

the evil one (ULT)
Satan, that evil being (UST)

John is speaking figuratively of the devil by association with the way that he is **evil**. Alternate translation: “the devil” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [young children](#)
- [you know](#)
- [you know \(2\)](#)
- [Father](#)
- [strong](#)
- [word of God](#)
- [evil one](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [whom I love as though you were my own little children](#)
- [you are acquainted with](#)
- [you are acquainted with \(2\)](#)
- [God the Father](#)

- spiritually strong
- what...God...commands
- Satan, that evil being

1 John 2:15

Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world (ULT)

Do not behave like people who do not honor God. Do not desire the things that they want to have (UST)

In the second phrase in this sentence, John leaves out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the first phrase.

Alternate translation: "Do not love the world, and do not love any of the things that are in the world" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Do not love the world (ULT)

Do not behave like people who do not honor God. Do...desire (UST)

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it figuratively refers to the system of values that people share who do not honor God. This system is necessarily contrary to the values that godly people have. Alternate translation: "Do not share the ungodly value system of the people who do not honor God" (See: [Metonymy](#))

nor the things that are in the world (ULT)
not...the things that they want to have (UST)

This phrase means essentially the same thing as the preceding one. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. However, since there is a slight difference in meaning, you may wish to translate these phrases separately rather than combining them. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "No, do not share any of the values that characterize that system" (See: [Parallelism](#))

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him (ULT)
If anyone behaves as those people do, {he is proving that} he does not love God the Father (UST)

John is describing a hypothetical situation in order to challenge his readers. Alternate translation: "Suppose someone loves the world. Then the love of the Father is not in him" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

the love of the Father is not in him (ULT)
he does not love God the Father (UST)

The phrase **the love of the Father** could mean: (1) It may refer to a person loving God the Father. Alternate translation: "that person does not really love God the Father" (2) It may refer to God loving people. Alternate translation: "God's love is not genuinely at work in that person's life" (See: [Possession](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Do not **love** the **world**, nor the things that are in the **world**. If anyone **loves** the **world**, the **love** of the **Father** is not in him.

UST

¹⁵ Do not **behave like people who do not honor God**. Do not **desire** the **things that they want to have**. If anyone **behaves as those people do, {he is proving that}** he does not **love God the Father**.

of the Father (ULT) **God the Father (UST)**

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: “of God the Father” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- Do...love
- loves
- love
- world
- world
- world (2)
- of...Father

Translation Words - UST

- Do...behave like...Do...desire
- behaves...he is proving that
- does...love
- people who do not honor God
- things that they want to have
- as those people do (2)
- God the Father

1 John 2:16

For (ULT) I say that such a person does not love God} because (UST)

In this verse, John is giving the reason why the statement is true that he made in the second sentence of the previous verse. If it would be clearer in your language, you could put this reason before that result by combining this verse and the previous one into a verse bridge. In order to create a verse bridge, you could begin this verse with “since” instead of **For**; you could end it with a comma instead of a period; and you could make it the beginning of the second sentence in the previous verse, putting it before “if anyone loves the world.” (See: [Verse Bridges](#))

everything that is in the world (ULT) the way that ungodly people act (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:15](#). Alternate translation: “everything that characterizes the ungodly value system of the people who do not honor God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the lust of the flesh (ULT) to...They want...fulfill their physical desires (UST)

John is using the term **flesh** figuratively to mean the physical human body, which is made of **flesh**. Alternate translation: “the strong desire to have sinful physical pleasure” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the lust of the eyes (ULT) They want to get for themselves the things that they see (UST)

John is using the term **eyes** figuratively to mean the ability to see. Alternate translation: “the strong desire to have things that we see” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the...arrogance of life (ULT) They want...They boast about...all of the things they own (UST)

John is likely using the Greek term that ULT translates as **life** in one of its specific senses, to mean “possessions,” as in [3:17](#). Alternate translation: “pride in one’s possessions”

is not from the Father, but is from the world (ULT) is not the way God our Father wants them...act...to...All these actions show that these people truly are ungodly (UST)

See how you translated the term **world** in [2:15](#). It has a similar meaning in this verse. Alternate translation: “does not represent how God the Father wants us to live, but instead comes from an ungodly value system” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁶ For everything that is in the **world**—the **lust** of the **flesh**, and the **lust** of the eyes, and the arrogance **of life**—is not from the **Father**, but is from the **world**.

UST

¹⁶ {I say that such a person does not love God} because **the way that ungodly people act** is not **the way God our Father wants them to act**. They want to fulfill their physical desires. They want to get for themselves the things that they see. They boast about **all of the things they own**. All these actions show that these people truly are **ungodly**.

the Father (ULT)

the way God our Father wants them...act...to (UST)

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "God the Father" (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- world
- world
- lust
- lust (2)
- of...flesh
- of life
- Father

Translation Words - UST

- the way that ungodly people act
- ungodly
- the way God our Father wants them...act...to
- They want
- They want (2)
- to...fulfill their physical desires
- all of the things they own

1 John 2:17

the world (ULT)

The way of behavior that does not honor God (UST)

See how you translated the term **world** in 2:15. It has a similar meaning in this verse. Alternate translation: “the ungodly value system of the people who do not honor God” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the world is going away (ULT)

The way of behavior that does not honor God...will not last (UST)

John speaks figuratively of the **world** as if it were leaving. Alternate translation: “the world will not last very much longer” (See: [Metaphor](#))

and its desire (ULT)

along with everything that it makes people desire (UST)

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “and its desire is also going away” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

its desire (ULT)

everything that it makes people desire (UST)

John is using the possessive form to show that the “world” is the source of this **desire** and gives it its character. Alternate translation: “worldly desire” or “the desire that this system of values creates in people” (See: [Possession](#))

its desire (ULT)

everything that it makes people desire (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this in the plural, since John is referring to all of the different types of **desire** associated with the “world” that he described in 2:16. Alternate translation: “worldly desires” or “the desires that this system of values creates in people” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

remains to the age (ULT)

will live forever (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the word seems to refer to continuing existence. Alternate translation: “will live forever” (See: [Metaphor](#))

to the age (ULT)

forever (UST)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “forever” (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

¹⁷ And the **world** is going away, and its **desire**, but the one who does the **will of God** remains to the **age**.

UST

¹⁷ **The way of behavior that does not honor God**, along with **everything that it makes people desire**, will not last. But those who do **what God wants** will live **forever!**

Translation Words - ULT

- world
- desire
- will of God
- of God
- age

Translation Words - UST

- The way of behavior that does not honor God
- everything that...makes people desire
- what...God...wants
- God
- forever

1 John 2:18

Young children (ULT)

You who are very dear to me (UST)

This is the same term that John used figuratively in 2:14 to describe new believers, but here it seems to be just a stylistic variation of the term that he uses in 2:1, as well as in several other places in the book, to address all of the believers to whom he is writing. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “My dear children” or “You dear believers who are under my care” (See: [Metaphor](#))

it is the last hour...that it is the last hour (ULT) I want you to know that} this is the time just before Jesus returns to earth...that it is that time (UST)

John is using the term **hour** figuratively to refer a specific time. The expression **the last hour** refers specifically to the time at the end of earthly history just before Jesus returns. Alternate translation: “Jesus will return soon ... that Jesus will return soon” (See: [Idiom](#))

and...the Antichrist is coming...now many antichrists have come (ULT)

See the discussion of the terms **Antichrist** and **antichrists** in the General Notes to this chapter. Alternate translation: “someone is coming who will lead a great opposition to Jesus, many people are already opposing Jesus now”

Translation Words - ULT

- [Young children](#)
- [the...hour](#)
- [the...hour \(2\)](#)
- [just as](#)
- [the Antichrist](#)
- [antichrists](#)
- [we know](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [You who are very dear to me](#)
- [the time](#)
- [time \(2\)](#)
- [already](#)
- [a person who will pretend to be the Messiah](#)
- [people like that, who are against the true Messiah](#)
- [we know](#)

ULT

¹⁸ [Young children](#), it is the last [hour](#), and [just as](#) you heard that [the Antichrist](#) is coming, indeed now many [antichrists](#) have come, by which [we know](#) that it is the last [hour](#).

UST

¹⁸ [You who are very dear to me](#), {I want you to know that} this is [the time](#) just before Jesus returns to earth. You have [already](#) heard that [a person who will pretend to be the Messiah](#) is coming. In fact, many [people like that, who are against the true Messiah](#), are already here. Because of this, [we know](#) that it is that [time](#).

1 John 2:19

They went out from us (ULT) These people refused to remain in our congregations (UST)

These people formerly met with the group of believers to whom John is writing. While they physically left the places where the believers met, John is also using the expression **went out** figuratively to mean that these people stopped being part of the group. Alternate translation: "They stopped being part of our group of believers in Jesus" (See: [Metaphor](#))

but they were not from us...they are all not from us (ULT) However, they never really belonged with us in the first place...they had all never actually joined with us (UST)

John is using the expression **from us** in a slightly different sense in these instances than in the first instance in the verse. In the first instance, it means that these people left the group. In this instance, it means that they were never genuinely part of the group. Alternate translation: "but they were never genuinely part of our group ... none of them are genuinely part of our group" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

they were not from us (ULT) they never really belonged with us in the first place (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly why John makes this claim. Alternate translation: "they were never genuinely part of our group, because they did not actually believe in Jesus in the first place" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

For if they had been from us, they would have remained with us (ULT) After all, if they had belonged with us, they would not have left (UST)

John is using a hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize why the claim he is making is true. Alternate translation: "Suppose they had genuinely been part of our group. Then they would have continued to participate in it" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

they would have remained with us (ULT) they would not have left (UST)

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the word seems to refer to continuing participation in a group. Alternate translation: "they would have continued to participate in our group" (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not from us. For if they had been from us, they would have remained with us, but so that **they would be made apparent**, that they are all not from us.

UST

¹⁹ These people refused to remain in our congregations. However, they never really belonged with us in the first place. After all, if they had belonged with us, they would not have left. But {when they left us,} then **we clearly saw** that they had all never actually joined with us.

but so that they would be made apparent, that they are all not from us (ULT)
But {when they left us,} then we clearly saw that they had all never actually joined with us (UST)

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous sentence. Alternate translation: "but so that their actions would reveal that all of them were not genuinely part of our group, they left us" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

so that they would be made apparent (ULT)
when they left us,} then we clearly saw (UST)

See the discussion of the term "appear" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this case, this Greek passive verbal form does seem to have a genuinely passive meaning. That is, the people who left the group are the objects rather than the subjects of this action. But if your language does not use passive forms, you could say this with an active form, and you could say what is doing the action. Alternate translation: "so that their actions would reveal" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

from us...not...they are all (ULT)
in our congregations...never really...in the first place...they had all...actually joined (UST)

The word **all** means all the people who left the group. If it would be clearer in your language, you could make the subject negative and the verb positive. Alternate translation: "none of them are from us" or "none of them were genuinely part of our group"

Translation Words - ULT

- [they would be made apparent](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [we clearly saw](#)

1 John 2:20

And (ULT)

But (UST)

John is using the word **And** to introduce a contrast between the people who left the group and the remaining believers to whom he is writing. Alternate translation: “But” (See: [Connect – Contrast Relationship](#))

you have an anointing from the Holy One

(ULT)

as for you, the Messiah, the one who is holy, has given you his Spirit (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **anointing** with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: “the Holy One has anointed you” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

you have an anointing from the Holy One (ULT)

as for you, the Messiah, the one who is holy, has given you his Spirit (UST)

The word **anointing** refers to the practice, seen often in the Old Testament, of pouring oil on a person to set that person apart to serve God. If your readers would not be familiar with this practice, you could describe it specifically in your translation. Alternate translation: “the Holy One has poured oil on you to set you apart to serve him” (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

you have an anointing from the Holy One (ULT)

as for you, the Messiah, the one who is holy, has given you his Spirit (UST)

John is using **anointing** figuratively to represent the Holy Spirit, whose presence in the life of a believer shows that they have been set apart and equipped to serve God. John says specifically in [3:24](#) and [4:13](#) that God has given the Spirit to believers in this way. Alternate translation: “the Holy One has given you his Spirit” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the Holy One (ULT)

the Messiah, the one who is holy (UST)

John is using the adjective **Holy** as a noun in order to indicate a specific person. ULT adds **One** to show this. John is referring specifically to God, and so ULT capitalizes both of these words to show that they are describing a divine person. Your language may allow you to use this adjective as a noun. If not, you can translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “God, the One who is holy” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

you all know (ULT)

you all know {the truth} (UST)

See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to follow the reading of ULT and say **you all know** or to follow the reading of some other versions and say “you know all things.” (See: [Textual Variants](#))

ULT

²⁰ And you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. ^[3]

UST

²⁰ But as for you, the Messiah, the one who is holy, has given you his Spirit. As a result, you all know {the truth}.

you all know (ULT)

you all know {the truth (UST)}

Based on what he says in the next verse, John likely means here that the believers to whom he is writing **all know** the truth. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “you all know the truth” or “you all know what is true” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- an anointing
- Holy One
- you...know

Translation Words - UST

- Messiah...one who is holy
- his Spirit
- you...know {the truth

1 John 2:21

I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it (ULT)

I am not writing this letter to you because you do not know the true things {that God has told us}, but because you do know them (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this double negative as a positive statement. Since John then repeats the statement in positive form in the next phrase, you can make the connection to that phrase as an affirmation rather than as a contrast. Alternate translation: "I have written to you because you know the truth, yes, because you do know it" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

the truth...from the truth (ULT)

the true things {that God has told us...one of the true things {God has told us (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **truth** with an adjective such as "true." Alternate translation: "what is true ... from what is true" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the truth...from the truth (ULT)

the true things {that God has told us...one of the true things {God has told us (UST)

John is likely referring figuratively to the teaching that believers have received from Jesus by association with the way that it is true. Alternate translation: "the true teaching that we received from Jesus ... from this true teaching" (See: [Metonymy](#))

and that every lie is not from the truth (ULT)

You also know enough to recognize and reject every lie that is not one of the true things {God has told us (UST)

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: "and you know that every lie is not from the truth" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

not...every lie is...from the truth (ULT)

not...every lie that is...one of the true things {God has told us (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could make the subject negative and the verb positive. Alternate translation: "no lie is from the truth"

ULT

²¹ I have not written to you because **you do not know** the **truth**, but because **you do know** it and that every lie is not from the **truth**.

UST

²¹ I am not writing this letter to you because **you do not know** the **true things {that God has told us}**, but because **you do know** them. You also know enough to recognize and reject every lie that is not **one of the true things {God has told us}**.

Translation Words - ULT

- you do...know
- you do know (2)
- truth
- truth

Translation Words - UST

- you do...know
- you do know (2)
- true things {that God has told us
- one of the true things...God has told us

1 John 2:22

Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?

John is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or exclamation. Alternate translation: “Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Messiah is certainly a liar!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ

For emphasis, John is using a double negative in Greek, specifically, a negative verb (**denies**) with a negative particle, “not.” In English, it would come out “the one who denies that Jesus is not the Christ.” In Greek, the second negative does not cancel the first to create a positive meaning. But in English, the meaning would inaccurately be positive, which is why ULT uses only one negative. It leaves out “not” and says “the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ.” However, if your language uses double negatives for emphasis that do not cancel one another, it would be appropriate to use that construction in your translation. (See: [Double Negatives](#))

the...Christ (ULT)

The worst liars...Messiah (UST)

The word **Christ** is the Greek word for “Messiah.” Alternate translation: “the Messiah”

This one is the Antichrist (ULT)

All who do that are against the Messiah (UST)

John does not mean that such a person is the actual Antichrist who will appear at the end of earthly history. John does not have a specific person in view. Rather, he is speaking generally of all such people. See how you translated the term **antichrist** in [2:18](#). Alternate translation: “Such a person is truly opposed to Jesus” (See: [Generic Noun Phrases](#))

the one who denies the Father and the Son (ULT)

They are refusing to believe both in God the Father and in Jesus his Son (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly why John says this about these people. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “By denying that Jesus is the Messiah, he is denying both God the Father, who sent Jesus to be the Messiah, and Jesus his Son, whom he sent” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the Father and the Son (ULT)

God the Father and in Jesus his Son (UST)

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. Alternate translation: “God the Father and Jesus his Son” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

²² Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that **Jesus** is the **Christ**? This one is the **Antichrist**, the one who denies the **Father** and the **Son**.

UST

²² The worst liars are the ones who deny that **Jesus** is the **Messiah**. All who do that are **against the Messiah**. They are refusing to believe both in **God the Father** and **in Jesus his Son**.

Translation Words - ULT

- Jesus
- Christ
- Antichrist
- Father
- Son

Translation Words - UST

- Jesus
- Messiah
- against the Messiah
- God...Father
- in Jesus...Son

1 John 2:23

Everyone who denies the Son (ULT) Those who refuse to acknowledge that Jesus is God's Son (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what this means in light of what John says in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Everyone who denies that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the Son...the Son (ULT) that Jesus is God's Son...that the Jesus is God's Son (UST)

Son is an important title for Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

the...does not have...Father...the...has...Father (ULT) that Jesus is God's Son are in no way joined with God...Father...the...are... joined with God...Father (UST)

The language of possession that John is using actually indicates that such a person does not or does belong to God, rather than that God does not or does belong to such a person. Alternate translation: "does not belong to the Father ... belongs to the Father" (See: [Possession](#))

the...Father...the...Father (ULT) that Jesus is God's Son...God...Father...that the Jesus is God's Son...God... Father (UST)

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "God the Father ... God the Father" (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

The one who confesses the Son (ULT) But those who acknowledge that the Jesus is God's Son (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what this means in light of what John says in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Everyone who truly believes and acknowledges publicly that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Son](#)
- [Son \(2\)](#)
- [Father](#)
- [Father \(2\)](#)
- [who confesses](#)

ULT

²³ Everyone who denies the [Son](#) does not have the [Father](#). The one [who confesses](#) the [Son](#) also has the [Father](#).

UST

²³ Those who refuse to acknowledge that [Jesus is God's Son](#) are in no way joined with [God the Father](#). But those [who acknowledge that the Jesus is God's Son](#) are also joined with [God the Father](#).

Translation Words - UST

- that Jesus is God's Son
- that the Jesus is God's Son (2)
- God...Father
- God...Father (2)
- who acknowledge

1 John 2:24

what you have heard ... what you have heard

John is referring implicitly to the teaching about Jesus that these believers **have heard**. Alternate translation: “the teaching you have heard ... the teaching you have heard” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

from the beginning...from the beginning (ULT) first...you do that (UST)

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the time when the people to whom he is writing first believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: “ever since you first believed in Jesus ... ever since you first believed in Jesus” (See: [Idiom](#))

let it remain in you...remains in you (ULT)

You must continue to believe and live by...you do that (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In these instances, in reference to the teaching about Jesus, the word seems to refer to continuing belief in that teaching. Alternate translation: “continue to believe it ... you continue to believe” (See: [Metaphor](#))

If what you have heard from the beginning remains in you, you will also remain in the Son and in the Father (ULT)

If you do that, then you will continue to share life with Jesus the Son and God the Father (UST)

John is describing a hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: “Suppose that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. Then you will also remain in the Son and in the Father” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

you will also remain in the Son and in the Father (ULT)

then you will continue to share life with Jesus the Son and God the Father (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in 2:6. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “you will also continue to have a close relationship with the Son and with the Father” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the Son...the Father (ULT)

Jesus the Son...God the Father (UST)

Son and **Father** are important titles. Alternate translation: “Jesus the Son of God ... God the Father” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

ULT

²⁴ As for you, what you have heard from the beginning, let it remain in you. If what you have heard from the beginning remains in you, you will also remain in the **Son** and in the **Father**.

UST

²⁴ Here is what you should do{, unlike those people who deny Jesus}. You must continue to believe and live by the truth about Jesus the Messiah that you first heard. If you do that, then you will continue to share life with **Jesus** the **Son** and **God** the **Father**.

Translation Words - ULT

- Son
- Father

Translation Words - UST

- Jesus...Son
- God...Father

1 John 2:25

the promise that he promised to us (ULT) what God promised us (UST)

Here John uses a cognate accusative, that is, an object that comes from the same root as its verb. You may be able to do the same thing in your translation. If not, you could explain what this means.
Alternate translation: “the promise that he made to us” or “what he promised us”

he (ULT) God (UST)

The pronoun **he** could refer in this context either to Jesus or to God the Father. However, it seems more likely that it refers to Jesus, since John has just talked in [2:22-23](#) about denying or confessing him, and it was Jesus who promised **eternal life** to everyone who believed in him. See, for example, the Gospel of John [3:36](#) and [6:47](#).
Alternate translation: “Jesus” (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

eternal life (ULT) he will enable us to live forever (UST)

John means more than physical **life**. This expression can indicate living forever in the presence of God after death, a commonly recognized meaning, but it can also indicate receiving power from God in this life to live in a new way.
Alternate translation: “that we would have power to live a new life now and that we would live with him forever after we die” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [promise](#)
- [promised](#)
- [eternal](#)
- [life](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [what](#)
- [promised](#)
- [he will enable us to live](#)
- [forever](#)

ULT

²⁵ And this is the [promise](#) that he [promised](#) to us—[eternal life](#).

UST

²⁵ And [what](#) God [promised](#) us is that [he](#) [will enable us to live forever](#)!

1 John 2:26

those who are leading you astray (ULT) people who want to deceive you {about Jesus (UST)

John speaks figuratively of these people as if they were guides who were **leading** others in the wrong direction. This is a metaphor for their attempts to get the people to whom John is writing to believe things that are not true. Alternate translation: “those who are deceiving you” or “those who are trying to get you to believe things that are not true” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [who are leading...astray](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [people who want to deceive...about Jesus](#)

ULT

²⁶ I have written these things to you about those [who are leading you astray](#).

UST

²⁶ I am writing this letter to you to warn you about [people who want to deceive you {about Jesus}](#).

1 John 2:27

the anointing that you received from him (ULT)

God's Spirit, whom you received from Jesus (UST)

See how you translated the word **anointing** in 2:20. Alternate translation: "the Spirit, whom Jesus has given you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

from him...his...in him (ULT)

from Jesus...God's...with Jesus (UST)

Like the pronoun "he" in 2:25, the words **him** and **his** in this verse likely refer to Jesus. Alternate translation: "from Jesus ... in Jesus" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

remains in you (ULT)

continues to live in you (UST)

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to refer to the continuing presence of the Spirit inside a believer. Alternate translation: "lives inside of you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

and (ULT)

So (UST)

John is using the word **and** to introduce the results of what he says in the previous part of this sentence. Alternate translation: "and so" (See: [Connect - Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

his anointing (ULT)

God's Spirit (UST)

See how you translated this earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: "his Spirit" (See: [Metaphor](#))

about all things (ULT)

everything that you need to know (UST)

This is a generalization for emphasis. Alternate translation: "about everything that you need to know" (See: [Hyperbole](#))

ULT

²⁷ And as for you, the **anointing** that you **received** from him remains in you, and you do not have need that anyone **should teach** you. But **as his anointing teaches** you about all things and is **true** and is not a lie, and **just as it has taught** you, remain in him.

UST

²⁷ Here is what you should do {about those people who are trying to deceive you}. **God's Spirit**, whom you **received** from Jesus, continues to live in you. So you do not need anyone else **to be** your **teacher**. God's **Spirit is teaching** you everything that you need to know. He always teaches **the truth**, and never says anything that is false. **So continue to live in the way that he has taught** you, and continue to share life with Jesus.

And...is true...is not a lie (ULT)

Here is what you should do {about those people who are trying to deceive you...He always teaches the truth...never says anything that is false (UST)

Alternate translation: "tells the truth and does not lie"

it has taught you (ULT)

So continue to live in the way that he has taught...you (UST)

Since the Spirit is a person, if you translate "anointing" as "Spirit" in this verse, it may not be appropriate in your language to use a neuter pronoun in this clause. Alternate translation: "he has taught you" or "the Spirit has taught you" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

remain in him (ULT)

and continue to share life with Jesus (UST)

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in 2:6. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "continue to have a close relationship with him" (See: [Metaphor](#))

remain in him (ULT)

and continue to share life with Jesus (UST)

John is speaking figuratively as if believers could be inside of God. Alternate translation: "continue to have a close relationship with him" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [anointing](#)
- [anointing \(2\)](#)
- [you received](#)
- [should teach](#)
- [teaches](#)
- [it has taught](#)
- [as](#)
- [just as](#)
- [true](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [God's Spirit](#)
- [Spirit \(2\)](#)
- [you received](#)
- [to be...teacher](#)
- [is teaching](#)
- [So continue to live in the way that he has taught](#)
- [the truth](#)
- [like, likeminded, likeness, likewise, alike, unlike, as if](#)
- [So continue to live in the way that he has taught](#)

1 John 2:28

And now (ULT)

Now (UST)

John uses this expression to introduce a new part of the letter, in which he will talk about being children of God and the return of Jesus. In your translation, you can use a word, phrase, or other method that is natural in your language for introducing a new topic.

little children (ULT)

my dear ones (UST)

John readdresses the recipients as he begins a new section of the letter. See how you translated this in [2:1](#). Alternate translation: “you dear believers who are under my care” (See: [Metaphor](#))

remain in him (ULT)

I urge you to} continue to share life with Jesus (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, John seems to be using the expression in the same way that he has just used it in [2:27](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “continue to have a close relationship with him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

him...when he appears...by him...his (ULT)

Jesus...when he comes back again...to face him...he (UST)

The pronouns **him**, **he**, and **his** likely refer to Jesus in this verse, since John speaks of his **coming** or return. It might be natural in your language to use the name “Jesus” in the first instance and pronouns in the other instances. (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

when he appears (ULT)

when he comes back again (UST)

See the discussion of the term “appear” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the term could have either an active or a passive meaning. (1) If the meaning is active, John is speaking of how Jesus will actually return to earth. John is not saying that Jesus will only appear to return. Alternate translation: “when Jesus returns” (2) If the meaning is passive, John is speaking of how God will reveal Jesus to the world as its true king. To bring out that meaning, you could translate this with a passive verbal form or, if your language does not use passive forms, you could use an active form and say who will do the action. Alternate translation: “when Jesus is revealed” or “when God reveals Jesus” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

we may have boldness and not be put to shame by him (ULT)

These two phrases mean similar things. John is likely using the repetition for emphasis. You could combine these phrases into an emphatic expression if that would be clearer for your readers. Alternate translation: “we may be completely confident at his coming” (See: [Parallelism](#))

ULT

²⁸ And now, **little children**, remain in him, so that when he appears, we may have **boldness** and not **be put to shame** by him at his coming.

UST

²⁸ Now, **my dear ones**, {I urge you to} continue to share life with Jesus. That way, when he comes back again **we will be confident** {that he will accept us}. **We will not be ashamed** to face him when he returns.

we may have boldness (ULT)
we will be confident {that he will accept us (UST)}

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **boldness** with an adjective such as “confident.” Alternate translation: “we may be confident” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

not be put to shame by him (ULT)
We will not be ashamed to face him (UST)

John is using the word **him**, meaning Jesus, figuratively to mean the presence of Jesus. Alternate translation: “not be ashamed to be in his presence” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

not be put to shame by him (ULT)
We will not be ashamed to face him (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “we will not be ashamed to be in his presence” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

in...him...coming (ULT)
with...him...when...returns (UST)

Alternate translation: “when he returns to earth”

Translation Words - ULT

- [little children](#)
- [boldness](#)
- [be put to shame](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [my dear ones](#)
- [we will be confident...that he will accept us](#)
- [We will...be ashamed](#)

1 John 2:29

If you know that he is righteous (ULT)
Since you know that God always does what is right (UST)

John is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might misunderstand and think that what John is saying is not certain, then you can translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since you know that God is righteous" (See: [Connect – Factual Conditions](#))

he is...him (ULT)
God always does...are the ones who have become God's children (UST)

The pronouns **he** and **him** likely refer to God the Father, since in the next two verses John says that believers are "children of God," and he speaks in this verse of those who have **been begotten from him**. Alternate translation: "God is ... God" (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

everyone who does righteousness (ULT)
all those who continue doing what is right (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **righteousness** with an adjective such as "right." Alternate translation: "everyone who does what is right" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

everyone who does righteousness has been begotten from him (ULT)
all those who continue doing what is right are the ones who have become God's children (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: "God is the father of everyone who does what is right" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

everyone who does righteousness has been begotten from him (ULT)
all those who continue doing what is right are the ones who have become God's children (UST)

Since believers have not literally **been begotten** by God, John means this figuratively. He says in [4:9](#) that Jesus is the "only-begotten" of God, since God is the actual Father of Jesus in a way that he is not the actual father of believers. Alternate translation: "God is the spiritual father of everyone who does what is right" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [you know](#)

ULT

²⁹ If [you know](#) that he is [righteous](#), you also [know](#) that everyone who does [righteousness has been begotten](#) from him.

2:13 ^[1] here, but the best ancient copies place it in verse 14.

2:14 ^[2] in verse 13.

2:20 ^[3] .

UST

²⁹ Since [you know](#) that God always does [what is right](#), [you know](#) that all those who continue doing [what is right](#) are [the ones who have become God's children](#).

- you...know
- righteous
- righteousness
- has been begotten

Translation Words - UST

- you know
- you know
- what is right
- what is right
- are the ones who have become God's children

1 John 3

1 John 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Genuine children of God do not sin (3:1-10, continuing from 2:28)

Genuine believers help one another sacrificially (3:11-18)

Genuine believers have confidence in prayer (3:19-24)

Special concepts in this chapter

“children of God”

People are sometimes described as “children of God” because God created them. However, John uses this expression in a different sense in this chapter. He uses it to describe people who have entered into a father-child relationship with God by putting their faith and trust in Jesus. God indeed created all people, but people can only become children of God in this sense by believing in Jesus. (See: [believe](#), [believer](#), [belief](#), [unbeliever](#), [unbelief](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“the one who keeps his commandments remains in him, and he in him” (3:24)

This does not mean that keeping our salvation is conditional on doing certain works. Rather, John is describing the results of keeping the commandments that he describes in 3:32. Those commandments are to believe in Jesus and to love one another. John is saying that the person who believes in Jesus and loves others shows that he has a close relationship with God, and that he will continue to have that close relationship because of this obedience. Christians around the world hold different beliefs about whether people who have been saved can lose their salvation. That is not what John is addressing here, and translators should be careful not to let how they understand that issue affect how they translate this passage. (See: [eternity](#), [everlasting](#), [eternal](#), [forever](#) and [save](#), [saved](#), [safe](#), [salvation](#))

Important textual issues in this chapter

In 3:1, the most accurate ancient manuscripts include the words “and we are.” That is the reading that ULT follows. However, some other ancient manuscripts do not include these words, and so some Bibles do not have them. If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using whichever reading is found in that version. If a translation does not already exist, we recommend that you follow the reading in the ULT text. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

1 John 3:1**See (ULT)
Think about (UST)**

John is using the term **See** figuratively. Alternate translation: “Consider” (See: [Metaphor](#))

**what kind of love the Father has given to us (ULT)
how much God our Father loves us (UST)**

Alternate translation: “how greatly the Father has loved us”

**the Father (ULT)
God our Father (UST)**

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: “God the Father” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

that we should be called children of God (ULT)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could say this with an active form. Alternate translation: “that God should call us his children” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**children of God (ULT)
his children (UST)**

Here John expresses the same metaphor as in [2:29](#) in a slightly different way. See whether you decided to indicate the figurative meaning there. Alternate translation: “spiritual children of God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

**and we are (ULT)
And this is indeed true (UST)**

See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to follow the reading of ULT and include these words or to follow the reading of some other versions and not include them. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

**For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know him (ULT)
But people who are unbelievers have not understood who God is. So they do not understand who we are{, that we are God’s children (UST)**

If it would be clearer in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Because the world did not know God, for that reason it does not know us” (See: [Connect – Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

ULT

¹ See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God, and we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know him. ^[1]

UST

¹ Think about how much God our Father loves us! He says that we are his children. And this is indeed true. But people who are unbelievers have not understood who God is. So they do not understand who we are{, that we are God’s children}.

For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know him (ULT)

But people who are unbelievers have not understood who God is. So they do not understand who we are{, that we are God’s children (UST)

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it figuratively refers to people who do not honor God and who do not live as God wishes. Alternate translation: “because ungodly people have not known God, for that reason they do not know us” (See: [Metonymy](#))

does not know us...it did not know him (ULT)
do not understand who we are{, that we are God’s children...have not understood who God is (UST)

John is using the word **know** in two different senses. See the discussion of the word “know” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. If your language has different words for these different senses, it would be appropriate to use them in your translation. Alternate translation: “does not recognize who we are ... it did not become acquainted with him”

does not know us (ULT)
do not understand who we are{, that we are God’s children (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what **the world does not know** about believers in Jesus. Alternate translation: “does not recognize that we are truly God’s children” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

him (ULT)
who God is (UST)

The pronouns **him** refers to God, the antecedent in the previous sentence. Alternate translation: “God” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- love
- Father
- we should be called
- children
- of God
- world
- does...know
- it did...know

Translation Words - UST

- God...Father
- loves
- He says that we are
- his
- children

- people who are unbelievers...they
- do...understand
- have...understood

1 John 3:2

Beloved (ULT)

Dear friends (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:7. Alternate translation: “You people whom I love” or “Dear friends” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

children of God (ULT)

God’s children (UST)

See whether you decided to indicate the figurative meaning of this expression in 3:1. Alternate translation: “spiritual children of God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

and (ULT)

John is using the word **and** to introduce a contrast between what is “now” known about believers and what is “not yet” known. Alternate translation: “but” (See: [Connect – Contrast Relationship](#))

what we will be has not yet been revealed (ULT)

he has not yet shown us what we will be like {in the future} (UST)

See the discussion of the term “appear” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the term could have either an active or a passive meaning. (1) If the meaning is active, John is speaking of what believers will become. He is not saying that believers will only appear to be this. Alternate translation: “we have not yet become what we will be” (2) If the meaning is passive, John is saying that God has not yet revealed what believers will become. To bring out that meaning, you could translate this with a passive verbal form or, if your language does not use passive forms, you could use an active form and say who will do the action. Alternate translation: “what we will be has not yet been revealed” or “God has not yet revealed what we will be” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

when he appears (ULT)

when Jesus comes back again (UST)

See the discussion of the term “appear” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. The meaning of the term in this instance seems to be the same as in 2:28. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “when Jesus returns” or “when Jesus is revealed” or “when God reveals Jesus” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

when he appears...him...him...he is (ULT)

when Jesus comes back again...him...him...face to face (UST)

The pronouns **he** and **him** likely refer to Jesus in this verse, since John speaks of **when he appears** or returns. It might be natural in your language to use the name “Jesus” in the first instance and pronouns in the other instances. (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

ULT

² **Beloved**, now we are **children of God**, and what we will be has not yet **been revealed**. **We know** that when he appears, we will be **like** him because we will see him **just as** he is.

UST

² **Dear friends**, even though at present we are **God’s children**, **he has** not yet **shown us** what we will be like {in the future}. {**However,**} **we know** that when Jesus comes back again, we will become **like** him, because we will see him **face to face**.

we will be like him because we will see him just as he is (ULT)
we will become like him, because we will see him face to face (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “because we will see him as he is, we will be like him” (See: [Connect - Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- Beloved
- children
- of God
- has...been revealed
- We know
- like
- just as

Translation Words - UST

- Dear friends
- God’s
- children
- he has...shown us
- However,} we know
- like
- face to face

1 John 3:3

everyone who has this hope upon him (ULT)
all those who confidently expect to see Jesus
face to face (UST)

The pronoun **him** does not refer to **everyone**; it refers to Jesus. The expression **this hope** refers to the hope that John describes in the previous verse, of seeing Jesus as he is. Alternate translation: “everyone who hopes to see Jesus as he really is” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

him...that one (ULT)
to see Jesus face to face...Jesus himself (UST)

These pronouns refer to Jesus. Alternate translation: “Jesus ... Jesus” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- hope
- purifies
- pure
- just as

Translation Words - UST

- who confidently expect
- will keep...from sinning
- who never sins
- just like

ULT

³ And everyone who has this hope upon him purifies himself, just as that one is pure.

UST

³ So all those who confidently expect to see Jesus face to face will keep themselves from sinning, just like Jesus himself, who never sins.

1 John 3:4

Everyone who commits sin also commits lawlessness. Indeed, sin is lawlessness (ULT)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **lawlessness** with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "Everyone who commits sin is also breaking God's law. Indeed, sin is breaking God's law" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Everyone who commits sin also commits lawlessness. Indeed, sin is lawlessness (ULT)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain why John gives this warning. See the discussion of **sin** in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Alternate translation: "Everyone who commits sin is also breaking God's law. Indeed, sin is breaking God's law. So do not listen to the false teachers who are saying that it does not matter what you do in your physical body" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁴ Everyone who commits [sin](#) also commits [lawlessness](#). Indeed, [sin](#) is [lawlessness](#).

UST

⁴ But everyone who continues [to sin](#) is [refusing to obey God's laws](#), because [that is what sin](#) is, [refusing to obey God's laws](#).

Translation Words - ULT

- [sin](#)
- [sin](#)
- [lawlessness](#)
- [lawlessness](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [to sin](#)
- [that is what sin](#)
- [is refusing to obey God's laws](#)
- [refusing to obey God's laws](#)

1 John 3:5

that one...he might take away...him (ULT) Jesus...God would forgive...he...himself (UST)

The pronouns **that one**, **he**, and **him** refer to Jesus in this verse. It might be natural in your language to use the name "Jesus" in the first instance and pronouns in the other instances. (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

that one appeared (ULT) Jesus came (UST)

See the discussion of the term "appear" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the term seems to have an active meaning. Alternate translation: "Jesus came to earth" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

sin is not in him (ULT) he never sinned himself (UST)

John speaks figuratively of **sin** as if it were an object that could be inside of Jesus, although he is emphasizing that **sin** is not in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus has never sinned" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [you know](#)
- [sins](#)
- [sin](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [You know](#)
- [our sins](#)
- [sinned](#)

ULT

⁵ And [you know](#) that that one appeared so that he might take away [sins](#), and [sin](#) is not in him.

UST

⁵ [You know](#) that Jesus came so that God would forgive [our sins](#). {You know} also {that} he never [sinned](#) himself.

1 John 3:6

Everyone who remains in him (ULT) Those who share life with Jesus (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in 2:6. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “Everyone who has a close relationship with Jesus” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Everyone who remains in him (ULT) Those who share life with Jesus (UST)

John is speaking figuratively as if believers could be inside of Jesus. Alternate translation: “Everyone who has a close relationship with Jesus” (See: [Metaphor](#))

him...him...him (ULT) Jesus...who Jesus is...him (UST)

The pronoun **him** refers to Jesus in this verse. It might be natural in your language to use the name “Jesus” in the first instance and pronouns in the other instances. (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

does not sin (ULT) do not continue sinning (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say what this implicitly means in light of the situation that John is addressing in this letter. See the discussion of **sin** in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. John acknowledges elsewhere in this letter that genuine believers actually do sin, but they do not sin continually or wantonly. Alternate translation: “does not sin wantonly and continually” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

has not seen him and has not known him (ULT) have not understood who Jesus is and they are not truly acquainted with him (UST)

The words **seen** and **known** mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine these terms into a single expression. Alternate translation: “certainly does not have a close relationship with Jesus” (See: [Doublet](#))

has not seen him (ULT) have not understood who Jesus is (UST)

John is not referring to people literally seeing Jesus. Rather, he is using sight figuratively to mean perception and recognition. Alternate translation: “has not recognized who Jesus is” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

⁶ Everyone who remains in him does not **sin**. Everyone **who sins** has not seen him and has not **known** him.

UST

⁶ Those who share life with Jesus do not **continue sinning**. But all those **who continue to sin** have not understood who Jesus is and **they are** not truly **acquainted with** him.

Translation Words - ULT

- does...sin
- who sins
- has...known

Translation Words - UST

- do...continue sinning
- who continue to sin
- they are...acquainted with

1 John 3:7

Little children (ULT)

So I urge you who are very dear to me (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:1. Alternate translation: "You dear believers who are under my care" (See: [Metaphor](#))

let no one lead you astray (ULT) not to let anyone deceive you {by telling you that it is all right to sin (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in 2:26. Alternate translation: "do not let anyone deceive you" or "do not let anyone get you to believe things that are not true" (See: [Metaphor](#))

The one who does righteousness (ULT) If you continue doing what is right (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in 2:29. Alternate translation: "The one who does what is right" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

is righteous, just as that one is righteous (ULT) that will please God, just as Jesus always does what pleases God (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what the term **righteous** means in this context. Alternate translation: "is acceptable to God, just as Jesus is acceptable to God" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

that one (ULT) Jesus (UST)

The demonstrative pronoun **that one** refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- Little children
- let...lead...astray
- righteousness
- righteous
- righteous (2)
- just as

Translation Words - UST

- So I urge you who are very dear to me
- to let anyone deceive...by telling...that it is all right to sin

ULT

⁷ Little children, let no one lead you astray. The one who does righteousness is righteous, just as that one is righteous.

UST

⁷ So I urge you who are very dear to me not to let anyone deceive you {by telling you that it is all right to sin}. If you continue doing what is right, that will please God, just as Jesus always does what pleases God.

- continue doing what is right
- that will please God
- always does what pleases God (2)
- just as

1 John 3:8

is from the devil (ULT) is behaving like the devil (UST)

Here the preposition **from** indicates the influence of the noun it introduces. The usage here is similar to that in the phrase “from the world” in 2:16. Alternate translation: “is acting under the influence of the devil”

from the beginning (ULT) since the world began (UST)

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the time when God created the world. In this case, the word **from** indicates not that the devil began to sin at that time, but that he had already begun to sin by that time. Alternate translation: “even before the world was created” (See: [Idiom](#))

the Son of God (ULT) God’s Son (UST)

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. Alternate translation: “Jesus, the Son of God” or “God’s Son Jesus” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

appeared (ULT) became a human being (UST)

See the discussion of the term “appear” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the term seems to have an active meaning and to mean the same thing as in 3:5. Alternate translation: “came to earth” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

so that he might destroy the works of the devil (ULT) was to destroy what the devil has done (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what this means in this context. Alternate translation: “so that he might free people from continually sinning, as the devil had gotten them to do” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [sin](#)
- [has sinned](#)
- [devil](#)
- [devil](#)
- [of...devil \(2\)](#)
- [Son of God](#)
- [works](#)

ULT

⁸ The one who commits [sin](#) is from the [devil](#), for the [devil has sinned](#) from the beginning. For this reason the [Son of God](#) appeared, so that he might destroy the [works](#) of the [devil](#).

UST

⁸ But anyone who continues [to sin](#) is behaving like the [devil](#), because the [devil has always been sinning](#), ever since the world began. And the reason why [God’s Son](#) became a human being was to destroy [what the devil has done](#).

Translation Words - UST

- to sin
- has always been sinning
- devil
- devil
- devil (2)
- God's...Son
- what...has done

1 John 3:9

**Everyone who has been begotten from God...
because he has been begotten from God (ULT)
People...if they have become children of God...
because...God has made them his children
(UST)**

See how you translated this in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: "Everyone whose father is God ... because God is his father" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**Everyone who has been begotten from God...
because he has been begotten from God (ULT)
People...if they have become children of God...
because...God has made them his children
(UST)**

See whether in [2:29](#) you decided to explain this metaphor. Alternate translation: "Everyone whose spiritual father is God ... because God is his spiritual father" (See: [Metaphor](#))

**his seed remains in him (ULT)
and he has put into them what he himself is like (UST)**

In this phrase, **his** refers to "God" and **him** refers to the person "who has been begotten from God." Alternate translation: "God's seed remains in such a person" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

**his seed remains in him (ULT)
and he has put into them what he himself is like (UST)**

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, as in [2:27](#), it seems to refer to a continuing presence. Alternate translation: "God's seed continues to be present in such a person" (See: [Metaphor](#))

**his seed remains in him (ULT)
and he has put into them what he himself is like (UST)**

John is using the word **seed** figuratively. This could mean: (1) This refers to a metaphorical reference to the **seed** from which plants grow. Alternate translation: "the new life that God has put in that person continues to grow" (2) This refers to a metaphorical reference to the characteristics of a father that a child is born with and displays more and more as he grows. Alternate translation: "the characteristics that show that God is his father become continually more evident" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [who has been begotten](#)

ULT

⁹ Everyone [who has been begotten](#) from [God](#) does not commit [sin](#), because his [seed](#) remains in him. And he is not able [to sin](#), because [he has been begotten](#) from [God](#).

UST

⁹ People do not continue [sinning if they have become children](#) of [God](#). They cannot [continually sin](#), because [God has made them his children](#), and he has put into them [what he himself is like](#).

- he has been begotten
- God
- God (2)
- sin
- to sin
- seed

Translation Words - UST

- sinning
- continually sin
- if they have become children
- God has made them his children
- God
- God has made them his children (2)
- what he himself is like

1 John 3:10

In this the children of God and the children of the devil are apparent (ULT)

People who belong to God are clearly different from people who belong to the devil (UST)

In this means something similar to the idiomatic expression “in this we know” that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: “This is how we can tell the difference between the children of God and the children of the devil” (See: [Idiom](#))

the children of God and the children of the devil (ULT)

People who belong to God...from people who belong to the devil (UST)

John is using the word **children** idiomatically in both of these instances. His usage is similar to the Hebrew idiom in which the “child” of something shares its characteristics. Alternate translation: “people who are living a new life in close relationship with God and people who are still in their old way of life influenced by the devil” (See: [Idiom](#))

Everyone who does not do righteousness is not from God (ULT)

Those who do not do what is right do not belong to God...do not belong to God (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this double negative as a positive statement. Alternate translation: “Everyone who does wrong is alienated from God” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

who does not do righteousness (ULT)

who do not do what is right (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: “who does not do what is right” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

is not from God (ULT)

do not belong to God...do not belong to God (UST)

The expression **from God** is an idiom. John uses it in various ways in this letter. Alternate translation: “does not belong to God” or “is not living in relationship with God” (See: [Idiom](#))

and the one who does not love his brother (ULT)

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: “and the one who does not love his brother is not from God” or, if you translated the double negative in the previous clause as a positive statement, “and anyone who hates a fellow believer is alienated from God” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

ULT

¹⁰ In this [the children of God](#) and the [children](#) of the [devil](#) are [apparent](#): Everyone who does not do [righteousness](#) is not from [God](#), and the one [who does not love](#) his [brother](#).

UST

¹⁰ [People who belong to God](#) are clearly different from [people who belong to the devil](#). Those who do not do [what is right](#) do not belong to [God](#). Those [who do not love](#) their [fellow believers](#) do not belong to [God](#).

his brother (ULT) **their fellow believers (UST)**

See how you translated this in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: “a fellow believer” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [the children](#)
- [children \(2\)](#)
- [of God](#)
- [God \(2\)](#)
- [of...devil](#)
- [apparent](#)
- [righteousness](#)
- [who does...love](#)
- [brother](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [People who belong](#)
- [people who belong to \(2\)](#)
- [to God](#)
- [to God...to God \(2\)](#)
- [clearly different](#)
- [devil](#)
- [what is right](#)
- [who do...love](#)
- [fellow believers](#)

1 John 3:11

from the beginning (ULT) when you first believed in Jesus (UST)

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the time when the people to whom he is writing first believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: “ever since you first believed in Jesus” (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [we should love](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [we should love](#)

ULT

¹¹ For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that [we should love](#) one another,

UST

¹¹ {You should recognize this because} the message that you heard when you first believed in Jesus is that [we should love](#) each other.

1 John 3:12

not like Cain (ULT)

We should not hate others as {Adam's son} Cain did (UST)

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous verse. Alternate translation: "and we should not be like Cain" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Cain...killed his brother (ULT)

Adam's son} Cain...Cain murdered his {younger} brother {Abel (UST)

John assumes that his readers will know that Cain was a son of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. As the book of Genesis describes, Cain was jealous of his younger brother Abel and murdered him. If your readers might not know this, you could say this explicitly. Alternate translation: "Cain, the son of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve ... murdered his younger brother Abel because he was jealous of him" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Cain (ULT)

Adam's son} Cain (UST)

Cain is the name of a man. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

who was from the evil one (ULT)

He belonged to {Satan,} that evil being (UST)

Alternate translation: "who belonged to the evil one" or "who was influenced by the evil one"

the evil one (ULT)

Satan,} that evil being (UST)

John is using the adjective **evil** as a noun in order to indicate a specific being. ULT adds **one** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "the one who is evil" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

the evil one (ULT)

Satan,} that evil being (UST)

John is speaking figuratively of the devil by association with the way that he is **evil**. Alternate translation: "the devil" (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹² not like Cain, who was from the evil one and killed his brother. And on account of what did he kill him? Because his works were evil, but those of his brother, righteous.

UST

¹² We should not hate others as {Adam's son} Cain did. He belonged to {Satan,} that evil being. Cain murdered his {younger} brother {Abel}. I will tell you why he did that. It was because Cain behaved in an evil way, and {he hated his younger brother because} his younger brother behaved in the right way.

**And on account of what did he kill him? Because (ULT)
I will tell you why he did that. It was because (UST)**

John is using a question as a teaching tool. If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate his words as a statement. Alternate translation: "He killed him because" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

**but those of his brother, righteous (ULT)
and {he hated his younger brother because} his younger brother behaved in
the right way (UST)**

John is leaving out a word, "were," that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. The word "were" can be supplied for clarity. Alternate translation: "but his brother's works were righteous" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- like
- Cain
- evil one
- brother
- brother
- works
- evil
- righteous

Translation Words - UST

- We should...hate others as...did
- in the right way
- Adam's son} Cain
- Satan...that evil being
- younger} brother...Abel
- younger brother
- behaved
- in an evil way

1 John 3:13

Do not be amazed (ULT)
you should not be amazed (UST)

Alternate translation: "Do not be surprised"

brothers (ULT)
My friends (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:9. Alternate translation: "my fellow believers" (See: [Metaphor](#))

if the world hates you (ULT)
when unbelievers hate you (UST)

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it figuratively refers to people who do not honor God and who do not live as God wishes. Alternate translation: "if ungodly people hate you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Do...be amazed](#)
- [brothers](#)
- [world](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [My friends](#)
- [you should...be amazed](#)
- [unbelievers](#)

ULT

¹³ Do not [be amazed](#), [brothers](#), if the [world](#) hates you.

UST

¹³ [My friends](#), [you should](#) not [be amazed](#) when [unbelievers](#) hate you.

1 John 3:14

We know that we have relocated from death into life, because we love the brothers (ULT)
We love our fellow believers, and this assures us that God has made us spiritually alive (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “Because we love the brothers, we know that we have relocated from death into life” (See: [Connect – Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

we have relocated from death into life (ULT)
God has made us spiritually alive (UST)

John is speaking figuratively of the conditions of being dead and alive as if they were physical locations between which a person could move. Alternate translation: “we are no longer dead but have become alive” (See: [Metaphor](#))

we have relocated from death into life (ULT)
God has made us spiritually alive (UST)

Since John and his readers were not literally dead, he is referring to spiritual **death** and to spiritual **life**. Alternate translation: “we are no longer dead spiritually but have become alive spiritually” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the brothers (ULT)
our fellow believers (UST)

See how you translated this in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: “our fellow believers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

The one who does not love (ULT)
But if someone does not love {other believers} (UST)

John does not say specifically whom such a person **does not love**. In context, it appears that he means other believers. UST expresses that interpretation. But it is also possible that John means other people in general. Alternate translation: “The one who does not love his fellow believers” or “The one who does not love other people” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

remains in death (ULT)
this shows that this has not happened for him (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it means staying in the same place. John is once again speaking figuratively of the state of **death** as if it were a location. Alternate translation: “is still spiritually dead” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

¹⁴ We **know** that we have relocated from **death** into **life**, because **we love** the **brothers**. The one **who does not love** remains in **death**.

UST

¹⁴ **We love our fellow believers, and this assures us that God has made us spiritually alive**. But if someone does not **love {other believers}**, **this shows that this has not happened for him**.

Translation Words - ULT

- know
- death
- death
- life
- we love
- who does...love
- brothers

Translation Words - UST

- We love
- does...love {other believers
- our fellow believers
- and this assures us
- God has made us spiritually alive
- this shows that this has not happened for him
- God has made us spiritually alive

1 John 3:15

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer (ULT)

Anyone who hates his fellow believers is doing something just as bad as committing murder (UST)

John is using the term **murderer** figuratively, and he is echoing the teaching of Jesus that is recorded in Matthew 5:21-22. John means that since people commit murder because they hate other people, anyone who hates is the same on the inside as someone who actually kills another person. It may be helpful to translate this metaphor as a simile. Alternate translation: "Whoever hates another believer is just like someone who kills a person" (See: [Metaphor](#))

his brother (ULT)

his fellow believers (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:9. Alternate translation: "a fellow believer" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Everyone...a murderer...does not have eternal life (ULT)

Anyone...committing murder...he is not living the new life that God enables us to live (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could make the subject negative and the verb positive. Alternate translation: "no murderer has eternal life"

eternal life (ULT)

the new life that God enables us to live (UST)

Since John is speaking of a present reality, by **eternal life** he does not mean living forever in the presence of God after death, which is one thing that this expression can describe. Rather, he means the regenerating power that God gives to believers in this life that helps them stop sinning and do what pleases him. Clearly, anyone who is a "murderer" does not have this power at work in him. Alternate translation: "the power that God gives to help us become new people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

does not have eternal life remaining in him (ULT)

he is not living the new life that God enables us to live (UST)

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, John seems to be using the term literally, in the sense of "residing," to depict **eternal life** figuratively as if it were a living thing that could actively reside within a person. Alternate translation: "has not received eternal life" (See: [Personification](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [brother](#)

ULT

¹⁵ Everyone who hates his [brother](#) is a murderer, and [you know](#) that every murderer does not have [eternal life](#) remaining in him.

UST

¹⁵ Anyone who hates his [fellow believers](#) is doing something just as bad as committing murder. Someone who hates like that [shows](#) that he is not living [the new life that God enables us to live](#).

- you know
- eternal
- life

Translation Words - UST

- fellow believers
- shows
- the new...that God enables us to live
- life

1 John 3:16

In this we have known love (ULT) We have the example of...That has shown us how to love our fellow believers truly (UST)

In this means something similar to the idiomatic expression “in this we know” that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: “This is how we have come to understand what love is” (See: [Idiom](#))

that one (ULT) Jesus (UST)

The demonstrative pronoun **that one** refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: “Jesus” (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

laid down his life for us (ULT) died for us of his own free will (UST)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “willingly gave his life for us” or “willingly died for us” (See: [Idiom](#))

We also ought to lay down our lives for the brothers (ULT) For our part, we should do anything for our fellow believers, even die for them (UST)

John is probably not saying in the first place that we should literally die for our fellow believers. Rather, he is using the expression **lay down our lives** figuratively to mean that we should love our fellow believers in sacrificial ways. However, when Jesus “laid down his life for us,” that did mean dying for us. And since John is offering Jesus as an example, there might actually be circumstances that could require us to die for someone else. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the brothers (ULT) our fellow believers (UST)

See how you translated this in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: “our fellow believers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [we have known](#)
- [love](#)
- [life](#)
- [lives](#)
- [brothers](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [We have the example of...That has shown us](#)

ULT

¹⁶ In this [we have known love](#), that that one laid down his [life](#) for us. We also ought to lay down our [lives](#) for the [brothers](#).

UST

¹⁶ [We have the example of](#) Jesus, who died for us of his own free will. [That has shown us how to love our fellow believers truly](#). For our part, we should do anything for [our fellow believers](#), even die for them.

- died...of his own free will
- do anything...even die for them
- how to love our fellow believers truly
- our fellow believers

1 John 3:17

whoever...whoever...has the possessions of the world (ULT)

Many of us...Many of us...have the things that are necessary for life in this world (UST)

John uses this expression to introduce a hypothetical situation, which he discusses over the course of the whole verse. UST models a way to translate the verse in order to show this. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

the possessions of the world (ULT)
the things that are necessary for life in this world (UST)

In this letter, John uses **world** to mean various things. Here it refers to the created world, and so to material things such as, in this context, money, food, and clothing. Alternate translation: “material possessions” (See: [Metonymy](#))

his brother (ULT)
a fellow believer (UST)

See how you translated this in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: “a fellow believer” (See: [Metaphor](#))

having need (ULT)
does not have what he needs (UST)

Alternate translation: “who needs help”

closes his entrails from him (ULT)
suppose we refuse to provide for him (UST)

John is using the **entrails** or internal organs figuratively to represent the emotions that would lead a person to act generously. Your language may have an equivalent figurative expression that you could use. You could also express the literal meaning in your translation. Alternate translation: “closes his heart to him” or “declines to help him compassionately” (See: [Metaphor](#))

how does the love of God remain in him (ULT)
Then it is clear that we do not love God (UST)

John is using a question as a teaching tool. If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or exclamation. Alternate translation: “the love of God does not remain in such a person!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

ULT

¹⁷ But whoever has the possessions of the **world** and sees his **brother** having need and closes his entrails from him, how does the **love of God** remain in him?

UST

¹⁷ Many of us have the things that are necessary for life **in this world**. But suppose we become aware that **a fellow believer** does not have what he needs. And suppose we refuse to provide for him. **Then it is clear that we do not love God.**

how does the love of God remain in him (ULT)

Then it is clear that we do not love God (UST)

See the discussion of the term **remain** in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. As in [2:14](#), here the word seems to describe behavior that is recognized to be genuine because it is consistent. Alternate translation: “such a person does not genuinely love others with love that is from God!” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the love of God (ULT)

Then it is clear that we do not love God (UST)

As in [2:5](#), the phrase **the love of God** could mean: (1) It may refer to God loving people. Alternate translation: “love that is from God” (2) It may refer to a person loving God. UST illustrates this possibility. (See: [Possession](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [of...world](#)
- [brother](#)
- [love](#)
- [of God](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [in this world](#)
- [a fellow believer](#)
- [Then it is clear that we do not love God](#)
- [Then it is clear that we do not love God](#)

1 John 3:18

Little children (ULT)

You whom I love dearly (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:1. Alternate translation: “You dear believers who are under my care” (See: [Metaphor](#))

let us not love in word nor in tongue (ULT) let us not merely say that we love each other (UST)

The phrases **in word** and **in tongue** mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine these terms into a single expression. Alternate translation: “let us not merely say that we love” (See: [Doublet](#))

let us not love in word nor in tongue (ULT) let us not merely say that we love each other (UST)

John is using the phrases **in word** and **in tongue** figuratively to refer to what a person says. Alternate translation: “let us not merely say that we love” (See: [Metonymy](#))

but in deed and truth (ULT) Let us love each other} genuinely by helping each other (UST)

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: “but let us love in deed and in truth” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

in deed and truth (ULT) genuinely by helping each other (UST)

John is expressing a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **truth** indicates the quality that loving **in deed** would have. Alternate translation: “truly, in actions” (See: [Hendiadys](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Little children](#)
- [let us...love](#)
- [in tongue](#)
- [deed](#)
- [truth](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [You whom I love dearly](#)
- [let us...merely say that](#)
- [we love each other](#)

ULT

¹⁸ [Little children](#), [let us](#) not [love](#) in word nor [in tongue](#), but in [deed](#) and [truth](#).

UST

¹⁸ [You whom I love dearly](#), [let us](#) not [merely say that we love each other](#). {Let us love each other} [genuinely by helping each other](#).

- genuinely
- by helping each other

1 John 3:19

In this we will know...and...we will persuade our hearts (ULT)

Here is how we can be sure...Here is why...we should not feel guilty (UST)

John describes a result in this verse. He gives the reason for that result in the next verse. If it would be clearer in your language, you could put the reason before the result by creating a verse bridge. You could put 3:20 first in your translation, making it a separate sentence and leaving out both instances of the word "that." You could put this verse next, translating it as in the following suggestions. Alternate translation: "That is how we can know ... and how we can persuade our hearts" (See: [Verse Bridges](#))

In this we will know (ULT)

Here is how we can be sure (UST)

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how we can know" (See: [Idiom](#))

we are from the truth and...we will persuade our hearts (ULT)

we are living according to the true message that we received from Jesus.

Here is why...we should not feel guilty (UST)

The phrases **we will know** and **we will persuade our hearts** mean similar things. John is likely using the repetition for emphasis. You could combine these phrases into an emphatic expression if that would be clearer for your readers. Alternate translation: "we will be completely convinced that we are from the truth" (See: [Parallelism](#))

we are from the truth (ULT)

we are living according to the true message that we received from Jesus (UST)

This could mean: (1) John may be referring figuratively to God by association with the way that God is true. In other words, God always tells **the truth** and does what he says. Alternate translation: "we are from God, who is true" (2) As in 2:21, the word **truth** may refer to the true teaching that believers have received from Jesus. That is the interpretation of UST. (See: [Metonymy](#))

we are from the truth (ULT)

we are living according to the true message that we received from Jesus (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **truth** with an adjective such as "true." Alternate translation: "we are from the One who is true" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

ULT

¹⁹ In this **we will know** that we are from the **truth** and we will persuade our **hearts** before him,

UST

¹⁹ Here is how **we can be sure** that we are living according to the **true message that we received from Jesus**. Here is why we **should not feel guilty** in the presence of God.

we are from the truth (ULT)
we are living according to the true message that we received from Jesus (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in [3:10](#). Alternate translation: “we belong to God” or “we are living in relationship with God” (See: [Idiom](#))

we will persuade our hearts (ULT)
we should not feel guilty (UST)

John is speaking figuratively of **hearts** to mean thoughts and feelings. Alternate translation: “we can reassure ourselves about this” (See: [Metaphor](#))

before him (ULT)
in the presence of God (UST)

The pronoun **him** refers to God. Alternate translation: “before God” (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

before him (ULT)
in the presence of God (UST)

The word **before** means “in front of” or “in the presence of” someone. It likely means that God will be present with a believer who needs reassurance and will help that believer find reassurance. Alternate translation: “with God’s help” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [we will know](#)
- [truth](#)
- [hearts](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [we can be sure](#)
- [true message that we received from Jesus](#)
- [should not feel guilty](#)

1 John 3:20

that if our heart condemns us, that God is greater than our heart and knows everything (ULT)

John is discussing a hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: “suppose our heart condemns us. Then we should remember that God is greater than our heart and knows everything” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

if our heart condemns us (ULT) we might still feel guilty and undeserving of God’s acceptance (UST)

John is speaking figuratively of the **heart** to mean the thoughts and feelings. Alternate translation: “if our feelings condemn us” or “if our thoughts accuse us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

if our heart condemns us (ULT) we might still feel guilty and undeserving of God’s acceptance (UST)

The topic here, continuing from [3:19](#), is how we can know that “we are from the truth,” so this is likely a reference to needing reassurance about that. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “if we ever feel that we do not belong to God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

our heart...our heart (ULT) we might still feel guilty and undeserving of God’s acceptance...our feelings (UST)

If it would be unusual in your language to speak as if one **heart** belonged to a number of people, and if you decide to retain the word **heart** as a metaphor in your translation, you can make it plural. Alternate translation: “our hearts ... our hearts” (See: [Possession](#))

God is greater than our heart and knows everything (ULT)

Since John is using the **heart** figuratively to mean the thoughts and feelings, the statement that **God is greater than our heart** likely means that God knows and understands more than we do and that God has greater compassion for us than we have for ourselves. In that case, the phrases **is greater than our heart** and **knows everything** would mean similar things. You could combine these phrases into an emphatic expression if that would be clearer for your readers. Alternate translation: “God certainly knows better than we do that we belong to him” (See: [Parallelism](#))

God is greater than our heart and knows everything (ULT)

The implications are that, given God’s greater knowledge, we should believe what he has said rather than what our thoughts and feelings are saying. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “God certainly knows better than we do that we belong to him, and so we should believe that because he has said so” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²⁰ that if our [heart condemns us](#), that [God](#) is greater than our [heart](#) and [knows](#) everything.

UST

²⁰ Even though [we might still feel guilty and undeserving of God’s acceptance](#), [God](#) does not go by our [feelings](#). [He knows](#) everything about us {and he knows when we have genuinely trusted him}.

Translation Words - ULT

- heart
- heart
- condemns us
- God
- knows

Translation Words - UST

- we might still feel guilty and undeserving of God's acceptance
- we might still feel guilty and undeserving of God's acceptance
- feelings
- God
- He knows

1 John 3:21

Beloved (ULT)

Dear friends (UST)

See how you translated this in [2:7](#). Alternate translation: “You people whom I love” or “Dear friends” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

if the heart does not condemn, we have confidence toward God (ULT)

if our minds do not accuse us {of having sinned}, then we can pray confidently to God (UST)

John discusses another hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: “suppose our hearts do not condemn us. Then we have confidence toward God” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

if the heart does not condemn (ULT)

if our minds do not accuse us {of having sinned} (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in [3:20](#). Alternate translation: “if we do not feel that we do not belong to God” or, positively, “if we feel assured that we belong to God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the heart (ULT)

our minds (UST)

If you decided in the previous verse to retain the word **heart** as a metaphor in your translation and you made it plural there, you can make it plural in this instance as well. You can also use the same possessive pronoun as in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “our hearts” (See: [Possession](#))

we have confidence toward God (ULT)

then we can pray confidently to God (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what this **confidence** applies to, in light of what John says in the next verse. Alternate translation: “we can pray to God confidently” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

we have confidence toward God (ULT)

then we can pray confidently to God (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **confidence** with an adverb such as “confidently.” Alternate translation: “we can pray to God confidently” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Beloved](#)

ULT

²¹ [Beloved](#), if the [heart](#) does not [condemn](#), we have [confidence](#) toward [God](#)

UST

²¹ [Dear friends](#), if [our minds](#) do not [accuse us {of having sinned}](#), then we can pray [confidently](#) to [God](#).

- heart
- does...condemn
- confidence
- God

Translation Words - UST

- Dear friends
- our minds
- do...accuse us {of having sinned
- confidently
- God

1 John 3:22

**because we keep his commandments and we do the pleasing things before him (ULT)
We pray confidently like this} because {as people who belong to him,} we do what he commands us to do and we do what pleases him (UST)**

John is not saying that we “receive” “whatever we ask” because we obey God’s commandments and do what pleases him. Our obedience does not obligate God to give us what we ask for. Our obedience is simply what God has a right to expect from us. Rather, the word **because** reaches back to the statement earlier in this sentence, in the previous verse, that “we have confidence toward God,” that is, we can pray to God confidently. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this explicitly by starting a new sentence here that refers back to that statement and explains how John’s statement in this verse relates to it. Alternate translation: “We can pray confidently like this because we obey God’s commandments and do what pleases him, and that assures us that we belong to him” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

²² and whatever we ask, [we receive](#) from him, because [we keep](#) his [commandments](#) and we do the pleasing things before him.

UST

²² We find that when we pray confidently to God and ask for something, he [gives it to us](#). {We pray confidently like this} because {[as people who belong to him,](#)} [we do what he commands us to do](#) and we do what pleases him.

**we keep his commandments (ULT)
as people who belong to him,} we do what he commands us to do (UST)**

As in [2:3](#), the word **keep** is an idiom that means “obey.” Alternate translation: “we obey his commandments” (See: [Idiom](#))

**we do the pleasing things before him (ULT)
we do what pleases him (UST)**

John is using the adjective **pleasing** as a noun. ULT adds **things** to show this. (The word is plural.) Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “the things that please him” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

**the pleasing things before him (ULT)
what pleases him (UST)**

The word **before** means “in front of” or “in the presence of” another person. In this case, **before him** indicates “where God can see.” Seeing, for its part, represents attention and judgment. So this means the things that God regards as pleasing. Alternate translation: “the things that please him” or “what pleases him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [we receive](#)
- [we keep](#)
- [commandments](#)

Translation Words - UST

- gives it to us
- as people who belong to him,} we do
- what...commands us to do

1 John 3:23

this is his commandment...just as he gave us a commandment (ULT)

I will tell you...what God commands us to do...

Yes, that is what God has commanded us to do (UST)

The pronouns **his** and **he** refer to God in this verse. Alternate translation: "this is what God has commanded ... as God commanded us" (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

in the name of his Son Jesus Christ (ULT)
Jesus the Messiah is his Son (UST)

As in [2:12](#), John is using the **name** of Jesus figuratively to represent who Jesus is and what he has done. Alternate translation: "in Jesus Christ his Son and what he has done for us" (See: [Metonymy](#))

of...Son (ULT)
Son (UST)

Son is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [commandment](#)
- [a commandment](#)
- [we should believe](#)
- [in...name](#)
- [of...Son](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [Christ](#)
- [love](#)
- [just as](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [what...commands us to do](#)
- [God has commanded...to do](#)
- [We must believe that](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [the Messiah](#)
- [Son](#)
- [Son](#)
- [We must...love](#)
- [Yes, that is what](#)

ULT

²³ And this is his [commandment](#): that [we should believe](#) in the [name](#) of his [Son Jesus Christ](#) and [love](#) one another [just as](#) he gave us a [commandment](#).

UST

²³ I will tell you [what](#) God [commands us to do](#). We must believe that [Jesus the Messiah](#) is his [Son](#). We must also [love](#) each other. [Yes, that is what God has commanded us to do](#).

1 John 3:24

**the one who keeps his commandments
remains in him, and he in him (ULT)**
**Those who do what God commands share life
with God, and God shares life with them (UST)**

The pronouns **his** and **his** are indicating “the one who keeps God’s commandments remains in God, and God remains in that person” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

the one who keeps his commandments (ULT)
Those who do what God commands (UST)

The word **keep** is an idiom that means “obey.” Alternate translation: “the person who obeys God’s commandments” (See: [Idiom](#))

remains in him (ULT)
share life with God...shares life (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “continues to have a close relationship with him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

remains in him (ULT)
share life with God...shares life (UST)

John is speaking figuratively as if believers could be inside of God. Alternate translation: “continues to have a close relationship with him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

and he in him (ULT)
and God...with them (UST)

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: “and God remains in him” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

and he in him (ULT)
and God...with them (UST)

John is speaking figuratively as if God could be inside of believers. Alternate translation: “and God continues to have a close relationship with that person” (See: [Metaphor](#))

ULT

²⁴ And the one [who keeps](#) his [commandments](#) remains in him, and he in him. And in this [we know](#) that he remains in us, from the [Spirit](#) whom he gave to us.

3:1 ^[1].

UST

²⁴ Those [who do what](#) God [commands](#) share life with God, and God shares life with them. Because we have God’s [Spirit](#), whom he gave to us, [we can be sure](#) that God is sharing life with us.

in this we know that (ULT)
Because...we can be sure that (UST)

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: “this is how we know that” (See: [Idiom](#))

he remains in us (ULT)
God is sharing life with us (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as it does earlier in the verse. Alternate translation: “he continues to have a close relationship with us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [who keeps](#)
- [commandments](#)
- [we know](#)
- [Spirit](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [who do](#)
- [what...commands](#)
- [Spirit](#)
- [we can be sure](#)

1 John 4

1 John 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

It is false teaching to deny that Jesus became human (4:1-6)
Genuine believers love one another as God has loved them (4:7-21)

Special concepts in this chapter

“Spirit” and “spirit”

John uses the word “spirit” in different ways in this chapter.

Sometimes the word “spirit” refers to a supernatural being.

Sometimes the word “spirit” refers to the character of something. The expressions “the spirit of the antichrist,” “the spirit of truth,” and “the spirit of error” refer to what is typical of them.

When the word is written with a capital letter, as in the expressions “the Spirit of God” and “his Spirit,” it refers to the Holy Spirit.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Loving God

If people love God, they should show it in the way they live and the way they treat other people. Doing this may assure us that God has saved us and that we belong to him. But loving others does not save us. Be sure that this is clear in your translation. John says in 4:7 that “everyone who loves is begotten from God and knows God.” As the notes explain, this means that God is the spiritual father of everyone who loves, and everyone who loves is in a close relationship with God. But that love is a sign that they belong to God because of what Jesus did for them on the cross, as John says in 4:10. They were saved by what Jesus did, not because they themselves loved others. (See: [save, saved, safe, salvation](#))

Important textual issues in this chapter

In 4:3, the most accurate ancient manuscripts say “acknowledge Jesus.” That is the reading that ULT follows. Some other ancient manuscripts say “acknowledge Jesus Christ having come in the flesh.” (Some of these manuscripts say “Jesus” or “the Lord Jesus” instead of “Jesus Christ.”) If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using whichever reading is found in that version. If a translation does not already exist, we recommend that you follow the reading in the ULT text. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

1 John 4:1

Beloved (ULT)

Dear friends (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:7. Alternate translation: “You people whom I love” or “Dear friends” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits (ULT)

John is speaking figuratively of a prophet by association with the **spirit** that would inspire a prophet to speak. Alternate translation: “do not believe every prophet; instead, consider carefully what prophets say” (See: [Metonymy](#))

whether they are from God (ULT)

whether they are teaching the truth that comes from God or not (UST)

The expression **from God** is an idiom. John uses it in various ways in this letter. Alternate translation: “in order to determine whether God has sent them” or “in order to determine whether God is inspiring them” (See: [Idiom](#))

have gone out into the world (ULT)

are teaching it to others (UST)

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it figuratively refers to the people living in the world. Alternate translation: “are going around speaking to people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

UST

¹ Dear friends, many people who have a false message are teaching it to others. Be very careful about these people. You must think carefully about what you hear them teach and decide whether they are teaching the truth that comes from God or not.

Translation Words - ULT

- Beloved
- do...believe
- spirit
- spirits
- test
- God
- false prophets
- world

Translation Words - UST

- Dear friends
- people who have a false message
- are teaching it to others
- Be very careful about these people
- You must think carefully about what you hear them teach
- Be very careful about these people
- You must think carefully about what you hear them teach

- God

1 John 4:2

In this you know (ULT) I will tell you how to know whether someone is teaching truth that comes from (UST)

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how you can recognize" (See: [Idiom](#))

Every spirit that confesses (ULT) Those who affirm that (UST)

John is speaking figuratively of a prophet by association with the **spirit** that would inspire a prophet to speak. Alternate translation: "Every prophet who teaches" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jesus Christ having come in the flesh (ULT) Jesus the Messiah came from God to become a human like us (UST)

As in [2:16](#), John is using the term **flesh** figuratively to mean the physical human body, which is made of **flesh**. See Part 2 of the Introduction to 1 John for an explanation of why the false teachers denied that Jesus had a human body. Alternate translation: "that Jesus Christ had a real human body" (See: [Metonymy](#))

is from God (ULT) are teaching a message that is from God (UST)

See how you translated this expression in [4:1](#). Alternate translation: "is inspired by God" or, if your language does not use passive forms, "God is inspiring," placing that phrase before "every spirit" or "every prophet" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [you know](#)
- [Spirit](#)
- [of God](#)
- [God \(2\)](#)
- [spirit](#)
- [confesses](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [Christ](#)
- [the flesh](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [to know whether someone is teaching truth that comes from](#)
- [Spirit](#)
- [of God](#)
- [God \(2\)](#)
- [Those](#)

ULT

² In this [you know](#) the [Spirit of God](#):
Every [spirit](#) that [confesses Jesus Christ](#)
having come in [the flesh](#) is from [God](#),

UST

² I will tell you how to [know whether someone is teaching truth that comes from the Spirit of God](#). Those who [affirm that Jesus the Messiah came from God to become a human like us](#) are teaching a message that is from [God](#).

- affirm that
- Jesus
- the Messiah
- to become a human like us

1 John 4:3

every spirit that does not confess (ULT) those who do not affirm that truth about (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in 4:2. Alternate translation: “every prophet who does not teach” (See: [Metonymy](#))

does...confess Jesus (ULT) do...affirm that truth about Jesus (UST)

See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to follow the reading of ULT and say **Jesus** or to follow the reading of some other versions and say “Jesus Christ having come in the flesh.” The note below discusses a translation issue related to the variant reading, for those who decide to use it. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

Jesus (ULT) Jesus (UST)

If you follow the variant reading “Jesus Christ having come in the flesh,” see how you translated that expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “that Jesus Christ had a real human body” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Jesus (ULT) Jesus (UST)

Even if you do not do so on the basis of a textual variant, you may wish to explain more fully what John means by **Jesus** in order to make implied information explicit. Alternate translation: “that Jesus Christ had a real human body” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

is not from God (ULT) are not teaching a message from God (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “is not inspired by God” or, if your language does not use passive forms, “God is not inspiring,” placing that phrase before **every spirit** or “every prophet” (See: [Idiom](#))

this is that of the Antichrist (ULT) They are teachers who oppose the Messiah (UST)

The word **that** most likely means “the spirit,” referring back to the word “spirit” in the previous sentence. Alternate translation: “this is the spirit of the Antichrist” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

ULT

³ and every **spirit** that does not **confess Jesus** is not from **God**. And this is that of the **Antichrist**, which you have heard about, that it is coming, and it is now already in the **world**.^[1]

UST

³ But **those** who do not **affirm that truth about Jesus** are not teaching a message from **God**. They are **teachers who oppose the Messiah**. You have heard that people like that will be coming {among us}. Even now they are already **here**.

this is that of the Antichrist (ULT)

They are teachers who oppose the Messiah (UST)

Assuming that the word **that** means “the spirit,” see the discussion of the word “spirit” in the General Notes to this chapter. In this instance, John would be using the word to mean the character of something rather than to mean a supernatural being. Also see how you translated the term **Antichrist** in 2:18. Alternate translation: “this false teaching is opposed to Jesus”

which you have heard about, that it is coming, and it is now already in the world (ULT)

You have heard that people like that will be coming {among us}. Even now they are already here (UST)

The word **which** refers to the “spirit” of “the Antichrist,” which was already **in the world** at the time when John wrote, and not to “the Antichrist” himself, who was not **in the world**. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: “You have heard that this false teaching is coming, and it is now already circulating among people” (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

in the world (ULT)

here (UST)

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here, while it could possibly mean the literal earth (so this expression would mean “on this earth”), it more likely refers figuratively to the people living in the world. Alternate translation: “circulating among people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [spirit](#)
- [does...confess](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [God](#)
- [of...Antichrist](#)
- [world](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [those](#)
- [do...affirm that truth about](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [God](#)
- [teachers who oppose the Messiah](#)
- [here](#)

1 John 4:4

You are from God (ULT) you belong to God (UST)

The expression **from God** means something different in this verse than in the previous three verses, since it refers to believers rather than to the spirits that are inspiring prophets. It means the same thing as in 3:10. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “You belong to God” or “You are living in relationship with God” (See: [Idiom](#))

little children (ULT) As for you who are very dear to me (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:1. Alternate translation: “you dear believers who are under my care” (See: [Metaphor](#))

you have overcome them (ULT) you have refused to believe what those people teach (UST)

As in 2:13 and 2:14, John is using the word **overcome** figuratively. He is speaking of the believers’ refusal to believe the false prophets as if the believers had defeated these prophets in a struggle. Alternate translation: “you have refused to believe these false teachers” (See: [Metaphor](#))

them (ULT) what those people teach (UST)

The pronoun **them** refers to the false prophets whom John describes in 4:1. Alternate translation: “these false teachers” (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

the one who is in you (ULT) God, who enables you to do what he wants, is (UST)

As in 3:24, John is speaking figuratively as if God could be inside of believers. Alternate translation: “God, with whom you have a close relationship,” (See: [Metaphor](#))

is greater...than (ULT) more powerful...than (UST)

Alternate translation: “is more powerful than”

the one in the world (ULT) the spirits who are inspiring them (UST)

John says in the previous verse that the spirit of the Antichrist is “already in the world,” meaning “on this earth” or “circulating among people.” In light of that, the phrase **the one in the world** may be referring figuratively to that

ULT

⁴ You are from God, little children, and you have overcome them because the one who is in you is greater than the one in the world.

UST

⁴ As for you who are very dear to me, you belong to God, and you have refused to believe what those people teach. You have done this because God, who enables you to do what he wants, is more powerful than the spirits who are inspiring them.

spirit by association with the way it is **in the world**. Alternate translation: “the spirit of the Antichrist” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the one in the world (ULT)
the spirits who are inspiring them (UST)

If the phrase **the one in the world** refers to the spirit of the Antichrist, then John would be personifying that spirit. ULT indicates that by saying **the one**. Alternate translation: “the spirit of the Antichrist” (See: [Personification](#))

the one in the world (ULT)
the spirits who are inspiring them (UST)

Another possibility is that John is using the term **world** to mean the value system opposed to God. In that case, the phrase **the one in the world** would refer to the devil by association with the way that he inspires that system. Alternate translation: “the devil” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [God](#)
- [little children](#)
- [world](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [As for you who are very dear to me](#)
- [God](#)
- [the spirits who are inspiring them](#)

1 John 4:5

They are from the world. Because of this, they speak from the world (ULT)

As for those people who are teaching what is false, they think what they do because they refuse to honor God. That is why what they say also does not honor God...that is why (UST)

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here in these first two instances, it figuratively refers to the system of values shared by people who do not know God. Alternate translation: "These false teachers are influenced by the ungodly value system of the people who do not honor God. As a result, they express the perspectives of that system" (See: [Metonymy](#))

They (ULT)

As for those people who are teaching what is false (UST)

The pronoun **They** refers to the false prophets whom John describes in [4:1](#). Alternate translation: "These false teachers" (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

the world listens to them (ULT)

other people who do not honor God believe what they say (UST)

In this instance, the term **world** figuratively refers to people living in the world, and specifically to people who do not honor or obey God. Alternate translation: "ungodly people listen to them" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the world listens to them (ULT)

other people who do not honor God believe what they say (UST)

The word **listens** is an idiom that means "believes" or "is persuaded by." Alternate translation: "ungodly people believe them" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [world](#)
- [world](#) (2)
- [world](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [they think what they do because they refuse to honor God](#)
- [what they say also does not honor God](#) (2)
- [other people who do not honor God](#)

ULT

⁵ They are from the [world](#). Because of this, they speak from the [world](#), and the [world](#) listens to them.

UST

⁵ As for those people who are teaching what is false, [they think what they do because they refuse to honor God](#). That is why [what they say also does not honor God](#), and that is why [other people who do not honor God](#) believe what they say.

1 John 4:6

We...to us...to us (ULT) As for us...what we teach...what we teach (UST)

These pronouns in the first three sentences of this verse would be exclusive, and so if your language marks that distinction, use the inclusive form in your translation. John is speaking of himself and his fellow eyewitnesses of the resurrection as teachers of the truth about Jesus. He is not speaking of himself and the believers to whom he is writing. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

We are from God (ULT) As for us, we belong to God (UST)

Here, **from God** could mean: (1) It may mean the same thing as it does in 4:4 and in 4:1-3. That is the interpretation in UST. Alternate translation: "We belong to God" (2) John may be saying that he and his fellow eyewitnesses teach the truth about Jesus because God has sent them to do that. Alternate translation: "God has sent us" (See: [Idiom](#))

We are from God (ULT) As for us, we belong to God (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what God has sent John and the other eyewitnesses to do. Alternate translation: "God has sent us to teach the truth about Jesus as eyewitnesses to his life on earth" (See: [Idiom](#))

The one who knows God (ULT) Whoever lives in relationship with God (UST)

As in 2:4, John is using the word **knows** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "Anyone who has a close relationship with God"

listens to us...does not listen to us (ULT) listens to what we teach...does not listen to what we teach (UST)

As in 4:5, the word **listens** is an idiom that means "believes" or "is persuaded by." Alternate translation: "believes what we teach ... does not believe what we teach" (See: [Idiom](#))

Whoever is not from God (ULT) Whoever does not live in relationship with God (UST)

The expression **from God** means the same thing in this verse as in 4:4. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "Whoever does not belong to God" or "Whoever is not living in relationship with God" (See: [Idiom](#))

ULT

⁶ We are from God. The one who knows God listens to us. Whoever is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

UST

⁶ As for us, we belong to God. Whoever lives in relationship with God listens to what we teach. Whoever does not live in relationship with God does not listen to what we teach. That difference enables us to distinguish between people who teach what is true {about God} and people who deceive {others}.

From this we know (ULT) That difference enables us to distinguish between (UST)

This is an idiomatic expression. It means the same thing as the expression “in this we know” which John uses several times in this letter. Alternate translation: “This is how we can recognize” (See: [Idiom](#))

we know (ULT) to distinguish between (UST)

Since John is once again speaking of himself and the believers to whom he is writing, **we** in this last sentence in the verse would be inclusive, and so if your language marks that distinction, use the inclusive form in your translation. This inclusive usage continues through [4:13](#). (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (ULT) people who teach what is true {about God} and people who deceive {others (UST)

See the discussion of the word **spirit** in the General Notes to this chapter. In these instances, the word refers to the character of something. John is using it figuratively to refer by association to people whose teaching has a certain character. Alternate translation: “whose teaching is true and whose teaching is false” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (ULT) people who teach what is true {about God} and people who deceive {others (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract nouns **truth** and **error** with the adjectives “true” and “false.” Alternate translation: “whose teaching is true and whose teaching is false” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [God](#)
- [God](#)
- [God \(2\)](#)
- [who knows](#)
- [we know](#)
- [spirit](#)
- [spirit \(2\)](#)
- [of truth](#)
- [of error](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [God](#)
- [God](#)
- [God \(2\)](#)
- [lives in relationship with](#)
- [to distinguish between](#)
- [people who teach](#)
- [people who \(2\)](#)

- [what is true...about God](#)
- [deceive...others](#)

1 John 4:7

Beloved (ULT)

Dear friends (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:7. Alternate translation: “You people whom I love” or “Dear friends” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

love is from God (ULT)

God enables us to do that (UST)

The expression **from God** means something similar to what it does in 4:1-3. Alternate translation: “God inspires us to love” (See: [Idiom](#))

everyone who loves has been begotten from God (ULT)

Those who love {their fellow believers} have become God’s children (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:29. Alternate translation: “God is the father of everyone who loves” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

everyone who loves has been begotten from God (ULT)

Those who love {their fellow believers} have become God’s children (UST)

See whether in 2:29 you decided to explain this metaphor. Alternate translation: “God is the spiritual father of everyone who loves” (See: [Metaphor](#))

and...knows God (ULT)

As in 2:4, John is using the word **knows** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “and such a person has a close relationship with God”

Translation Words - ULT

- Beloved
- let us love
- love
- who loves
- God
- God (2)
- God
- has been begotten
- knows

Translation Words - UST

- Dear friends
- we must love

ULT

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and everyone who loves has been begotten from God and knows God.

UST

⁷ Dear friends, we must love each other, because God enables us to do that. Those who love {their fellow believers} have become God’s children and are living in relationship with him.

- us to do that
- love {their fellow believers
- God enables
- have become God's children (2)
- him
- have become God's children
- are living in relationship with

1 John 4:8

The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love (ULT)

God shows his love to people. So those who do not love others must not be living in relationship with God (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Since God is love, the one who does not love does not know God" (See: [Connect – Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

ULT

⁸ The one [who does](#) not [love](#) does not [know God](#), for [God is love](#).

UST

⁸ [God shows his love to people](#). So those who do not [love others must](#) not [be living in relationship with God](#).

does not know God (ULT)

must not be living in relationship with God (UST)

As in [2:4](#), John is using the word **know** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "does not have a close relationship with God"

God is love (ULT)

God shows his love to people (UST)

This is a metaphor that describes what God is like in his character. Alternate translation: "God is entirely loving" (See: [Metaphor](#))

God is love (ULT)

God shows his love to people (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **love** with an adjective such as "loving." Alternate translation: "God is entirely loving" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [who does...love](#)
- [love](#)
- [does...know](#)
- [God](#)
- [God](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [God](#)
- [God](#)
- [do...love others](#)
- [shows his love to people](#)
- [must...be living in relationship with](#)

1 John 4:9

In this (ULT) Here is how (UST)

In this means something similar to the idiomatic expression “in this we know” that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: “This is how” (See: [Idiom](#))

the love of God appeared among us (ULT) God has shown us that he loves us (UST)

See the discussion of the term “appear” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. This could mean: (1) John may be emphasizing how Jesus came to this earth. In that case, this would be a situation in which a Greek passive verbal form has an active meaning. Alternate translation: “God’s love came to be among us” (2) John may be emphasizing how God revealed his love to the world through Jesus. To bring out that emphasis, you could translate this with a passive verbal form or, if your language does not use passive forms, you could use an active form and say who did the action. Alternate translation: “God’s love for us was revealed” or “God showed us how much he loves us” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the love of God (ULT) God...that he loves us (UST)

Here, **the love of God** refers to God loving people. Alternate translation: “God’s love for us” (See: [Possession](#))

among us (ULT) us (UST)

The expression **among us** likely refers to all of humanity, not just to the people who saw and heard Jesus when he was alive, so this would be an inclusive use of the term **us** that would include the believers to whom John is writing. John says later in the sentence that Jesus came “so that we might live through him,” and “we” in that instance does include these believers. So it is likely that **us** earlier in the sentence includes them as well. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

his Son (ULT) his...Son (UST)

Son is an important title for Jesus. Alternate translation: “his Son Jesus” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Son...only-begotten (ULT) only...Son (UST)

Alternate translation: “who is God’s only actual Child”

ULT

⁹ In this the [love of God](#) appeared among us, that [God sent](#) his [Son](#), the only-begotten, into the [world](#) so that [we might live](#) through him.

UST

⁹ Here is how [God](#) has shown us [that he loves us](#). [He sent](#) his only [Son](#) to this [earth](#) to enable us [to live eternally](#) because of him.

into the world (ULT) **to this earth (UST)**

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it refers to the created world. Alternate translation: “to this earth” (See: [Metonymy](#))

so that we might live through him (ULT) **to enable us to live eternally because of him (UST)**

Since people were already literally alive before Jesus came, John means this in a figurative sense. He is likely referring to what he calls “eternal life” in [3:15](#). That includes both living forever in the presence of God after death and receiving power from God in this life to live in a new way. Alternate translation: “so that through him we might receive power from God to live as new people in this life and to live forever in God’s presence after we die” (See: [Metaphor](#))

his...through (ULT) **his...because of (UST)**

Alternate translation: “as a result of what he did for us”

Translation Words - ULT

- [love](#)
- [of God](#)
- [God](#)
- [sent](#)
- [Son](#)
- [world](#)
- [we might live](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [God](#)
- [He](#)
- [that he loves us](#)
- [sent](#)
- [Son](#)
- [earth](#)
- [to live eternally](#)

1 John 4:10

In this is love (ULT) God has shown us what love truly is (UST)

In this means something similar to the idiomatic expression “in this we know” that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: “This is how we have experienced genuine love” (See: [Idiom](#))

his Son (ULT) his Son (UST)

Son is an important title for Jesus. Alternate translation: “his Son Jesus” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

sent his Son as the propitiation for our sins (ULT)

sent his Son to offer himself on our behalf. That offering pleased God so much that God is not angry about the sins of anyone who trusts in Jesus (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the meaning behind the abstract noun **propitiation** with an equivalent expression. See how you translated the term in [2:2](#). Alternate translation: “sent his Son to be the offering that made him no longer angry with us because of our sins” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [love](#)
- [loved](#)
- [loved](#)
- [God](#)
- [sent](#)
- [Son](#)
- [as the propitiation](#)
- [sins](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [love](#)
- [loved](#)
- [loved](#)
- [God](#)
- [sent](#)
- [Son](#)
- [to offer himself on our behalf. That offering pleased God so much that God is not angry](#)
- [sins](#)

ULT

¹⁰ In this is [love](#), not that we [loved God](#), but that he [loved](#) us and [sent his Son as the propitiation](#) for our [sins](#).

UST

¹⁰ God has shown us what [love](#) truly is. It is not that we [loved God](#). It is that God [loved](#) us and [sent his Son to offer himself on our behalf. That offering pleased God so much that God is not angry](#) about the [sins](#) of anyone who trusts in Jesus.

1 John 4:11

Beloved (ULT)

Dear friends (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:7. Alternate translation: “You people whom I love” or “Dear friends” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

if God thus loved us (ULT) since God loves us like that (UST)

John is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might misunderstand and think that what John is saying is not certain, then you can translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: “since God loved us in this way” (See: [Connect - Factual Conditions](#))

ULT

¹¹ Beloved, if God thus loved us, we also ought to love one another.

UST

¹¹ Dear friends, since God loves us like that, we certainly ought to love each other!

Translation Words - ULT

- Beloved
- God
- loved
- to love

Translation Words - UST

- Dear friends
- God
- loves
- to love

1 John 4:12

If we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is perfected in us (ULT)

Nevertheless, if we love each other, it is clear that God lives within us and that we love others just as he intends us to do (UST)

John is describing a hypothetical situation in order to challenge and encourage his readers. Alternate translation: "Suppose we do love one another. Then God remains in us, and his love is perfected in us" (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

God remains in us (ULT)

God lives within us (UST)

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "God continues to have a close relationship with us" (See: [Metaphor](#))

his love is perfected in us (ULT)

we love others just as he intends us to do (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:5](#). In this case, it is clear that John is referring to God's love for us, rather than to our love for God. Alternate translation: "God's love has achieved its purpose in our lives" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [God](#)
- [God](#)
- [we love](#)
- [love](#)
- [perfected](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [God](#)
- [God](#)
- [we love](#)
- [we love others](#)
- [just as...intends](#)

ULT

¹² No one has ever seen [God](#). If [we love](#) one another, [God](#) remains in us, and his [love](#) is [perfected](#) in us.

UST

¹² No one has ever seen [God](#). Nevertheless, if [we love](#) each other, it is clear that [God](#) lives within us and that [we love others just as](#) he [intends](#) us to do.

1 John 4:13

In this we know that (ULT) This is how we can be sure that (UST)

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: “This is how we know that” (See: [Idiom](#))

we remain in him and he in us (ULT) we are sharing life with God and that God is sharing life with us (UST)

In the expression **and he in us**, John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “we remain in him and he remains in us” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

we remain in him and he in us (ULT) we are sharing life with God and that God is sharing life with us (UST)

See the discussion of the term **remain** in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “we continue to have a close relationship with God, and God continues to have a close relationship with us” (See: [Metaphor](#))

In this we know that we remain in him and he in us: that he has given us of his Spirit

Your translation may be clearer if you do not translate the word **that** or if you translate it as “because” and leave out the expression **in this**. Alternate translation: “This is how we know that we remain in him, and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit” or “We know that we remain in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit”

us...he has given...of his Spirit (ULT) us: He has put his Spirit (UST)

The word **of** means “some of.” John is not saying that God has only given some of his Spirit to the whole community of believers. Rather, John is saying that through his Spirit, God is fully present in the entire community, and that each believer experiences some of that full presence of God through the presence of the Spirit in his own life. Be sure that it is also clear in your translation that God does not have less of his Spirit now that each of us has some. Alternate translation: “he has sent his Spirit to live in each of us”

Translation Words - ULT

- [we know](#)
- [Spirit](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [we can be sure](#)

ULT

¹³ In this [we know](#) that we remain in him and he in us: that he has given us of his [Spirit](#).

UST

¹³ This is how [we can be sure](#) that we are sharing life with God and that God is sharing life with us: He has put his [Spirit](#) within us.

- Spirit

1 John 4:14

we have seen and we testify that (ULT) We apostles have seen...and we solemnly tell others that (UST)

In this verse, John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses of the earthly life of Jesus, so the pronoun **we** is exclusive. Alternate translation: “we apostles have seen and bear witness to the fact that” (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’](#))

the Father...the Son (ULT) the Father...God’s Son {Jesus on earth...him (UST)

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. Alternate translation: “God the Father ... Jesus his Son” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

as the Savior of the world (ULT) to save the people in the world {from suffering eternally for their sins (UST)

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it figuratively refers to the people living in the world. Alternate translation: “to save the people in the world” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- we testify
- Father
- sent
- Son
- as the Savior
- of...world

Translation Words - UST

- God’s Son...Jesus on earth...him
- we solemnly tell others
- Father
- sent
- to save...from suffering eternally for their sins
- the people in the world

ULT

¹⁴ Indeed, we have seen and we testify that the Father sent the Son as the Savior of the world.

UST

¹⁴ We apostles have seen God’s Son {Jesus on earth}, and we solemnly tell others that the Father sent him to save the people in the world {from suffering eternally for their sins}.

1 John 4:15

**Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God (ULT)
So God continues to share life with those who say the truth about Jesus. They say, “He is the Son of God.” And so they continue to share life with God (UST)**

John is actually making a conditional statement. He is saying that what he describes in the second phrase will only happen, although it will certainly happen, if what he describes in the first phrase happens. Alternate translation: “If someone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, then God will remain in him and he will remain in God” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

ULT

¹⁵ Whoever [confesses](#) that [Jesus](#) is the [Son of God](#), [God](#) remains in him and he in [God](#).

UST

¹⁵ [So God](#) continues to share life with those who [say the truth about Jesus](#). They say, “[He](#) is the [Son of God](#).” And so they continue to share life with [God](#).

**Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God (ULT)
those who say the truth about Jesus. They say, “He is the Son of God (UST)**

The meaning of this expression is similar to the expression “the one who confesses the Son” in 2:23. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “Everyone who truly believes and acknowledges publicly that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

**the Son of God (ULT)
the Son of God (UST)**

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

**God remains in him and he in God (ULT)
So God continues to share life with...say the truth about...And so they continue to share life with God (UST)**

In the expression **and he in God**, John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “God remains in him and he remains in God” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

**God remains in him and he in God (ULT)
So God continues to share life with...say the truth about...And so they continue to share life with God (UST)**

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in 2:6. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “God continues to have a close relationship with him, and he continues to have a close relationship with God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [confesses](#)

- Jesus
- Son of God
- God
- God

Translation Words - UST

- So God
- God
- say the truth about
- Jesus...He
- Son of God

1 John 4:16

we...us (ULT)

We...us...us...As a result, we love others (UST)

Here and in the rest of the letter, John once speaks of himself and the believers to whom he is writing, so the words **we** and **us** will be inclusive, and so if your language marks that distinction, use the inclusive form in your translation. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

we have known and believed the love that God has in us (ULT)

We have experienced how God loves us and we believe that he loves us. {As a result, we love others (UST)

The meaning of the phrase **in us** is not entirely clear. Some interpreters take it to mean “for us.” However, other interpreters understand it to be comparable to the phrase “in this” that John uses in many places in this letter. In that case, “in us” would mean “in ourselves” and it would be indicating the means by which believers have known the love of God. Alternate translation: “from our own experience, we have recognized God’s love and come to trust in it” (See: [Idiom](#))

God is love (ULT)

Because God’s nature is to love people (UST)

This is a metaphor that describes what **God** is like in his character. See how you translated it in [4:8](#). Alternate translation: “God is entirely loving” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the one who remains in love (ULT)

those who continue to love others (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. As in [2:24](#), in this instance the word seems to refer to maintaining a pattern of behavior. Alternate translation: “someone who continues to love others” (See: [Metaphor](#))

remains in God, and God remains in him (ULT)

share life with God, and God shares life with them (UST)

See the discussion of the term “remain” in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#) and in [4:15](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “continues to have a close relationship with God, and God continues to have a close relationship with him” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [have known](#)
- [believed](#)
- [love](#)
- [love](#)

ULT

¹⁶ And we [have known](#) and [believed](#) the [love](#) that [God](#) has in us. [God](#) is [love](#), and the one who remains in [love](#) remains in [God](#), and [God](#) remains in him.

UST

¹⁶ We [have experienced how God loves](#) us and [we believe that he loves](#) us. {As a result, we love others.} Because [God’s nature](#) is [to love people](#), those who continue [to love others](#) share life with [God](#), and [God](#) shares life with them.

- love
- God
- God (2)
- God
- God (3)

Translation Words - UST

- have experienced
- how...loves...loves
- to love people
- to love others
- God...he
- God's nature (2)
- God
- God (3)
- we believe that

1 John 4:17

In this love has been perfected with us so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment (ULT)

We should love others completely. If we do that, when the time comes for God to judge us, we will be confident {that he will not condemn us. We will be confident of that (UST)

This could mean: (1) The **so that** clause may be a purpose clause. That is, John may be saying that one reason why God is having his love achieve its purpose in our lives now is because he wants us to be confident on the day of judgment of his forgiveness and acceptance. If you decide that is the case, then your translation should follow the conventions of your language for purpose clauses, as ULT does. (2) The **so that** clause may be a result clause. That is, John may be saying that as a result of God's love achieving its purposes in our lives now, we will be confident on the day of judgment of his forgiveness and acceptance. If you decide that is the case, then your translation should follow the conventions of your language for result clauses. Alternate translation: "In this love has been perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment" (See: [Connect – Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

**In this (ULT)
completely (UST)**

As in [4:9](#), **in this** means something similar to the idiomatic expression "in this we know" that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how" (See: [Idiom](#))

**love has been perfected with us (ULT)
We should love others...completely (UST)**

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:5](#). Since John speaks in the previous verse of God's love, the context suggests that John is referring to God's **love** for us, rather than to our love for God. Alternate translation: "God's love has achieved its purpose in our lives" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

**so that we may have confidence (ULT)
If we do that...we will be confident {that he will not condemn us. We will be confident of that (UST)**

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what believers will **have confidence** about. Alternate translation: "so that we will be confident that God has forgiven us and will accept us" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

¹⁷ In this [love has been perfected](#) with us so that we may have [confidence](#) in the [day of judgment](#): that [just as](#) that one is, we also are in this [world](#).

UST

¹⁷ We [should love others completely](#). If we do that, [when the time comes for God to judge us](#), we will be [confident {that he will not condemn us. We will be confident of that}](#) because we are living in this [world {sharing life with God}](#) [just as](#) the Messiah himself {is sharing life with God}.

so that we may have confidence (ULT)

If we do that...we will be confident {that he will not condemn us. We will be confident of that (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **confidence** with an adjective such as “confident.” Alternate translation: “so that we will be confident that God has forgiven us and will accept us” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

in the day of judgment (ULT)

when the time comes for God to judge us (UST)

John is using the term **day** figuratively to refer a specific time. Alternate translation: “at the time when God judges us” (See: [Idiom](#))

that (ULT)

because (UST)

As in [4:13](#), your translation may be clearer if you do not translate the word **that** or if you translate it as “because” and leave out the expression **in this**.

that just as that one is, we also are (ULT)

because we are living...sharing life with God} just as the Messiah himself {is sharing life with God (UST)

The demonstrative pronoun **that one** refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: “we are becoming more and more like Jesus” (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

in this world (ULT)

in this world (UST)

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter, usually in a figurative sense. Here, however, it refers literally to the created world. Alternate translation: “as we live in this world” or “in our lives on this earth” (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [love](#)
- [has been perfected](#)
- [confidence](#)
- [day](#)
- [of judgment](#)
- [just as](#)
- [world](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [should love others](#)
- [completely](#)
- [when the time comes](#)
- [for God to judge us](#)

- confident {that he will not condemn us...confident of that
- world
- just as

1 John 4:18

Fear is not in love, but perfect love throws fear outside, because fear has punishment (ULT)

We will not be afraid {of God} if we truly love him, because those who love {God} completely cannot possibly be afraid {of him}. We would be afraid only if we thought that he would punish us (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could put the third clause before the first clause, since the third clause gives the reason for the result that the first clause describes. Alternate translation: "Because fear has punishment, fear is not in love, but perfect love throws fear outside" (See: [Connect – Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

Fear is not in love, but perfect love throws fear outside, because fear has punishment (ULT)

We will not be afraid {of God} if we truly love him, because those who love {God} completely cannot possibly be afraid {of him}. We would be afraid only if we thought that he would punish us (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could say explicitly what this means, particularly in light of what John says in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Because a person who thinks he is going to be punished is afraid, no one who truly understands how much God loves him will be afraid, because when God's love has achieved its purpose in our lives, we are confident that he has forgiven us and will accept us" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Fear is not in love (ULT)

We will not be afraid {of God} if we truly love him (UST)

John speaks figuratively as if **fear** could be inside of **love**. Alternate translation: "no one who truly understands how much God loves him will be afraid" (See: [Metaphor](#))

perfect love throws fear outside (ULT)

those who love {God} completely cannot possibly be afraid {of him} (UST)

By **perfect love**, John means the same thing as when he speaks in the previous verse of love that "has been perfected". See how you translated that expression. Alternate translation: "when God's love has achieved its purpose in our lives, it keeps us from being afraid"

ULT

¹⁸ Fear is not in love, but perfect love throws fear outside, because fear has punishment. So the one who fears has not been perfected in love.

UST

¹⁸ We will not be afraid {of God} if we truly love him, because those who love {God} completely cannot possibly be afraid {of him}. We would be afraid only if we thought that he would punish us. So those who are afraid {of God} certainly are not loving {God} completely.

perfect love throws fear outside (ULT)
those who love {God} completely cannot possibly be afraid {of him (UST)

John speaks figuratively of **love** as if it could actively throw **fear** far away from us. Alternate translation: “when God’s love has achieved its purpose in our lives, it keeps us from being afraid” (See: [Personification](#))

So the one who fears has not been perfected in love (ULT)
So those who are afraid {of God} certainly are not loving {God} completely (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:5](#). Here, as there, **love** could mean: (1) It may mean God’s love for us. Alternate translation: “So if someone is afraid, then God’s love has not achieved its purpose in his life” (2) It may mean our love for God. That is the interpretation in UST. (See: [Active or Passive](#))

So the one who fears has not been perfected in love (ULT)
So those who are afraid {of God} certainly are not loving {God} completely (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what such a person **fears**. This is clear from the previous verse. Alternate translation: “So if someone is afraid that God has not forgiven him and that God will not accept him, then God’s love has not achieved its purpose in his life” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- Fear
- fear
- fear (2)
- who fears
- love
- love
- love (2)
- perfect
- has...been perfected
- punishment

Translation Words - UST

- We will...be afraid {of God
- be afraid...of him
- We would be afraid (2)
- those who are afraid...of God
- if we truly love him
- those who love...God
- are...loving...God (2)
- completely
- completely
- only if we thought that he would punish us

1 John 4:19

We love because he first loved us (ULT)
We love {God and our fellow believers}
because God loved us first (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Because God first loved us, we love" (See: [Connect - Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

We love (ULT)
We love {God and our fellow believers (UST)}

This could mean one of two things. UST takes it to mean both things. Alternate translation: (1) "We love God" (2) "We love others" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he first loved us (ULT)
God loved us first (UST)

The pronoun **he** refers to God. Alternate translation: "God first loved us" (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- love
- loved

Translation Words - UST

- love {God and our fellow believers}
- loved

ULT

¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

UST

¹⁹ We love {God and our fellow believers} because God loved us first.

1 John 4:20

If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar

John is using a hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the importance of consistency between their words and their actions. Alternate translation: “Suppose someone says, ‘I love God,’ but he hates his brother. Then he is a liar” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

and (ULT) but (UST)

John is using the word **and** to introduce a contrast between what would be expected, that someone who loved God would also love his fellow believers, and what would actually be true of this hypothetical person. Alternate translation: “but” (See: [Connect – Contrast Relationship](#))

his brother (ULT) a fellow believer (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:9. Alternate translation: “a fellow believer” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the one...who does not love his brother...God...is not able to love (ULT) those...our fellow believers...not...who do...love one of their fellow believers... God...God...certainly cannot be loving...because it is much easier to love someone you can see than someone you cannot see (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this double negative as a positive statement. Alternate translation: “only those who love their fellow believers ... are able to love God” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- I love
- who does...love
- love
- God
- God
- brother
- brother (2)

Translation Words - UST

- I love
- who do...love
- be loving

ULT

²⁰ If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, is not able to love God, whom he has not seen.

UST

²⁰ So those who say “I love God” but hate a fellow believer are lying. After all, we have seen our fellow believers. But we have not seen God. So those who do not love one of their fellow believers certainly cannot be loving God, {because it is much easier to love someone you can see than someone you cannot see}.

- God
- God...God
- a fellow believer
- fellow believers...one of their fellow believers (2)

1 John 4:21

we have this commandment from him (ULT)
this is what God has commanded us (UST)

Alternate translation: "this is what God has commanded us"

from him (ULT)
God (UST)

The pronoun **him** refers to God. Alternate translation: "from God"
 (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

his brother (ULT)
our fellow believers (UST)

See how you translated this in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: "each fellow believer" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [commandment](#)
- [who loves](#)
- [should...love](#)
- [God](#)
- [brother](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [what...has commanded us](#)
- [love](#)
- [we must...love](#)
- [him](#)
- [fellow believers](#)

ULT

²¹ Indeed, we have this [commandment](#) from him, that the one [who loves God](#) should also [love](#) his [brother](#).
 4:3 ^[1].

UST

²¹ Keep in mind that this is [what](#) God [has commanded us](#): If we [love him](#), we [must](#) also [love](#) our [fellow believers](#).

1 John 5

1 John 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

It is false teaching to deny that Jesus is the Son of God (5:1-12)
Closing of Letter (5:13-21)

Possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“a sin towards death”

It is not entirely clear what John means by this phrase. The word “death” could refer either to physical death or to spiritual death, that is, to eternal separation from God. See the further discussion in the notes to [5:16](#). (See: [die](#), [dead](#), [deadly](#), [death](#))

“the whole world lies in the power of the evil one”

The phrase “the evil one” refers to Satan. God has allowed him to rule the world, but, ultimately, God is in control over everything. God keeps his children safe from the evil one. (See: [Satan](#), [devil](#), [evil one](#))

Important textual issues in this chapter

In [5:7-8](#), all ancient manuscripts say: “For there are three who testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and the three are unto the one.” That is the reading that ULT follows. Some much later manuscripts say: “For there are three who testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one; and there are three who testify on earth: the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three are unto the one.” In this case, translators are advised to translate this as the ULT text does, since there is wide agreement that it follows the accurate reading. However, if there are older versions of the Bible in your region that have the longer reading, you can include it, but you should put it inside square brackets [] to indicate that it was most likely not in the original version of 1 John. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

1 John 5:1

who believes...Christ (ULT) those...Messiah (UST)

Christ is the Greek word for “Messiah.” Alternate translation: “the Messiah”

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten from God (ULT) All those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah are children of God (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: “God is the father of everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

ULT

¹ Everyone [who believes](#) that [Jesus](#) is the [Christ has been begotten](#) from [God](#), and everyone [who loves](#) the [one begetting](#) also [loves](#) the [one having been begotten](#) from him.

UST

¹ All those [who believe](#) that [Jesus](#) is the [Messiah are children](#) of [God](#). And whoever [loves anyone who is a father](#) certainly [loves](#) his [child](#) also. {So if we believe in Jesus, then we should love our fellow believers.}

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten from God (ULT)

All those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah are children of God (UST)

See whether in [2:29](#) you decided to explain this metaphor. Alternate translation: “God is the spiritual father of everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah” (See: [Metaphor](#))

everyone who loves the one begetting also loves the one having been begotten from him (ULT) whoever loves anyone who is a father certainly loves his child also (UST)

John includes this short saying to teach something that is generally true about life and that applies to the point he has been developing since [4:7](#), that genuine believers love one another as God has loved them. Alternate translation: “everyone who loves someone who is a father also loves that person’s child” (See: [Proverbs](#))

everyone who loves the one begetting also loves the one having been begotten from him (ULT) whoever loves anyone who is a father certainly loves his child also (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what this means and how it applies to John’s argument in this part of the letter. Alternate translation: “everyone who loves God will also love his fellow believers, since God is their spiritual father” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [who believes](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [Christ](#)
- [has been begotten](#)
- [one begetting](#)

- having been begotten
- God
- who loves
- loves

Translation Words - UST

- who believe
- Jesus
- Messiah
- are children
- anyone who is a father
- child
- God
- loves
- loves

1 John 5:2

In this we know that (ULT) We can be sure that (UST)

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how we know that" (See: [Idiom](#))

the children of God (ULT) others who believe that Jesus is the Messiah (UST)

Since John says in the previous verse that God is the spiritual father of believers, by **the children of God** he means other believers. Alternate translation: "our fellow believers" (See: [Metaphor](#))

we keep his commandments (ULT) do what he commands us to do (UST)

Here, **keep** is an idiom that means "obey." Alternate translation: "we obey his commandments" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- we know
- we love
- we love (2)
- children
- of God
- God
- we keep
- commandments

Translation Words - UST

- We can be sure
- we truly love
- we love (2)
- others who believe that Jesus is the Messiah
- God
- others who believe that Jesus is the Messiah
- do
- what...commands us to do

ULT

² In this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and we keep his commandments.

UST

² We can be sure that we truly love others who believe that Jesus is the Messiah when we love God and do what he commands us to do.

1 John 5:3

For this is the love of God, that we should keep his commandments (ULT)

I am saying this because what loving God really means is that we do what he commands (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly why this is the reason for the statement that John makes in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "And this is why: If we really do love God, we will love other believers, as he has commanded" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

For (ULT)

I am saying...because (UST)

In this verse, John gives a reason why his readers should recognize that the statement he makes in the previous verse is true. Alternate translation: "After all," (See: [Connect - Reason-and-Result Relationship](#))

the love of God (ULT)

loving God (UST)

In this context, the phrase **the love of God** refers to believers loving God. John speaks in the previous verse of "when we love God." Alternate translation: "what it means to love God" (See: [Possession](#))

that we should keep his commandments (ULT)

that we do what he commands (UST)

Here, **keep** is an idiom that means "obey." Alternate translation: "that we should obey his commandments" (See: [Idiom](#))

his commandments are not burdensome (ULT)

it is not difficult to do what he commands (UST)

John speaks figuratively of God's **commandments** as if they had weight but did not weigh very much. Alternate translation: "his commandments are not difficult to obey" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [love](#)
- [of God](#)
- [we should keep](#)
- [commandments](#)
- [commandments](#)
- [burdensome](#)

ULT

³ For this is the [love of God](#), that [we should keep](#) his [commandments](#). And his [commandments](#) are not [burdensome](#).

UST

³ I am saying this because what [loving God](#) really means is that [we do what he commands](#). And it is not [difficult to do what he commands](#).

Translation Words - UST

- loving
- God
- we do
- what...commands
- what...commands
- difficult to do

1 John 5:4

For everyone who has been begotten from God overcomes the world (ULT)

Here is the reason why it is not difficult for us to do what God commans. All of us who believe in Jesus as the Messiah have been able to refuse to do what unbelievers want us to do (UST)

In order to create a verse bridge, you could begin this sentence with “Since” instead of **For**; you could end it with a comma instead of a period; and you could make it the beginning of the second sentence in the previous verse. It would go before “his commandments are not burdensome.” The word “And” would be left out. (See: [Verse Bridges](#))

everyone who has been begotten from God (ULT)

All of us who believe in Jesus as the Messiah (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: “everyone whose father is God” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

everyone who has been begotten from God (ULT)

All of us who believe in Jesus as the Messiah (UST)

See whether in [2:29](#) you decided to explain this metaphor. Alternate translation: “everyone whose spiritual father is God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

overcomes the world (ULT)

have been able to refuse to do what unbelievers want us to do (UST)

As in [2:13](#), John is using the word **overcomes** figuratively. He is speaking of the believers’ refusal to live by the value system of ungodly people as if the believers had defeated that system in a struggle. Alternate translation: “does not live by the value system of ungodly people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the world (ULT)

what unbelievers want us to do (UST)

See how you translated the term **world** in [2:15](#). It has a similar meaning in this verse. Alternate translation: “the value system of ungodly people” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁴ For everyone [who has been begotten from God](#) overcomes the [world](#). And this is the victory that has overcome the [world](#), our [faith](#).

UST

⁴ Here is the reason why it is not difficult for us to do what God commans. All of us [who believe in Jesus as the Messiah](#) have been able to refuse to do [what unbelievers want us to do](#). We are stronger than everything that is against God. We are able to refuse [to do wrong because we trust in Jesus](#).

the victory (ULT)**stronger than everything that is against God. We are able to refuse (UST)**

John is speaking figuratively of the thing that has won **the victory** as if it were **the victory** itself. Alternate translation: "what has won the victory" (See: [Metonymy](#))

that has overcome the world (ULT)**stronger than everything that is against God. We are able to refuse...to do wrong (UST)**

Once again John is using the word **overcome** figuratively. He is speaking of the "faith" that he and his readers share as if it had defeated the ungodly value system in a struggle. Alternate translation: "that enables us to live differently from the value system of ungodly people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the world (ULT)**what unbelievers want us to do (UST)**

John is using the term **world** to mean the same thing as in the previous sentence. Alternate translation: "the value system of ungodly people" (See: [Metonymy](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [who has been begotten](#)
- [God](#)
- [world](#)
- [world \(2\)](#)
- [faith](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [who believe in Jesus as the Messiah](#)
- [who believe in Jesus as the Messiah](#)
- [what unbelievers want us to do](#)
- [to do wrong \(2\)](#)
- [because...trust in Jesus](#)

1 John 5:5

But who is the one who overcomes the world, if not the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (ULT)

I will tell you who is stronger than everything that is against God: It is anyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (UST)

John is using the question form for emphasis, to reaffirm what he said in the first sentence of the previous verse. If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate his words as a statement.

Alternate translation: "But only someone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God overcomes the world." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

who overcomes the world (ULT)
is stronger than everything that is against God (UST)

See how you translated this in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "who does not live by the value system of ungodly people" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the world (ULT)
everything that is against God (UST)

See how you translated this in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "the value system of ungodly people" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the Son of God (ULT)
the Son of God (UST)

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [world](#)
- [who believes](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [Son of God](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [everything that is against God](#)
- [who believes](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [Son of God](#)

ULT

⁵ But who is the one who overcomes the [world](#), if not the one [who believes](#) that [Jesus](#) is the [Son of God](#)?

UST

⁵ I will tell you who is stronger than [everything that is against God](#): It is anyone [who believes](#) that [Jesus](#) is the [Son of God](#).

1 John 5:6

This is the one who came by water and blood: Jesus Christ—not in water alone, but in water and in blood (ULT)

Jesus is the one who came {to earth from God}. God showed that he had truly sent Jesus not only when John baptized Jesus in water, but also when Jesus' blood flowed from his body when he died...Jesus the Messiah (UST)

The terms **water** and **blood** likely mean one of two things. Either way, John is specifying what it means to believe fully that "Jesus is the Son of God," as he described in the previous verse. (1) As John indicates in 4:2, the false teachers denied that God had come to earth in a real human body. Some false teachers at this time claimed instead that the divine Son of God had united himself with a human being, Jesus, only at the time of his baptism. So John may be using the term **water** to refer figuratively to the baptism of Jesus and the term **blood** to refer figuratively to the real human birth of Jesus by association with the way that there is blood when mothers give birth. A reference to the birth of Jesus would suit John's statement that this is how how Jesus **came**. Alternate translation: "It is vital to affirm that the Son of God did not come to earth only at the baptism of Jesus, but that he was born as Jesus, who was a real human being" (2) The term **blood** could also be a figurative reference to the death of Jesus on the cross, where he shed his blood as the Savior of the world. That is the interpretation of UST. (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

⁶ This is the one who came by [water](#) and [blood: Jesus Christ](#)—not in [water](#) alone, but in [water](#) and in [blood](#). And the [Spirit](#) is the one [who testifies](#), because the [Spirit](#) is [truth](#).

UST

⁶ Jesus is the one who came {to earth from God}. God showed that he had truly sent Jesus [not only when John baptized Jesus in water](#), but also [when Jesus' blood flowed from his body when he died](#). And God's [Spirit declares {truthfully that Jesus the Messiah came from God}](#), because the [Spirit always tells the truth](#).

the one who came (ULT)

the one who came {to earth from God (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say more explicitly what this means, as UST does. Alternate translation: "the one who came to earth from God" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the Spirit is the one who testifies

Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit gives us assurance about this"

the Spirit is truth (ULT)

truthfully...the Spirit always tells the truth (UST)

Like the statement "God is love" in 4:8 and 4:16, which describes God's character, this is a metaphor that describes the character of the Holy **Spirit**. Alternate translation: "the Spirit is entirely truthful" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [water](#)
- [water](#)
- [water](#) (2)
- [blood](#)

- blood
- truth
- Jesus
- Christ
- Spirit
- Spirit (2)
- who testifies

Translation Words - UST

- not only when John baptized Jesus in water
- not only when John baptized Jesus in water
- not only when John baptized Jesus in water (2)
- when Jesus' blood flowed from his body when he died
- when Jesus' blood flowed from his body when he died
- Spirit
- Spirit (2)
- declares...that...came from God
- truthfully...always tells the truth
- Jesus
- the Messiah

1 John 5:7

**For there are three who testify (ULT)
We know this} because two other witnesses
confirm what the Spirit says (UST)**

In this statement, John gives a reason why believers can be confident that the Spirit testifies truthfully about Jesus, as he said in the previous verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that more explicitly. Alternate translation: “We can be confident that the Spirit testifies truthfully about Jesus because two further witnesses say the same thing about him that the Spirit does” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

ULT

⁷ For there are three [who testify](#)

UST

⁷ {We know this} because [two other witnesses confirm what the Spirit says.](#)

**For there are three who testify (ULT)
We know this} because two other witnesses confirm what the Spirit says
(UST)**

See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to follow the reading of ULT or to follow the reading of some late manuscripts and say in your translation, “For there are three who testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three who testify on earth.” As the General Notes recommend, if you decide to use the longer reading, put it inside square brackets [] to indicate that it was most likely not in the original version of 1 John The notes below discuss translation issues related to the variant reading, for those who decide to use it. (See: [Textual Variants](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [who testify](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [two other witnesses confirm what the Spirit says](#)

1 John 5:8

the water and the blood (ULT)

What happened when John baptized Jesus in water...What happened when Jesus' blood flowed from his body when he died also (UST)

See how you decided to translate the terms **water** and **blood** in 5:6. Alternate translation: (1) "the baptism of Jesus and his human birth" (2) "the baptism of Jesus and his death on the cross" (See: [Metonymy](#))

the three are unto the one (ULT)

confirms what...says...confirms what...says (UST)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "these three all say the same thing" or "these three all agree" (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- Spirit
- water
- blood

Translation Words - UST

- What happened when John baptized Jesus in water
- Spirit...Spirit
- What happened when Jesus' blood flowed from his body when he died

ULT

⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood, and the three are unto the one. ^[1]

UST

⁸ What happened when John baptized Jesus in water confirms what the Spirit says. What happened when Jesus' blood flowed from his body when he died also confirms what the Spirit says.

1 John 5:9

If we receive the testimony of men (ULT)
We usually believe what other people tell us.
But we can certainly trust...in (UST)

John is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might misunderstand and think that what John is saying is not certain, then you can translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since we receive the testimony of men" (See: [Connect – Factual Conditions](#))

we receive the testimony of men (ULT)
We...believe what other people tell us. But we
can certainly trust...in (UST)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "we believe people when they give testimony" (See: [Idiom](#))

of men (ULT)
other people (UST)

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "of people" (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

the testimony of God is greater (ULT)
much more...what God says (UST)

The word **greater** implicitly means that the testimony of God is more reliable than human testimony, since God knows everything and God always tells the truth. Alternate translation: "the testimony of God is more reliable" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the testimony of God is greater (ULT)
much more...what God says (UST)

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "we should certainly receive the testimony of God, since it is greater" or "we should certainly believe God when he gives testimony, since his testimony is more reliable" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

For this is the testimony of God that he has testified about his Son

Here, **For** could mean: (1) John may be using the term to introduce the content of God's testimony to his Son. In that case, after using the next verse to stress again the importance of believing God's testimony, John would be specifying the content itself in [5:11](#), where he says, "And this is the testimony." That is the interpretation of ULT. Alternate translation: "Now this is the testimony that God has given regarding his Son" (2) John may be using the

ULT

⁹ If **we receive** the **testimony** of men, the **testimony of God** is greater. For this is the **testimony of God**, that **he has testified** about his **Son**.

UST

⁹ We usually **believe what** other people **tell us. But we can certainly trust** much more **in what God says**. After all, **God has spoken about** things {that no human would know}. **He has told us who** his **Son is**.

term **For** to give the reason why the testimony of God is greater than human testimony, as he says in the previous sentence. That is the interpretation of UST.

his Son (ULT)

his Son (UST)

Son is an important title for Jesus. Alternate translation: “his Son Jesus” (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- we receive
- testimony
- testimony
- testimony (2)
- he has testified
- of God
- of God (2)
- Son

Translation Words - UST

- We...believe...But we can certainly trust...in
- what...tell us
- what...says
- has spoken about (2)
- He has told us who...is
- Son
- God
- God (2)

1 John 5:10

in the Son of God (ULT)

in the Son of God (UST)

John implicitly means believing that Jesus is the Son of God. Alternate translation: “that Jesus is the Son of God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the Son of God (ULT)

the Son of God (UST)

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

has the testimony in him (ULT)

know within their inner beings what is true about him (UST)

John speaks figuratively of the **testimony** as if it were an object that could be inside believers. Alternate translation: “completely accepts what God has said” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the testimony (ULT)

know within their inner beings what is true about him (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **testimony** with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “what God has said” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

has made him a liar (ULT)

call him a liar (UST)

As in [1:10](#), be sure that it is clear in your translation that God would not actually be a **liar** in this case. Rather, since God has said that Jesus is his Son, a person who did not believe that would be calling God a liar. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that explicitly. Alternate translation: “is, in effect, calling God a liar” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

The one...of God...the testimony...that...God...has testified about his...Son (ULT)

Those...of God...know within their inner beings what is true about him... God...has testified about his...Son (UST)

John is using a cognate accusative, that is, an object that comes from the same root as its verb. You may be able to do the same thing in your translation. If not, you could explain what this means. Alternate translation: “what God has solemnly said to be true about his Son”

ULT

¹⁰ The one **who believes** in the **Son of God** has the **testimony** in him. The one **who does not believe** God has made him a liar, because **he has not believed** in the **testimony** that **God has testified** about his **Son**.

UST

¹⁰ Those **who trust** in the **Son of God** **know within their inner beings what is true about him**. But those **who do not believe what God says** call him a liar, because **they have refused to believe what God has testified** about his **Son**.

Translation Words - ULT

- who believes
- who does...believe (2)
- he has...believed
- Son of God
- Son
- testimony
- testimony (2)
- has testified
- God
- God

Translation Words - UST

- who trust
- who do...believe (2)
- they have refused to believe
- Son of God
- Son
- know within their inner beings what is true about him
- what (2)
- has testified
- what God says
- God

1 John 5:11

this is the testimony (ULT)

This is what...says to us (UST)

Alternate translation: "this is what God has said about his Son"

God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son (ULT)

John speaks figuratively of **life** as if it were an object that was inside Jesus. Alternate translation: "God gave us eternal life, which people receive by believing in his Son Jesus" (See: [Metaphor](#))

eternal life (ULT)

eternal life (UST)

As in [4:9](#), **eternal life** means two things at once. It means receiving power from God in this life to live in a new way, and it also means living forever in the presence of God after death. See how you translated the expression in [4:9](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

his Son (ULT)

his Son (UST)

Son is an important title for Jesus. Alternate translation: "his Son Jesus" (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [testimony](#)
- [God](#)
- [eternal](#)
- [life](#)
- [life](#)
- [Son](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [what...says to us](#)
- [God...I](#)
- [eternal](#)
- [life](#)
- [We will live forever](#)
- [Son](#)

ULT

¹¹ And this is the [testimony](#): that [God](#) gave us [eternal life](#), and this [life](#) is in his [Son](#).

UST

¹¹ This is [what God says to us](#): "I have given you [eternal life](#)." [We will live forever](#) if we share life with his [Son](#).

1 John 5:12

The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life (ULT)

Those who share life with God's Son Jesus will live forever with God. Those who do not share life with him will not live forever (UST)

John speaks figuratively of believers who are in a close relationship with Jesus as if Jesus were their possession. Alternate translation: "Anyone who is in a close relationship with the Son has life. Anyone who is not in a close relationship with the Son of God does not have life" (See: [Metaphor](#))

has life...does not have life (ULT)
will live forever with God...will not live forever (UST)

Since both groups of people are alive literally, John means this in a figurative sense. As in [4:9](#), he is likely referring to what he calls "eternal life" in [3:15](#). See how you translated that term in those verses. Alternate translation: "has power from God to live as a new person now and will live forever in God's presence after death ... does not have power from God to live as a new person now and will not live forever in God's presence after death" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the Son...the Son of God (ULT)
God's Son Jesus...him (UST)

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [Son](#)
- [Son of God](#)
- [life](#)
- [life](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [Son Jesus](#)
- [him](#)
- [will live forever with God](#)
- [live forever](#)

ULT

¹² The one who has the [Son](#) has [life](#). The one who does not have the [Son of God](#) does not have [life](#).

UST

¹² Those who share life with God's [Son Jesus will live forever with God](#). Those who do not share life with [him](#) will not [live forever](#).

1 John 5:13

these things (ULT)

this letter (UST)

Alternate translation: "this letter"

**to you...the ones believing in the name of the
Son of God (ULT)**

**you...to...who believe that Jesus is the Son of
God (UST)**

As in 2:12, John is using the **name** of Jesus figuratively to represent who Jesus is and what he has done. Alternate translation: "to you who believe in Jesus and what he has done for you" (See: [Metonymy](#))

of the Son of God (ULT)

the Son of God (UST)

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

that you have eternal life (ULT)

that...will live forever...you (UST)

The emphasis in this verse seems to be more on the future aspect of the expression **eternal life**. Alternate translation: "that you will live forever in God's presence after you die" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [believing](#)
- [name](#)
- [of...Son of God](#)
- [you may know](#)
- [eternal](#)
- [life](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [to know...you](#)
- [will live...you](#)
- [forever](#)
- [who believe](#)
- [that Jesus is](#)
- [Son of God](#)

ULT

¹³ I have written these things to you, the ones [believing](#) in the [name](#) of the [Son of God](#), so that [you may know](#) that you have [eternal life](#).

UST

¹³ Because I want you [to know](#) that [you will live forever](#), I have written this letter to [you who believe that Jesus is the Son of God](#).

1 John 5:14

this is the confidence that we have towards him (ULT)

we can be very confident (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, as in [3:21](#) you could say explicitly what this **confidence** applies to, in light of what John says in the rest of this sentence. Alternate translation: “we can be confident of this as we pray to God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

this is the confidence that we have towards him (ULT)

we can be very confident (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **confidence** with an adjective such as “confident.” Alternate translation: “we can be confident of this as we pray to God” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

him...his...he listens (ULT)

we can be very confident...God...he...wants to answer...prayers (UST)

The pronouns **him**, **his**, and **he** refer to God in this verse. It might be natural in your language to use the name “God” in the first instance and pronouns in the other instances. (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

if we ask anything according to his will (ULT)

God...when we ask him to do anything that he approves of (UST)

Alternate translation: “if we ask for the things that God wants for us”

he listens to us (ULT)

wants to answer our prayers (UST)

As in [4:5](#), the word **listens** is an idiom. However, the meaning here is not as strong as the meaning there, “is persuaded by.” Rather, this refers to God hearing our prayers with a disposition to grant what we ask. Alternate translation: “he is disposed to give it to us” (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [confidence](#)
- [his...will](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [we can be very confident](#)
- [God...that...he...approves of](#)

ULT

¹⁴ And this is the [confidence](#) that we have towards him, that if we ask anything according to [his will](#), he listens to us.

UST

¹⁴ I also want you to know that [we can be very confident](#) that [God](#) wants to answer our prayers when we ask him to do anything that [he approves of](#).

1 John 5:15

if we know that he listens to us (ULT) if we know that God wants to answer our prayers (UST)

John is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might misunderstand and think that what John is saying is not certain, then you can translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: “since we know that he listens to us” (See: [Connect – Factual Conditions](#))

he listens to us (ULT) God wants to answer our prayers (UST)

See how you translated this in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “he is disposed to give us what we ask for” (See: [Idiom](#))

he listens to us (ULT) God wants to answer our prayers (UST)

It may be helpful to repeat the condition that John specifies in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “he is disposed to give us what we ask for if it is according to his will” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

he listens...him (ULT) God wants to answer...prayers...him (UST)

The pronouns **he** and **him** refer to God in this verse. It might be natural in your language to use the name “God” for **he** and to say **him** later in the verse. (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

we know that...we have the requests that we have asked from him (ULT) we know that...God will give us what we ask him for (UST)

Alternate translation: “we know that we will receive what we have asked God for”

Translation Words - ULT

- [we know](#)
- [we know](#) (2)

Translation Words - UST

- [we know](#)
- [then we can also be sure](#) (2)

ULT

¹⁵ And if [we know](#) that he listens to us, whatever we may ask, [we know](#) that we have the requests that we have asked from him.

UST

¹⁵ Now if [we know](#) that God wants to answer our prayers, no matter what we ask for, [then we can also be sure](#) that God will give us what we ask him for.

1 John 5:16

If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not towards death, he will ask (ULT)

Suppose someone sees one of his fellow believers sinning in a way that would not separate him from God. Then he should pray for the one who is sinning (UST)

John is describing a hypothetical situation in order to counsel his readers. UST models a way of showing this. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

his brother (ULT)
one of his fellow believers (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:9. Alternate translation: “a fellow believer” (See: [Metaphor](#))

sinning a sin (ULT)
sinning (UST)

John is using a cognate accusative, that is, an object that comes from the same root as its verb. You may be able to do the same thing in your translation. If not, you could explain what this means. Alternate translation: “committing a sin”

a sin not towards death...for those sinning not towards death...a sin towards death (ULT)

sinning...in a way that would not separate him from God...However, I am saying this only about people who are sinning in a way that would not separate them from God...some kinds of sins that cause people to be separated from God forever (UST)

Here, **death** could mean: (1) This refers to a figurative reference to spiritual death, that is, to eternal separation from God. (See the later note to this verse for a discussion of what kind of sin John may have in mind that would lead to that.) Alternate translation: “a sin that does not lead to eternal separation from God ... those whose sin will not lead to eternal separation from God ... a sin that does lead to eternal separation from God” (2) This refers to a literal reference to physical death. Alternate translation: “a sin that will not cause him to die ... those whose sin will not cause them to die ... a sin that will cause a person to die” (See: [Metaphor](#))

he will ask (ULT)
Then he should pray for the one who is sinning (UST)

John is using a future statement to give an instruction and command. Alternate translation: “he should pray for that fellow believer” (See: [Statements – Other Uses](#))

ULT

¹⁶ If anyone sees his **brother sinning a sin** not towards **death**, he will ask, and he will give him **life**, for those **sinning** not towards **death**. There is **a sin** towards **death**; I am not saying that **he should pray** about that.

UST

¹⁶ Suppose someone sees **one of his fellow believers sinning in a way that would not separate him from God**. Then he should pray for the one who is sinning. If he does, **God will bring** that person **back into close fellowship with himself**. **However, I am saying this only about people who are sinning in a way that would not separate them from God**. There are **some kinds of sins that cause people to be separated from God forever**. I am not saying that **you should pray** for people who are sinning in that way.

he will give him life (ULT)**God will bring that person back into close fellowship with himself (UST)**

In this clause, the pronoun **he** refers to God and the pronoun **him** refers to the believer who is sinning. Elsewhere in the verse, the words **his** and **he** refers to the person who sees a fellow believer sinning. Alternate translation: "God will give life to the believer who is sinning" (See: [Pronouns – When to Use Them](#))

he will give him life (ULT)**God will bring that person back into close fellowship with himself (UST)**

The meaning of the word **life** depends on the meaning of the word "death." (1) The word "death" could be figurative. Alternate translation: "God will make sure that the believer who is sinning is not separated from him eternally" (2) The word **death** could be literal. Alternate translation: "God will make sure that the believer who is sinning does not die" (See: [Metaphor](#))

There is a sin towards death; I am not saying that he should pray about that (ULT)**There are some kinds of sins that cause people to be separated from God forever. I am not saying that you should pray for people who are sinning in that way (UST)**

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say more explicitly what this likely means if the word **death** is figurative. In the context of the whole letter, by **a sin towards death**, John is probably referring to the behavior that the false teachers engaged in and encouraged. As Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John explains, these false teachers claimed that it did not matter what people did in their bodies, and so they would have been committing many serious sins without feeling any conviction that their actions were wrong. This showed that they had abandoned faith in Jesus and had rejected the influence of the Holy Spirit. John implicitly corrects this false teaching again in [5:18](#) His statement that believers should not pray for people who behave in this way is likely descriptive rather than prescriptive. That is, he is not saying that he does not want the believers to pray for them. Rather, he is explaining that it will not do any good to pray for them, since they are determined to live in a way that is contrary to faith in Jesus and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "The false teachers who say that it does not matter what people do in their bodies are committing many serious sins without feeling any conviction that their actions are wrong. This shows that they no longer believe in Jesus, they have rejected the influence of the Holy Spirit, and they are no longer living in relationship with God. This suggests that they will also be separated from God for eternity. Praying for them is not likely to make any difference" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [brother](#)
- [sinning](#)
- [a sin](#)
- [sinning](#)
- [a sin](#)
- [death](#)
- [death](#) (2)
- [death](#) (3)
- [life](#)
- [he should pray](#)

Translation Words - UST

- one of...fellow believers
- you should pray
- sinning
- sinning
- However, I am saying this only about people who are sinning
- some kinds of sins
- in a way that would...separate him from God
- in a way that would...separate them from God (2)
- that cause people to be separated from God forever (3)
- God will bring...back into close fellowship with himself

1 John 5:17

All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not towards death (ULT)

Everything that is wrong is a sin against God, but not every bad thing we do will separate us from God forever (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **unrighteousness** with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "Every time we do what God does not want, that is sin" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

and (ULT)

but (UST)

John is using the word **and** to introduce a contrasting statement that is intended to encourage the believers to whom he is writing. Alternate translation: "but" (See: [Connect - Contrast Relationship](#))

there is sin not towards death (ULT)

not every bad thing we do will separate us from God forever (UST)

See how you translated the word **death** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "not every sin leads to eternal separation from God" or "not every sin causes a person to die" (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [unrighteousness](#)
- [sin](#)
- [sin \(2\)](#)
- [death](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [that is wrong](#)
- [a sin against God](#)
- [every bad thing we do \(2\)](#)
- [will separate us from God forever](#)

ULT

¹⁷ All [unrighteousness](#) is [sin](#), and there is [sin](#) not towards [death](#).

UST

¹⁷ Everything [that is wrong](#) is a [sin against God](#), but not [every bad thing we do will separate us from God forever](#).

1 John 5:18

everyone who has been begotten from God (ULT)

if a person is sharing life with God (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: “everyone whose father is God” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

everyone who has been begotten from God (ULT)

if a person is sharing life with God (UST)

See whether in [2:29](#) you decided to explain this metaphor. Alternate translation: “everyone whose spiritual father is God” (See: [Metaphor](#))

does not sin (ULT)

he does not keep sinning again and again (UST)

See how you translated this expression in [3:6](#). Alternate translation: “does not sin wantonly and continually” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

who has been begotten from God...who was begotten (ULT)
is sharing life with God...the Son (UST)

This is a description of Jesus, whom John calls “the only-begotten” in [4:9](#). See how you translated that expression there. Alternate translation: “Jesus, God’s actual Child”

keeps him (ULT)

protects him (UST)

This could mean one of two things. Alternate translation: (1) “keeps him in a close relationship with God” (2) “keeps him from sinning” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the evil one (ULT)

As in [2:13](#), John is using the adjective **evil** as a noun in order to indicate a specific being. ULT adds **one** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “the one who is evil” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

the evil one (ULT)

John is speaking figuratively of the devil by association with the way that he is **evil**. Alternate translation: “the devil” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

¹⁸ We know that everyone who has been begotten from God does not sin, but the One who was begotten from God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

UST

¹⁸ We know that if a person is sharing life with God, he does not keep sinning again and again. Instead, the Son of God protects him so that Satan, that evil being, does not harm him.

does not touch him (ULT)
does not harm him (UST)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “cannot harm him” (See: [Idiom](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- We know
- who has been begotten
- who was begotten
- God
- God (2)
- does...sin
- evil one

Translation Words - UST

- We know
- is sharing life
- the Son
- God
- of God (2)
- he does...keep sinning again and again
- Satan, that evil being

1 John 5:19

we are from God (ULT) we are sharing life with God (UST)

See how you translated the similar expression in [4:4](#). Alternate translation: “we belong to God” or “we are living in relationship with God” (See: [Idiom](#))

the whole world (ULT) all the people who are unbelievers (UST)

John uses the term **world** in various ways in this letter. In this instance, it likely refers figuratively both to the people living in the **world** who do not honor God and to their value system. Alternate translation: “all ungodly people and their value system” (See: [Metonymy](#))

lies in the evil one (ULT) are under the control of Satan, that evil being (UST)

The expression **lies in** figuratively represents being controlled by someone or something. Alternate translation: “is controlled by the evil one” or “is controlled by evil influences” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the evil one (ULT) Satan, that evil being (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the meaning behind the abstract noun **evil** with an equivalent expression. This could mean: (1) John may be speaking figuratively of the devil, as in [2:13](#). Alternate translation: “the devil” (2) John may be speaking of evil influences. Alternate translation: “evil influences” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- We know
- God
- world
- evil one

Translation Words - UST

- We know...We...know
- God
- people who are unbelievers
- Satan, that evil being

ULT

¹⁹ We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the evil one.

UST

¹⁹ We know that we are sharing life with God,. We also know that all the people who are unbelievers are under the control of Satan, that evil being.

1 John 5:20

the Son of God (ULT)

the Son of God (UST)

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

has come (ULT)

has come among us (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say more explicitly what this means, as you may have done in 5:6. Alternate translation: “has come to earth from God” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

has given us understanding (ULT)

has enabled us to understand what is true (UST)

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **understanding** with a verb such as “understand.” Alternate translation: “has enabled us to understand” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

has given us understanding (ULT)

has enabled us to understand what is true (UST)

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could say explicitly what Jesus has enabled us to understand. Alternate translation: “has enabled us to understand the truth” or “has enabled us to understand what God is truly like” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

the True One...the True One (ULT)

the one genuine God...the one genuine God (UST)

John is using the adjective **True** as a noun in order to indicate a specific being. ULT adds **One** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “the One who is true ... the One who is true” (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

the True One...the True One (ULT)

the one genuine God...the one genuine God (UST)

John is speaking figuratively of God by association with the way that he is **True**. Alternate translation: “God, who always tells the truth and does what he says he will do” (See: [Metonymy](#))

ULT

²⁰ But **we know** that the **Son of God** has come and has given us **understanding**, so that **we may know** the **True One**. And we are in the **True One**, in his **Son Jesus Christ**. This is the **true God** and **eternal life**.

UST

²⁰ We also **know** that the **Son of God** has come among us and has enabled us **to understand what is true**. That way **we can share life with the one genuine God**. We are living in relationship with the **one genuine God** and with his **Son, Jesus the Messiah**. Jesus is **truly God**, and **he is the one who enables us to live the new life that God wants us to live**.

we are in the True One, in his Son Jesus Christ (ULT)
We are living in relationship with the one genuine God and with his Son, Jesus the Messiah (UST)

As in 2:5, John is speaking figuratively as if believers could be inside of God and Jesus. This expression describes having a close relationship with God. Alternate translation: “we have a close relationship with God and with his Son Jesus Christ” (See: [Metaphor](#))

his Son (ULT)
his Son (UST)

Son is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#))

This is the true God (ULT)
Jesus is truly God (UST)

This could refer either to God or to Jesus. ULT takes it to refer to God and UST takes it to refer to Jesus. (See: [Pronouns - When to Use Them](#))

the true God and eternal life (ULT)
truly God, and he is the one who enables us to live the new life that God wants us to live (UST)

John is expressing a single idea by using two noun phrases connected with **and**. The phrase **eternal life** describes a quality of **the true God**, that he gives eternal life. Alternate translation: “the true God, who gives eternal life” (See: [Hendiadys](#))

eternal life (ULT)
he is the one who enables us to live the new life that God wants us to live (UST)

As in 4:9, this means both receiving power from God in this **life** to live in a new way and living forever in the presence of God after death. See how you translated the expression there. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Translation Words - ULT

- [we know](#)
- [we may know](#)
- [Son of God](#)
- [Son](#)
- [God](#)
- [eternal](#)
- [life](#)
- [understanding](#)
- [True One](#)
- [True One](#)
- [true](#)
- [Jesus](#)
- [Christ](#)

Translation Words - UST

- We...know
- we can share life with
- Son of God
- Son
- God
- he is the one who enables us to live the new life
- that God wants us to live
- to understand what is true
- one genuine God
- one genuine God
- truly
- Jesus
- the Messiah

1 John 5:21

Little children (ULT)

I say to you who are very dear to me (UST)

See how you translated this in 2:1. Alternate translation: “You dear believers who are under my care” (See: [Metaphor](#))

keep yourselves (ULT)

Guard yourselves (UST)

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: “stay away from” (See: [Idiom](#))

idols (ULT)

worshiping gods that have no real power (UST)

This could mean: (1) John may be referring figuratively to anything that might take the place of God in a person’s life. Alternate translation: “anything that might take the place of God in your life” (2) John may be referring literally to **idols**, that is, to statues that were worshiped as if they embodied a god. That is the interpretation of UST. (See: [Metaphor](#))

keep yourselves from idols (ULT)

Guard yourselves from worshiping gods that have no real power (UST)

“stay away from idols” or “do not worship idols”

Translation Words - ULT

- [Little children](#)
- [idols](#)

Translation Words - UST

- [I say to you who are very dear to me](#)
- [worshiping gods that have no real power](#)

ULT

²¹ [Little children](#), keep yourselves from [idols](#).

5:8 ^[1]. However, the best copies do not have this reading.

UST

²¹ [I say to you who are very dear to me](#), “Guard yourselves from [worshiping gods that have no real power](#).”



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Version 22

Abstract Nouns

Description

Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, or situations. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, unity, friendship, health, and reason. This is a translation issue because some languages may express a certain idea with an abstract noun, while others would need a different way to express it.

This page answers the question: *What are abstract nouns and how do I deal with them in my translation?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

Remember that nouns are words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea. Abstract nouns are the nouns that refer to ideas. These can be attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even relationships between those ideas. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as joy, peace, creation, goodness, contentment, justice, truth, freedom, vengeance, slowness, length, weight, and many, many more.

Some languages, such as Biblical Greek and English, use abstract nouns a lot. They provide a way of giving names to actions or qualities. With names, people who speak these languages can talk about the concepts as though they were things. For example, in languages that use abstract nouns, people can say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin."

But some languages do not use abstract nouns very much. In these languages, speakers may not have the two abstract nouns "forgiveness" and "sin," but they would express the same meaning in other ways. For example, they would express, "I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned," by using verb phrases instead of nouns for those ideas.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible that you translate from may use abstract nouns to express certain ideas. Your language might not use abstract nouns for some of those ideas. Instead, it might use phrases to express those ideas. Those phrases will use other kinds of words such as adjectives, verbs, or adverbs to express the meaning of the abstract noun. For example, "What is its **weight**?" could be expressed as "How much does it **weigh**?" or "How **heavy** is it?"

Examples From the Bible

From **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

The abstract noun "childhood" refers to when someone was a child.

But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

The abstract nouns "godliness" and "contentment" refer to being godly and content. The abstract noun "gain" refers to something that benefits or helps someone.

Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

The abstract noun "salvation" here refers to being saved.

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The abstract noun "slowness" refers to the lack of speed with which something is done.

He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

The abstract noun “purposes” refers to the things that people want to do and the reasons they want to do them.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun. Alternative translations are indented below the Scripture example.

... from **childhood** you have known the sacred writings ... (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

Ever since **you were a child** you have known the sacred writings.

But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

But **being godly** and **content** is very **beneficial**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **are godly** and **content**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **honor and obey God** and when we are **happy with what we have**.

Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

Today the people in this house **have been saved** ... Today God **has saved** the people in this house ...

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be. (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **moving slowly** to be.

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal **the things that people want to do and the reasons that they want to do them**.

(Go back to: 1 John 1:3; 1:4; 1:6; 1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 2:2; 2:4; 2:20; 2:21; 2:28; 2:29; 3:4; 3:7; 3:10; 3:19; 3:21; 4:6; 4:8; 4:10; 4:17; 5:10; 5:14; 5:17; 5:19; 5:20)

Active or Passive

Some languages use 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 bolded:

- Active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- Passive: **The house** was built in 2010.

Translators whose languages do not use 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.

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)
[Verbs](#)

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 bolded 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 use active forms. Some languages use passive forms, and some do not. Some languages use passive forms only for certain purposes, and the passive form is not used for the same purposes in all of the languages that use 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

Then 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 ULT)

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.

When the men of the city arose early in the morning, and see, the altar of Baal **was torn down**. (Judges 6:28a ULT)

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 17:2a ULT)

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 your language would use a passive form for the same purpose as in the passage that you are translating, then use a passive form. If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies that 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.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21b ULT)

The king's servants gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

- (2) 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."

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

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.

- (3) Use a different verb in an active sentence.

A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21 ULT)

He **received** a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Abstract Nouns](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-order]]

(Go back to: [1 John 1:2](#); [1:4](#); [2:5](#); [2:12](#); [2:19](#); [2:28](#); [2:29](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:5](#); [3:8](#); [3:9](#); [4:7](#); [4:9](#); [4:12](#); [4:17](#); [4:18](#); [5:1](#); [5:4](#); [5:18](#))

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Assumed knowledge is whatever a speaker assumes his audience knows before he speaks and gives them some kind of information. The speaker does not give the audience this information because he believes that they already know it.

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?*

When the speaker does give the audience information, he can do so in two ways. The speaker gives explicit information in what he states directly. Implicit Information is what the speaker does not state directly because he expects his audience to be able to learn it from other things 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. Implicit information is information that he expects people to learn from what he says even though he does not state it directly.

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 from the biblical languages and is 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, it is helpful if you 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 8:19-20 ULT)

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

I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the **day of judgment** than for you.
(Matthew 11:21-22 ULT)

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 the people he was speaking to would be judged more severely than the people of Tyre and Sidon would be judged **because** they did not repent.

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

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 ULT)

The 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 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the people of Tyre and Sidon were very, very wicked. This can be stated explicitly.

>

At the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for **those cities of Tyre and Sidon, whose people were very wicked**, than it will be for you. or At

the day of judgment, It will be more tolerable for those **wicked cities, Tyre and Sidon**, than for you.

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

The 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 bread.

(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 ULT)

The implicit information is that Jesus himself is the Son of Man. Other implicit information is that if the scribe wanted to follow Jesus, then, like Jesus, he would have to live 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 ULT)

The 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.**
or:

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.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicitinfo\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [1 John 1:1](#); [1:3](#); [1:4](#); [1:10](#); [2:1](#); [2:7](#); [2:8](#); [2:10](#); [2:19](#); [2:20](#); [2:22](#); [2:23](#); [2:24](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:4](#); [3:6](#); [3:7](#); [3:8](#); [3:12](#); [3:20](#); [3:21](#); [3:22](#); [4:3](#); [4:15](#); [4:17](#); [4:18](#); [4:19](#); [5:1](#); [5:3](#); [5:6](#); [5:7](#); [5:9](#); [5:10](#); [5:14](#); [5:15](#); [5:16](#); [5:18](#); [5:20](#))

Connect – Contrast Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate a contrast relationship?*

Contrast Relationship

Description

A contrast relationship is a logical relationship in which one event or item is in contrast or opposition to another.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, many events did not happen as the people involved intended or expected them to happen. Sometimes people acted in ways that were not expected, whether good or bad. Often it was God at work, changing the events. These events were often pivotal. It is important that translators understand and communicate these contrasts. In English, contrast relationships are often indicated by the words “but,” “although,” “even though,” “though,” “yet,” or “however.”

Examples From OBS and the Bible

You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, **but** God used the evil for good! (Story 8 Frame 12 OBS)

Joseph’s brothers’ evil plan to sell Joseph is contrasted with God’s good plan to save many people. The word “but” marks the contrast.

For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)

Jesus contrasts the proud way that human leaders behave with the humble way that he behaves. The contrast is marked by the word “yet.”

The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)

It was unexpected that the Israelites, who had been slaves in Egypt, would be able to conquer and lay claim to the promised land.

[David] found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **However**, Solomon built the house for him. **But** the Most High does not live in houses made with hands. (Acts 7:46-48a ULT)

There are two contrasts here, marked with “however” and “but.” The first contrast shows that even though David asked to find a place for God’s house, it was Solomon who built it. Then there is another contrast because, even though Solomon built a house for God, God does not live in houses that people build.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses contrast relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.
- (2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.
- (3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.

For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)

For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Unlike that person**, I am among you as one who serves.

- (2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.

The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)

The hill country will also be yours. It is a forest, **but** you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders. They have chariots of iron, and they are strong, **but** you will drive out the Canaanites.

- (3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

[David] found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **However**, Solomon built the house for him. **But** the Most High does not live in houses made with hands. (Acts 7:46-48a ULT)

[David] found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **But** it was, Solomon, **not David**, who built the house for God. **Even though Solomon built him a house**, the Most High does not live in houses made with hands.

(Go back to: [1 John 1:6](#); [2:1](#); [2:4](#); [2:9](#); [2:20](#); [3:2](#); [4:20](#); [5:17](#))

Connect – Factual Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate factual conditions?*

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words, “if ... then.” Often, however, the word “then” is not stated.

Factual Conditions

Description

A Factual Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true in the speaker’s mind. In English, a sentence containing a Factual Condition can use the words “even though,” “since,” or “this being the case” to indicate that it is a factual condition and not a hypothetical condition.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not state something as a condition if it is certain or true. Translators from these languages may misunderstand the original languages and think that the condition is uncertain. This would lead to mistakes in their translations. Even if the translators understand that the condition is certain or true, the readers may misunderstand it. In this case, it would be best to translate it as a statement of fact rather than as a conditional statement.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

“**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!” (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you keep changing your mind? **If Yahweh is God**, follow him. But if Baal is God, then follow him.” Yet the people did not answer him a word. (1 Kings 18:21 ULT)

This sentence has the same construction as a hypothetical condition. The condition is “if Yahweh is God.” If that is true, then the Israelites should worship Yahweh. But the prophet Elijah does not question whether or not Yahweh is God. In fact, he is so certain that Yahweh is God that later in the passage he pours water all over his sacrifice. He is confident that God is real and that he will burn even an offering that is completely wet. Over and over again, the prophets taught that Yahweh is God, so the people should worship him. The people did not worship Yahweh, however, even though He is God. By putting the statement or instruction into the form of a Factual Condition, Elijah is trying to get the Israelites to understand more clearly what they should do.

“A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?” says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

Yahweh has said that he is a father and a master to Israel, so even though this sounds like a hypothetical condition because it begins with “if,” it is not hypothetical. This verse begins with the proverb that a son honors his father. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh. The other proverb in the verse says that a servant honors his master. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh, so it seems that he is not their master. But Yahweh is the master. Yahweh uses the form of a hypothetical condition to demonstrate that the Israelites are wrong. The second part of the condition that should occur naturally is not happening, even though the conditional statement is true.

Translation Strategies

If using the form of a hypothetical condition is confusing or would make the reader think that the speaker doubts what he is saying in the first part of the sentence, then use a statement instead. Words such as “since” or “you know that ...” or “it is true that ...” can be helpful to make the meaning clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

“**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!” (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

“**It is true that** Yahweh is God, so worship him!”

“A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?” says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

“A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **Since** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **Since** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?”

(Go back to: [1 John 2:29](#); [4:11](#); [5:9](#); [5:15](#))

Connect – Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the reason-result relationship?*

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

A reason-and-result relationship is a logical relationship in which one event is the **reason** or cause for another event. The second event, then, is the **result** of the first event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

A reason-and-result relationship can look forward – “I did Y because I wanted X to happen.” But usually it is looking backward – “X happened, and so I did Y.” Also, it is possible to state the reason either before or after the result. Many languages have a preferred order for the reason and the result, and it will be confusing for the reader if they are in the opposite order. Common words used to indicate a reason-and-result relationship in English are “because,” “so,” “therefore,” and “for.” Some of these words can also be used to indicate a goal relationship, so translators need to be aware of the difference between a goal relationship and a reason-and-result relationship. It is necessary for translators to understand how the two events are connected, and then communicate them clearly in their language.

If the reason and result are stated in different verses, it is still possible to put them in a different order. If you change the order of the verses, then put the verse numbers together at the beginning of the group of verses that were rearranged like this: 1-2. This is called a [Verse Bridge](#).

Examples From OBS and the Bible

The Jews were amazed, **because** Saul had tried to kill believers, and now he believed in Jesus!
(Story 46 Frame 6 OBS)

The **reason** is the change in Saul – that he had tried to kill people who believed in Jesus, and now he himself believed in Jesus. The **result** is that the Jews were amazed. “Because” connects the two ideas and indicates that what follows it is a reason.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves.
(Matthew 8:24a ULT)

The **reason** is the great storm, and the **result** is that the boat was covered with the waves. The two events are connected by “so that.” Notice that the term “so that” often indicates a goal relationship, but here the relationship is reason-and-result. This is because the sea cannot think and therefore does not have a goal.

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

The **result** is that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The **reason** is because he rested on the seventh day from his work.

“Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20b ULT)

The **result** is that the poor are blessed. The **reason** is that the kingdom of God is theirs.

But he raised up in their place their sons that Joshua circumcised, being uncircumcised, **because** they had not been circumcised on the way. (Joshua 5:7 ULT)

The **result** is that Joshua circumcised the boys and men who had been born in the wilderness. The **reason** was that they had not been circumcised while they were journeying.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses reason-and-result relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the order of the clauses is confusing for the reader, then change the order.
- (2) If the relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a more clear connecting word.
- (3) If it is more clear to put a connecting word in the clause that does not have one, then do so.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

(1) God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done in his creation. **That is why** he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 ULT)

- (1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.
- (2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.
- (3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

- (1) Behold, the boat was covered with the waves **because** a great storm arose on the sea.
- (2) Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **with the result that** the boat was covered with the waves.
- (3) Behold, **because** a great storm arose on the sea, the boat was covered with the waves.

Since he was not able to find out anything for certain because of the noise, he ordered that he be brought into the fortress. (Acts 21:34b ULT)

- (1) The captain ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress, **because** he could not tell anything because of all the noise.
- (2) **Because** the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.
- (3) The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, **so** he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

(Go back to: [1 John 1:3](#); [2:3](#); [2:8](#); [2:11](#); [2:27](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:14](#); [4:8](#); [4:17](#); [4:18](#); [4:19](#); [5:3](#))

Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each express the meaning of “not.” Double negatives mean very different things in different languages. To translate sentences that have double negatives accurately and clearly, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express this idea in your language.

This page answers the question: *What are double negatives?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

Description

Negative words are words that have in them the meaning “not.” Examples in English are “no,” “not,” “none,” “no one,” “nothing,” “nowhere,” “never,” “nor,” “neither,” and “without.” Also, some words have prefixes or suffixes that mean “not,” such as the bolded parts of these words: “**un**happy,” “**im**possible,” and “**useless**.” Some other kinds of words also have a negative meaning, such as “lack” or “reject,” or even “fight” or “evil.”

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each have a negative meaning.

We did this **not** because we have **no** authority ... (2 Thessalonians 3:9a ULT)

And this was not done without an oath! (Hebrews 7:20a ULT)

Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **un**punished. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

- In some languages, such as Spanish, a double negative emphasizes the negative. The Spanish sentence, “No vi a nadie,” literally says “I did not see no one.” It has both the word ‘no’ next to the verb and ‘nadie,’ which means “no one.” The two negatives are seen as in agreement with each other, and the sentence means, “I did not see anyone.”
- In some languages, a second negative cancels the first one, creating a positive sentence. So, “He is not unintelligent” means “He is intelligent.”
- In some languages the double negative creates a positive sentence, but it is a weak statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” means, “He is somewhat intelligent.”
- In some languages, such as the languages of the Bible, the double negative can create a positive sentence, and often strengthens the statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” can mean “He is intelligent” or “He is very intelligent.”

To translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples From the Bible

... in order **not** to be **un**fruitful. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

This means “so that they will be fruitful.”

All things were made through him and **without** him there was **not** one thing made that has been made. (John 1:3 ULT)

By using a double negative, John emphasized that the Son of God created absolutely everything. The double negative makes a stronger statement than the simple positive.

Translation Strategies

If double negatives are natural and are used to express the positive in your language, consider using them. Otherwise, you could consider these strategies:

- (1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is simply to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.
- (2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a strong positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives and put in a strengthening word or phrase such as “very” or “surely” or “absolutely.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is simply to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.

For we do **not** have a high priest who **cannot** feel sympathy for our weaknesses. (Hebrews 4:15a ULT)

“For we have a high priest who can feel sympathy for our weaknesses.”

... in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

“... so that they may be fruitful.”

- (2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a strong positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives and put in a strengthening word or phrase such as “very” or “surely” or “absolutely.”

Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **unpunished**. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

“Be sure of this—wicked people will **certainly** be punished.”

All things were made through him and **without** him there was **not** one thing made that has been made. (John 1:3 ULT)

“All things were made through him. He made **absolutely** everything that has been made.”

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Verbs](#)

(Go back to: [1 John 1:5](#); [2:21](#); [2:22](#); [3:10](#); [4:20](#))

Doublet

Description

We are using the word “doublet” to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word “and.” Unlike [Hendiadys](#), in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but only in certain situations, so a doublet might not make sense in their language in some verses. People might think that the verse is describing two ideas or actions, when it is only describing one. In this case, translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning expressed by the doublet.

Examples From the Bible

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

The bolded words mean the same thing. Together they mean the people were spread out.

He attacked two men **more righteous** and **better** than himself. (1 Kings 2:32b ULT)

This means that they were “much more righteous” than he was.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

This means that they had decided to lie, which is another way of saying that they intended to deceive people.

... like of a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any defect—not even one.

Translation Strategies

If a doublet would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, consider these strategies.

- (1) Translate only one of the words or phrases.
- (2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words or phrases and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”
- (3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate only one of the words.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

“You have decided to prepare **false** things to say.”

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

“He has one people **very spread out**.”

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

... like a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

• English can emphasize this with “any” and “at all.”

“... like a lamb **without any blemish at all**.”

(Go back to: [1 John 3:6](#); [3:18](#))

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis¹ occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

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

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor 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. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will sinners stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

[1] English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (...) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

Two Types of Ellipsis

A Relative Ellipsis happens when the reader has to supply the omitted word or words from the context. Usually the word is in the previous sentence, as in the example above.

An Absolute Ellipsis happens when the omitted word or words are not in the context, but the phrases are common enough in the language that the reader is expected to supply what is missing from this common usage or from the nature of the situation.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers who see incomplete sentences or phrases may not know that there is information missing that the writer expects them to fill in. Or readers may understand that there is information missing, but they may not know what information is missing because they do not know the original biblical language, culture, or situation as the original readers did. In this case, they may fill in the wrong information. Or readers may misunderstand the ellipsis if they do not use ellipsis in the same way in their language.

Examples From the Bible

Relative Ellipsis

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

The writer wants his words to be few and to make good poetry. The full sentence with the information filled in would be:

This page answers the question: *What is ellipsis ?* ([^1])
In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**walk** not as unwise but **walk** as wise,

Absolute Ellipsis

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

It seems that 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. The complete sentence would be:

“Lord, **I want you to heal me so** that I might receive my sight.”

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:4 ULT)

The writer assumes that the reader will recognize this common form of a blessing or wish, so he does not need to include the full sentence, which would be:

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. **May you receive** grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

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.

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinner in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinner will not stand in the assembly** of the righteous.

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

Then when the 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.”

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

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

(Go back to: [1 John 2:15](#); [2:17](#); [2:19](#); [2:21](#); [3:10](#); [3:12](#); [3:14](#); [3:18](#); [3:24](#); [4:13](#); [4:15](#); [5:9](#))

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

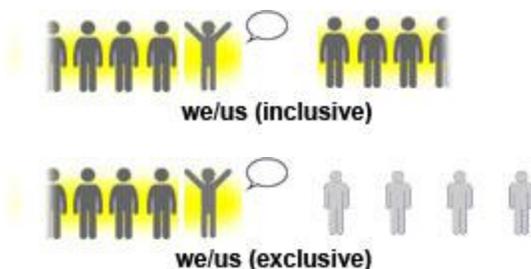
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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.

This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)

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." If your language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of "we," then you will need to understand what the speaker meant so that you can decide which form of "we" to use.

Examples From the Bible

Exclusive

They said, "There are not more than five loaves of bread and two fish with us—unless **we** go and buy food for all these people." (Luke 9:13 ULT)

In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food. They were speaking to Jesus, but Jesus was not going to buy food. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" would use the **exclusive** form there.

We have seen it, and **we** bear witness to it. **We** are announcing to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to **us**. (1 John 1:2 ULT)

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

Inclusive

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 2:15b ULT)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us," they were including the people they were speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Now it happened that on one of those days, he indeed got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let **us** go over to the other side of the lake." So they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULT)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[When Masculine Words Include Women](#)

(Go back to: [1 John 1:1](#); [1:2](#); [1:3](#); [1:4](#); [1:5](#); [4:6](#); [4:9](#); [4:14](#); [4:16](#))

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 languages have other forms that refer to three or four people.

You may also want to watch the video at https://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 https://ufw.io/figs_youform.

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- Forms of “You” – Formal or Informal

(Go back to: [1 John 1:2; 1:4](#))

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-yousingular]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-youdual]]

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

Can a **man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?
So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife;**
the one who touches her will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

The phrases in bold above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

Yahweh gives favor to a **good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

The phrase "a good man" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who is good. The phrase "a man who makes evil plans" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.
- (2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.
- (3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."
- (4) Use the plural form, as in "people."

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the word “the” in the noun phrase.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

“Yahweh gives favor to **the good man**, but he condemns **the man who makes evil plans**.” (Proverbs 12:2)

(2) Use the word “a” in the noun phrase.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **a man** who refuses to sell grain.”

(3) Use the word “any,” as in “any person” or “anyone.”

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **any man** who refuses to sell grain.”

(4) Use the plural form, as in “people” (or in this sentence, “men”).

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **men** who refuse to sell grain”

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

“People curse **whoever** refuses to sell grain.”

Next we recommend you learn about:

[When Masculine Words Include Women](#)

(Go back to: [1 John 2:10](#); [2:17](#); [2:22](#))

Hendiadys

Description

When a speaker expresses a single idea by using two words that are connected with “and,” it is called a hendiadys. In a hendiadys, the two words work together. Usually one of the words is the primary idea and the other word further describes the primary one.

This page answers the question: *What is hendiadys and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]

... his own **kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

Though “kingdom” and “glory” are both nouns, “glory” actually tells what kind of kingdom it is: it is a **kingdom of glory** or a **glorious kingdom**.

Two phrases connected by “and” can also be a hendiadys when they refer to a single person, thing, or event.

while we look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

Titus 2:13 contains two hendiadyses. “The blessed hope” and “appearing of the glory” refer to the same thing and serve to strengthen the idea that the return of Jesus Christ is greatly anticipated and wonderful. Also, “our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” refer to one person, not two.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Often a hendiadys contains an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that the second word is further describing the first one.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that only one person or thing is meant, not two.

Examples From the Bible

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

“A mouth” and “wisdom” are nouns, but in this figure of speech “wisdom” describes what comes from the mouth.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

“Willing” and “obedient” are adjectives, but “willing” describes “obedient.”

Translation Strategies

If the hendiadys would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
- (2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
- (3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

(5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

For I will give you **wise words** ...

Walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own glorious kingdom**.

(2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

for I will give you **words of wisdom**.

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own kingdom of glory**.

(3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

If you are **willingly obedient** ...

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

The adjective "obedient" can be substituted with the verb "obey."

if you **obey willingly** ...

(4) and (5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

We look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

The noun "glory" can be changed to the adjective "glorious" to make it clear that Jesus' appearing is what we hope for. Also, "Jesus Christ" can be moved to the front of the phrase and "great God and Savior" put into a relative clause that describes the one person, Jesus Christ.

We look forward to receiving **what we are longing for, the blessed and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, who is our great God and Savior**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Doublet](#)

(Go back to: [1 John 3:18](#); [5:20](#))

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the 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.

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Translate Unknowns](#)

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.

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

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 first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

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

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

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 **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

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

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

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 execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

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.

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying 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.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like 'drawn out')**, and she said, "For out of the water I drew him."

(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 **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

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.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

^[1] Most versions say "Saul" here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called "Paul."

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

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;

(5) 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."

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

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;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

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

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate]]

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 John](#); [1 John 3:12](#))

Hyperbole

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.

The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.

The speaker means this as a **hyperbole** if he wants to say that it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount or frequency of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy about it.

This page answers the question: *What are hyperboles? What are generalizations? How can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

They will not leave **stone upon stone in you**. (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians**. (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame**, but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words**. (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like "all," "always," "none," or "never," it does not necessarily mean **exactly** "all," "always," "none," or "never." It simply means "most," "most of the time," "hardly any," or "rarely."

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.

If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed ... (Mark 9:43a ULT)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should **do whatever extreme things** we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches. (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

- Do not assume that something is an exaggeration just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”
 - > Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways
 - > and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
- (4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame. (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)

In general, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame

When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do**, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

Almost all the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

or:

Many of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(Go back to: [1 John 2:27](#))

Hypothetical Situations

Consider these phrases: “If the sun stopped shining ...” “What if the sun stopped shining ...” “Suppose the sun stopped shining ...” and “If only the sun had not stopped shining.” We use such expressions to set up hypothetical situations, imagining what might have happened or what could happen in the future but probably will not. We also use them to express regret or wishes. Hypothetical expressions occur often in the Bible. You (the translator) need to translate them in a way that people will know that the event did not actually happen and so that they will understand why the event was imagined.

This page answers the question: *What is a hypothetical situation?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

Description

Hypothetical situations are situations that are not real. They can be in the past, present, or future. Hypothetical situations in the past and present have not happened, are not happening now, and ones in the future are not expected to happen.

People sometimes tell about conditions and what would happen if those conditions were met, but they know that these things have not happened or probably will not happen. (The conditions comprise a phrase that starts with “if.”)

- If he had lived to be 100 years old, he would have seen his grandson’s grandson. (But he did not.)
- If he lived to be 100 years old, he would still be alive today. (But he is not.)
- If he lives to be 100 years old, he will see his grandson’s grandson. (But he probably will not.)

People sometimes express wishes about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- I wish he had come.
- I wish he were here.
- I wish he would come.

People sometimes express regrets about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- If only he had come.
- If only he were here.
- If only he would come.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to recognize the different kinds of hypothetical situations in the Bible and understand that they are unreal.
- Translators need to know their own language’s ways of talking about different kinds of hypothetical situations.

Examples From the Bible

Hypothetical Situations in the Past

“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.” (Matthew 11:21 ULT)

Here in Matthew 11:21, Jesus said that **if** the people living in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon had been able to see the miracles that he performed, they would have repented long ago. The people of Tyre and Sidon did not actually see his miracles, and they did not repent. He said this to rebuke the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida who had seen his miracles and yet did not repent.

Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, **if you had been here, my brother would not have died.**” (John 11:21 ULT)

Martha said this to express her wish that Jesus would have come sooner so that her brother would not have died. But Jesus did not come sooner and her brother did die.

Hypothetical Situations in the Present

And no man puts new wine into old wineskins. **But if he did do that, the new wine would burst the wineskins, and it would be spilled out, and the wineskins would be destroyed.** (Luke 5:37 ULT)

Jesus told about what would happen if a person were to put new wine into old wineskins. But no one would do that. He used this imaginary situation as an example to show that there are times when it is unwise to mix new things with old things. He did this so that people could understand why his disciples were not fasting as people traditionally did.

Jesus said to them, “What man would there be among you, who, **if he had just one sheep, and if this sheep fell into a deep hole on the Sabbath, would not grasp hold of it and lift it out?**” (Matthew 12:11 ULT)

Jesus asked the religious leaders what they would do on the Sabbath if one of their sheep fell into a hole. He was not saying that their sheep would fall into a hole. He used this imaginary situation to show them that they were wrong to judge him for healing people on the Sabbath.

Hypothetical Situation in the Future

Unless those days are shortened, no flesh would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 ULT)

Jesus was talking about a future time when very bad things would happen. He told what would happen if those days of trouble were to last a long time. He did this to show how bad those days will be—so bad that if they lasted a long time, no one would be saved. But then he clarified that God will shorten those days of trouble so that the elect (those he has chosen) will be saved.

Expressing Emotion About a Hypothetical Situation

People sometimes talk about hypothetical situations in order to express regrets and wishes. Regrets are about the past and wishes are about the present and future.

The Israelites said to them, “**If only we had died by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt when we were sitting by the pots of meat and were eating bread to the full.** For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill our whole community with hunger.” (Exodus 16:3 ULT)

Here the Israelites were afraid that they would have to suffer and die of hunger in the wilderness, and so they wished that they had stayed in Egypt and died there with full stomachs. They were complaining, expressing regret that this had not happened.

I know what you have done, and that you are neither cold nor hot. **I wish that you were either cold or hot!** (Revelation 3:15 ULT)

Jesus wished that the people were either hot or cold, but they are neither. He was rebuking them, expressing anger at this.

Translation Strategies

Find out how people speaking your language show:

- that something could have happened, but did not.
- that something could be true now, but is not.
- that something could happen in the future, but will not unless something changes.
- that they wish for something, but it does not happen.
- that they regret that something did not happen.

Use your language's ways of showing these kinds of things.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_hypo.

(Go back to: 1 John 1:6; 1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 1:10; 2:1; 2:4; 2:5; 2:9; 2:10; 2:15; 2:19; 2:24; 3:17; 3:20; 3:21; 4:12; 4:15; 4:20; 5:16)

Idiom

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 teasing me by telling me something that is not true.”)
- 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.”)

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

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 **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

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 would **come under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

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

Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

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

Purpose: An idiom is probably created in a culture 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 ULT)

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

█ The children of Israel went out **with a high hand**. (Exodus 14:8b ASV)

This means, “The Israelites went out defiantly.”

█ the one who **lifts up my head** (Psalm 3:3b ULT)

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.

█ Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

█ Look, we all **belong to the same nation**.

█ Then he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

█ He started to travel to Jerusalem, **determined to reach it**.

█ I am not worthy that you would come **under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

█ I am not worthy that you should enter **my house**.

- (2) Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

█ Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

█ **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.

█ My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)

█ I am crying my **eyes out**

(Go back to: 1 John 1:1; 2:3; 2:4; 2:5; 2:7; 2:8; 2:13; 2:14; 2:17; 2:18; 2:24; 3:8; 3:10; 3:11; 3:16; 3:19; 3:22; 3:24; 4:1; 4:2; 4:3; 4:4; 4:5; 4:6; 4:7; 4:9; 4:10; 4:13; 4:16; 4:17; 5:2; 5:3; 5:8; 5:9; 5:14; 5:15; 5:18; 5:19; 5:21)

Metaphor

Description

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of one thing as if it were a different thing because he wants people to think about how those two things are alike.

For example, someone might say, “The girl I love is a red rose.”

A girl and a rose are very different things, but the speaker considers that they are alike in some way. The hearer’s task is to understand in what way they are alike.

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-simile\]\]](#)

The Parts of a Metaphor

The example above shows us that a metaphor has three parts. In this metaphor, the speaker is talking about “the girl I love.” This is the **Topic**. The speaker wants the hearer to think about what is similar between her and “a red rose.” The red rose is the **Image** to which he compares the girl. Most probably, he wants the hearer to consider that they are both beautiful. This is the **Idea** that the girl and the rose both share, and so we may also call it the **Point of Comparison**.

Every metaphor has three parts:

- The **Topic**, the item being immediately discussed by the writer/speaker.
- The **Image**, the physical item (object, event, action, etc.) which the speaker uses to describe the topic.
- The **Idea**, the abstract concept or quality that the physical **Image** brings to the mind of the hearer when he thinks of how the **Image** and the **Topic** are similar. Often, the **Idea** of a metaphor is not explicitly stated in the Bible, but it is only implied from the context. The hearer or reader usually needs to think of the **Idea** himself.

Using these terms, we can say that a metaphor is a figure of speech that uses a physical **Image** to apply an abstract **Idea** to the speaker’s **Topic**.

Usually, a writer or speaker uses a metaphor in order to express something about a **Topic**, with at least one **Point of Comparison (Idea)** between the **Topic** and the **Image**. Often in metaphors, the **Topic** and the **Image** are explicitly stated, but the **Idea** is only implied. The writer/speaker often uses a metaphor in order to invite the readers/listeners to think about the similarity between the **Topic** and the **Image** and to figure out for themselves the **Idea** that is being communicated.

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

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. When a metaphor has become very common in a language, often it becomes a “passive” metaphor, in contrast to uncommon metaphors, which we describe as being “active.” Passive metaphors and active metaphors each present a different kind of translation problem, which we will discuss below.

Passive Metaphors

A passive 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. Linguists often call these “dead metaphors.” Passive metaphors are extremely common. Examples in English include the terms “table **leg**,” “family **tree**,” “book **leaf**” (meaning a page

in a book), or the word “crane” (meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads). English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples of passive metaphors in Biblical Hebrew include using the word “hand” to represent “power,” using the word “face” to represent “presence,” and speaking of emotions or moral qualities as if they were “clothing.”

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” (the Image) often represents the concepts of “more” or “better” (the Idea). 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 temperature is going **down**,” and “I am feeling very **low**.”

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 body parts, or as if they were objects that could be seen or held, 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 these as metaphorical expressions or figures of speech, 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.

When translating something that is a passive metaphor into another language, do not treat it as a metaphor. Instead, just use the best expression for that thing or concept in the target language.

Active Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept, or one thing for another thing. Metaphors make people think about how the one thing is like the other thing, because in most ways the two things are very different. People also easily recognize these metaphors as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. For example,

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

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:

And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox ...” (Luke 13:32a ULT)

Here, “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was intending for them to apply certain characteristics of a fox to Herod. They probably understood that Jesus intended to communicate that Herod was evil, either in a cunning way or as someone who was destructive, murderous, or who took things that did not belong to him, or all of these.

Active metaphors require the translator's special care to make a correct translation. To do so, you need to understand the parts of a metaphor and how they work together to produce meaning.

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 ULT)

In this metaphor, Jesus called himself the bread of life. The **Topic** is "I" (meaning Jesus himself) and the **Image** is "bread." Bread was the primary food that people ate in that place and time. The similarity between bread and Jesus is that people need both to live. Just as people need to eat food in order to have physical life, people need to trust in Jesus in order to have eternal life. The **Idea** of the metaphor is "life." In this case, Jesus stated the central Idea of the metaphor, but often the Idea is only implied.

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 (the **Topic**) has a particular quality (the **Idea**) or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about the **Topic** as they would feel about the **Image**.

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 wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.
- People may think that they understand the metaphor, but they do not. This can happen when they apply points of comparison from their own culture, rather than from the biblical culture.

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 4:1q ULT)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria ("you," the Topic) as if they were cows (the Image). Amos does not say what similarity(s) he intends between these women and cows. He wants the reader to think of them, and he fully expects that readers from his culture will easily do so. From the context, we can see that he means that the women are like cows in that they are fat and interested only in feeding themselves. If we were to apply similarities from a different culture, such as that cows are sacred and should be worshiped, we would get the wrong meaning from this verse.

NOTE: Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows. He speaks to them as human beings.

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 ULT)

The example above has two related metaphors. The Topic(s) are “we” and “you,” and the Image(s) are “clay” and “potter.” The similarity between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish out of their material. The potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people. The Idea being expressed by the comparison between the potter’s clay and “us” is that **neither the clay nor God’s people have a right to complain about what they are becoming.**

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 did not take bread.”
(Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

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 would have understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it in the right way.

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

- (1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, it is a passive metaphor), then express the **Idea** in the simplest way preferred by your language.
- (2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible.** 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 would not know the intended similarity (the **Idea**) between the topic and the image, then state it 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 in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, a passive metaphor), then express the Idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.

Then, see, one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **fell at his feet**. (Mark 5:22 ULT)

Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **immediately bowed down in front of him**.

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

But Jesus said to them, "He wrote this commandment to you because of your **hardness of heart**." (Mark 10:5 ULT)

It was because of your **hard hearts** that he wrote you this law.

We made no change to this one, but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.

(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."

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 ULT)

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.

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14b ULT)

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.

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 ULT)

"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."

(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.)

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

Yahweh lives; **He is my rock**. May he be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity between the Topic and the Image, then state it clearly.

Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

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.

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14 ULT)

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**.

(8) If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)

I will make you to 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.

(Go back to: [1 John 1:1](#); [1:5](#); [1:6](#); [1:7](#); [1:8](#); [1:9](#); [1:10](#); [2:1](#); [2:4](#); [2:5](#); [2:6](#); [2:8](#); [2:9](#); [2:10](#); [2:11](#); [2:12](#); [2:13](#); [2:14](#); [2:17](#); [2:18](#); [2:19](#); [2:20](#); [2:24](#); [2:25](#); [2:26](#); [2:27](#); [2:28](#); [2:29](#); [3:1](#); [3:5](#); [3:6](#); [3:7](#); [3:9](#); [3:10](#); [3:13](#); [3:14](#); [3:15](#); [3:16](#); [3:17](#); [3:18](#); [3:19](#); [3:20](#); [3:22](#); [3:24](#); [4:4](#); [4:7](#); [4:8](#); [4:9](#); [4:12](#); [4:13](#); [4:15](#); [4:16](#); [4:18](#); [4:20](#); [4:21](#); [5:1](#); [5:2](#); [5:3](#); [5:4](#); [5:5](#); [5:6](#); [5:10](#); [5:11](#); [5:12](#); [5:13](#); [5:16](#); [5:17](#); [5:18](#); [5:19](#); [5:20](#); [5:21](#))

Metonymy

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) 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 that it is associated with.

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

... and **the blood** of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7b ULT)

The blood represents Christ's death.

And 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 ULT)

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

- as 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 familiar with 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 to him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

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 a king who would follow King David.

Then immediately his **mouth** was opened (Luke 1:64a ULT)

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 3:7b ULT)

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.

And he took the cup in the same way after the supper, saying, “**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” (Luke 22:20 ULT)

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.”

This verse also contains a second metonym: The cup, (representing the wine it contains) also represents the new covenant made with the blood Christ shed for us.

- (2) Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

The Lord God will give him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

“The Lord God will give him **the kingly authority** of his father, David.”
or:
“The Lord God will **make him king** like his ancestor, King David.”

Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

“Who warned you to flee from God’s coming **punishment**?”

To learn about some common metonymies, see [Biblical Imagery – Common Metonymies](#).

(Go back to: [1 John 1:2](#); [1:7](#); [1:10](#); [2:2](#); [2:5](#); [2:7](#); [2:8](#); [2:12](#); [2:13](#); [2:14](#); [2:15](#); [2:16](#); [2:17](#); [2:21](#); [3:1](#); [3:12](#); [3:13](#); [3:17](#); [3:18](#); [3:19](#); [3:23](#); [4:1](#); [4:2](#); [4:3](#); [4:4](#); [4:5](#); [4:6](#); [4:9](#); [4:14](#); [4:17](#); [5:4](#); [5:5](#); [5:6](#); [5:8](#); [5:13](#); [5:18](#); [5:19](#); [5:20](#))

Nominal Adjectives

Description

In some languages an adjective can be used to refer to a class of things that the adjective describes. When it does, it acts like a noun. For example, the word “rich” is an adjective. Here are two sentences that show that “rich” is an adjective.

The rich man had huge numbers of flocks and herds. (2 Samuel 12:2 ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes before the word “man” and describes “man.”

He will not be rich; his wealth will not last. (Job 15:29a ULT)

The adjective “rich” comes after the verb “be” and describes “He.”

Here is a sentence that shows that “rich” can also function as a noun.

The rich must not give more than the half shekel, and **the poor** must not give less. (Exodus 30:15b ULT)

In Exodus 30:15, the word “rich” acts as a noun in the phrase “the rich,” and it refers to rich people. The word “poor” also acts as a noun and refers to poor people.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate adjectives that act like nouns?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Many times in the Bible adjectives are used as nouns to describe a group of people.
- Some languages do not use adjectives in this way.
- Readers of these languages may think that the text is talking about one particular person when it is really talking about the group of people whom the adjective describes.

Examples From the Bible

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **the righteous**. (Psalms 125:3a ULT)

“The righteous” here are people who are righteous, not one particular righteous person.

Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

“The meek” here are all people who are meek, not one particular meek person.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses adjectives as nouns to refer to a class of people, consider using the adjectives in this way. If it would sound strange, or if the meaning would be unclear or wrong, here is another option:

(1) Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the adjective with a plural form of the noun that the adjective describes.

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **the righteous**. (Psalms 125:3a ULT)

The scepter of wickedness must not rule in the land of **righteous people**.

Blessed are **the meek**. (Matthew 5:5a ULT)

Blessed are **people who are meek**.

(Go back to: [1 John 2:1](#); [2:7](#); [2:13](#); [2:14](#); [2:20](#); [3:2](#); [3:12](#); [3:21](#); [3:22](#); [4:1](#); [4:7](#); [4:11](#); [5:18](#); [5:20](#))

Parallelism

Description

Parallelism is a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "**doublet**" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Yahweh sees everything a person does
and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The first phrase and the second phrase mean the same thing. There are three ideas that are the same between these two phrases. “Sees” corresponds to “watches,” “everything...does” corresponds to “all the paths...takes,” and “a person” corresponds to “he.”

Praise Yahweh, all you nations;
exalt him, all you peoples! (Psalm 117:1 ULT)

Both parts of this verse tell people everywhere to praise Yahweh. The words ‘Praise’ and ‘exalt’ mean the same thing. The words ‘Yahweh’ and ‘him’ refer to the same person. The terms ‘all you nations’ and ‘all you peoples’ refer to the same people.

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people,
and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2b ULT)

The two parts of this verse say that Yahweh has a serious disagreement with his people, Israel. These are not two different disagreements or two different groups of people.

Translation Strategies

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
- (2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”
- (3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely,” or “all.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.

Until now you have deceived me with your lies.
Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The phrase “all the paths he takes” is a metaphor for “all he does.”

Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.
For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULT)

This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.

(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)
 Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

You have certainly made him to rule over everything that you have created.

(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)
 All you have done is lie to me.

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)
 Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.

Next we recommend you learn about:
[Personification](#)

(Go back to: [1 John 1:1](#); [1:2](#); [1:5](#); [1:6](#); [1:9](#); [2:4](#); [2:11](#); [2:14](#); [2:15](#); [2:28](#); [3:19](#); [3:20](#))

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 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

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

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

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

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 6:24b ULT)

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 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were 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 the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
- (2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
- (3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) – God speaks of sin as if it were 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**.

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) – This can be translated with the word “as.”

Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person..**

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) – The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just 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) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-apostrophe]]
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part1]]

(Go back to: [1 John 3:15](#); [4:4](#); [4:18](#))

Possession

Description

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word “**of**,” by using **an apostrophe and the letter “s”**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my grandfather’s house
- **his** house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership – Someone owns something.
 - My clothes – The clothes that I own
- Social Relationship – Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
 - my mother – the woman who gave birth to me, or the woman who cared for me
 - my teacher – the person who teaches me
- Association – A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
 - David’s sickness – the sickness that David is experiencing
 - the fear of the Lord – the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents – Something has something in it.
 - a bag of clothes – a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
 - my head – the head that is part of my body
 - the roof of a house – the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession**. This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language.

This page answers the question: *What is possession and how can I translate phrases that show it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]
 [[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences]]

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.
- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

Ownership – In the example below, the son owned the money.

█ The younger son ... wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

Social Relationship – In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

█ Then **the disciples of John** came to him. (Matthew 9:14a ULT)

Association – In the example below, the gospel is the message associated with Paul because he preaches it.

█ Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to **my gospel**, (2 Timothy 2:8 ULT)

Material – In the example below, the material used for making the crowns was gold.

█ On their heads were something like **crowns of gold**. (Revelation 9:7b)

Contents – In the example below, the cup has water in it.

█ For whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Part of a whole – In the example below, the door was a part of the palace.

█ But Uriah slept at **the door of the king's palace**. (2 Samuel 11:9a ULT)

Part of a group – In the example below, “us” refers to the whole group and “each one” refers to the individual members.

█ Now to **each one of us** grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7 ULT)

Events and Possession

Sometimes one or both of the nouns is an abstract noun that refers to an event or action. In the examples below, the abstract nouns are in **bold** print. These are just some of the relationships that are possible between two nouns when one of them refers to an event.

Subject – Sometimes the word after “of” tells who would do the action named by the first noun. In the example below, **John baptized people**.

█ The **baptism of John**, was it from heaven or from men? Answer me. (Mark 11:30)

In the example below, **Christ loves us**.

█ Who will separate us from the **love of Christ**? (Romans 8:35)

Object – Sometimes the word after “of” tells who or what something would happen to. In the example below, **people love money**.

For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10a ULT)

Instrument – Sometimes the word after “of” tells how something would happen. In the example below, God would **punish people by sending enemies to attack them with swords**.

Then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings **the punishment of the sword**. (Job 19:29a ULT)

Representation – In the example below, John was baptizing people who were repenting of their sins. They were being baptized to show that they were repenting. Their **baptism represented their repentance**.

John came, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching **a baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4 ULT)

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

- (1) Read the surrounding verses to see if they help you to understand the relationship between the two nouns.
- (2) Read the verse in the UST. Sometimes it shows the relationship clearly.
- (3) See what the notes say about it.

Translation Strategies

If possession would be a natural way to show a particular relationship between two nouns, consider using it. If it would be strange or hard to understand, consider these.

- (1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.
- (2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.
- (3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.

On their heads were something like **crowns of gold**. (Revelation 9:7b)

“On their heads were **gold crowns**”

- (2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.

Whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink ... will not lose his reward.

Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath**. (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)

Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**.
or:

Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

- (3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb. (In the example below, there are two possession relationships, “punishment of Yahweh” and “your God.”)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God**. (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.

You will only observe and see the **punishment of the wicked**. (Psalms 91:8 ULT)

You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.

You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)

You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you**.

(Go back to: [1 John 1:1](#); [2:5](#); [2:15](#); [2:17](#); [2:23](#); [3:17](#); [3:20](#); [3:21](#); [4:9](#); [5:3](#))

Pronouns – When to Use Them

Description

When we talk or write, we use pronouns to refer to people or things without always having to repeat the noun or name. Usually, the first time we refer to someone in a story, we use a descriptive phrase or a name. The next time we might refer to that person with a simple noun or by name. After that we might refer to him simply with a pronoun as long as we think that our listeners will be able to understand easily to whom the pronoun refers.

This page answers the question: *How do I decide whether or not to use a pronoun?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. **This man** came to Jesus at night. Jesus replied and said to **him** ... (John 3:1, 2a, 3a ULT)

In John 3, Nicodemus is first referred to with noun phrases and his name. Then he is referred to with the noun phrase “this man.” Then he is referred to with the pronoun “him.”

Each language has its rules and exceptions to this usual way of referring to people and things.

- In some languages, the first time something is referred to in a paragraph or chapter, it is referred to with a noun rather than a pronoun.
- The main character is the person whom a story is about. In some languages, after a main character is introduced in a story, he is usually referred to with a pronoun. Some languages have special pronouns that refer only to the main character.
- In some languages, marking on the verb helps people know who the subject is. (See [Verbs](#).) In some of these languages, listeners rely on this marking to help them understand who the subject is. Speakers will use a pronoun, noun phrase, or proper name only when they want either to emphasize or to clarify who the subject is.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- If translators use a pronoun at the wrong time for their language, readers might not know about whom the writer is talking.
- If translators too frequently refer to a main character by name, listeners of some languages might not realize that the person is a main character, or they might think that there is a new character with the same name.
- If translators use pronouns, nouns, or names at the wrong time, people might think that there is some special emphasis on the person or thing to which it refers.

Examples From the Bible

The example below occurs at the beginning of a chapter. In some languages it might not be clear to whom the pronouns refer.

Then Jesus entered into the synagogue again, and there was a man who had a withered hand. Some people watched **him** closely to see if **he** would heal **him** on the Sabbath so that they might accuse **him**. (Mark 3:1-2 ULT)

In the example below, two men are named in the first sentence. It might not be clear whom “he” in the second sentence refers to.

Now after some days had passed, **King Agrippa** and Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay their respects to **Festus**. After **he** had been there for many days, Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul. (Acts 25:13-14)

Jesus is the main character of the book of Matthew, but in the verses below he is referred to four times by name. This may lead speakers of some languages to think that Jesus is not the main character. Or it might lead them to think that there is more than one person named Jesus in this story. Or it might lead them to think that there is some kind of emphasis on him, even though there is no emphasis.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **Jesus** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.
- (2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.

Again **he** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **him** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:1-2)

Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

- (2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **Jesus** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

This may be translated as:

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **him**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **he** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **he** left from there and went into their synagogue.

(Go back to: 1 John 1:1; 1:2; 1:4; 1:5; 1:6; 1:7; 1:9; 1:10; 2:2; 2:3; 2:4; 2:5; 2:6; 2:8; 2:12; 2:25; 2:27; 2:28; 2:29; 3:1; 3:2; 3:3; 3:5; 3:6; 3:7; 3:9; 3:16; 3:19; 3:23; 3:24; 4:3; 4:4; 4:5; 4:17; 4:19; 4:21; 5:14; 5:15; 5:16; 5:20)

Proverbs

Description

Proverbs are short sayings that give wise advice or teach something that is generally true about life. People enjoy proverbs because they give a lot of wisdom in few words. Proverbs in the Bible often use metaphor and parallelism. Proverbs should not be understood as absolute and unchangeable laws. Rather, proverbs offer general advice to a person about how to live his life.

Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers over all offenses. (Proverbs 10:12 ULT)

Here is another example from the book of Proverbs.

Look at the ant, you lazy person, consider her ways, and be wise. It has no commander, officer, or ruler, yet it prepares its food in the summer, and during the harvest it stores up what it will eat. (Proverbs 6:6-8 ULT)

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Metaphor](#)

[Parallelism](#)

[\[\[r://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying proverbs. There are many proverbs in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say proverbs in your language so that people recognize them as proverbs and understand what they teach.

Examples From the Bible

A good name is to be chosen over great riches, and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

This means that it is better to be a good person and to have a good reputation than it is to have a lot of money.

Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26 ULT)

This means that a lazy person is very annoying to those who send him to do something.

The way of Yahweh protects those who have integrity, but it is destruction for the wicked. (Proverbs 10:29 ULT)

This means that Yahweh protects people who do what is right, but he destroys those who are wicked.

Translation Strategies

If translating a proverb literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

- (1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.
- (2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.
- (3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.

A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

Here are some ideas for ways that people might say a proverb in their language.

It is better to have a good name than to have great riches, and to be favored by people than to have silver and gold.

Wise people choose a good name over great riches, and favor over silver and gold.

Try to have a good reputation rather than great riches.

Will riches really help you? I would rather have a good reputation.

(2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

Like **snow in summer** or rain in harvest,
so a fool does not deserve honor. (Proverbs 26:1 ULT)

It is not natural for **a cold wind to blow in the hot season** or for it to rain in the harvest season; And it is not natural to honor a foolish person.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring. (Proverbs 27:1a ULT)

Do not count your chickens before they hatch.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

There is a generation that curses their father
and does not bless their mother.
There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes,
and yet they are not washed of their filth. (Proverbs 30:11-12 ULT)

People who do not respect their parents think that they are righteous, and they do not turn away from their sin.

(Go back to: [1 John 5:1](#))

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question that a speaker asks when he is more interested in expressing his attitude about something than in getting information about it. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express surprise, to rebuke or scold the hearer, or to teach. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other purposes as well.

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentencetypes\]\]](#)

Description

A rhetorical question is a question that strongly expresses the speaker's attitude toward something. Often the speaker is not looking for information at all. Or, if he is asking for information, it is not usually the information that the question appears to ask for. The speaker is more interested in expressing his attitude than in getting information.

But those who stood by said, **“Are you insulting the high priest of God?”** (Acts 23:4 ULT)

The people who asked Paul this question were not asking if he was insulting God's high priest. Rather, they used this question to accuse Paul of insulting the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. These rhetorical questions might be used for the purposes: of expressing attitudes or feelings, rebuking people, teaching something by reminding people of something they know and encouraging them to apply it to something new, or introducing something they want to talk about.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use rhetorical questions; for them a question is always a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions, but for purposes that are different or more limited than in the Bible.
- Because of these differences between languages, some readers might misunderstand the purpose of a rhetorical question in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

Jezebel used the question above to remind King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. The rhetorical question made her point more strongly than if she had merely stated it, because it forced Ahab to admit the point himself. She did this in order to rebuke him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that, since he was the king of Israel, he had the power to take the man's property.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

God used the question above to remind his people of something they already knew: a young woman would never forget her jewelry or a bride forget her veils. He then rebuked his people for forgetting him who is so much greater than those things.

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

Job used the question above to show deep emotion. This rhetorical question expresses how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

Elizabeth used the question above to show how surprised and happy she was that the mother of her Lord came to her.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Jesus used the question above to remind the people of something they already knew: a good father would never give his son something bad to eat. By introducing this point, Jesus could go on to teach them about God with his next rhetorical question:

Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11 ULT)

Jesus used this question to teach the people in an emphatic way that God gives good things to those who ask him.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed that a man took and threw into his garden ... (Luke 13:18b-19a ULT)

Jesus used the question above to introduce what he was going to talk about. He was about to compare the kingdom of God to something. In this case, he compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed.

Translation Strategies

In order to translate a rhetorical question accurately, first be sure that the question you are translating truly is a rhetorical question and is not an information question. Ask yourself, "Does the person asking the question already know the answer to the question?" If so, it is a rhetorical question. Or, if no one answers the question, did the person who asked it expect to receive an answer? If not, it is a rhetorical question.

When you are sure that the question is rhetorical, then be sure that you understand the purpose for the rhetorical question. Is it to encourage or rebuke or shame the hearer? Is it to bring up a new topic? Is it to do something else?

When you know the purpose of the rhetorical question, then think of the most natural way to express that purpose in the target language. It might be as a question, or a statement, or an exclamation.

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Add the answer after the question.
- (2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
- (3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
- (4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Add the answer after the question.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? **Of course not!** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? **None of you would do that!**

(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed. (Luke 13:18-19a ULT)

This is what the kingdom of God is like. It is like a mustard seed ...

Are you insulting the high priest of God? (Acts 23:4b ULT) (Acts 23:4 ULT)

You should not insult God's high priest!

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!

And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!

(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

You still rule the kingdom of Israel, **do you not?**

(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone?**

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number

(Go back to: [1 John 2:22](#); [3:12](#); [3:17](#); [5:5](#))

Statements – Other Uses

Description

Normally statements are used to give information. Sometimes they are used in the Bible for other functions.

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for statements?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentencetypes]]

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use a statement for some of the functions that statements are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Statements are normally used to give **information**. All of the sentences in John 1:6-8 below are statements, and their function is to give information.

There was a man who was sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness in order to testify about the light, that all might believe through him. John was not the light, but came that he might testify about the light. (John 1:6-8 ULT)

A statement can also be used as a **command** to tell someone what to do. In the examples below, the high priest used statements with the verb “will” to tell people what to do.

He commanded them, saying, “This is what you **must** do. A third of you who come on the Sabbath **will** keep watch over the king’s house, and a third **will** be at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guardhouse.” (2 Kings 11:5 ULT)

A statement can also be used to give **instructions**. The speaker below was not just telling Joseph about something Joseph would do in the future; he was telling Joseph what he needed to do.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

A statement can also be used to make a **request**. The man with leprosy was not just saying what Jesus was able to do. He was also asking Jesus to heal him.

Behold, a leper came to him and bowed before him, saying, “Lord, if you are willing, **you can make me clean.**” (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

A statement can also be used to **perform** something. By telling Adam that the ground was cursed because of him, God actually cursed it.

... **cursed is the ground** because of you; (Genesis 3:17b ULT)

By telling a man that his sins were forgiven, **Jesus forgave** the man’s sins.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “**Son, your sins are forgiven.**” (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a sentence type** that would express that function.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **add a sentence type** that would express that function.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a verb form** that would express that function.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a sentence type that would express that function.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

The phrase “you will call his name Jesus” is an instruction. It can be translated using the sentence type of a normal instruction.

She will give birth to a son. **Name him Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, add a sentence type that would express that function.

Lord, **please heal me**, because I know you are able to heal me if you are willing to. (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

The function of “I know you can” is to make a request. In addition to the statement, a request can be added.

Lord, **I know you can heal me**., If you are willing, please do so.

Lord, if you are willing, please heal me. **I know you can do so**.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a verb form that would express that function.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

She will give birth to a son, and **you must call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins.

Son, your sins are forgiven. (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Son, I forgive your sins.

Son, God has forgiven your sins.

(Go back to: [1 John 5:16](#))

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

■ **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

■ So **the Pharisees** said to him, “Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?” (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

■ Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

■ **“My soul** magnifies the Lord.” (Luke 1:46b ULT)

■ **“I** magnify the Lord.”

So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)

■ **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...

Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

This page answers the question: *What is a synecdoche, and how can I translate such a thing into my language?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro]]

I looked on all the deeds that I had accomplished

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Metonymy](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/bita-part2]]

(Go back to: [1 John 2:28](#))

Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULT based the ULT on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. Because people who use the ULT may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULT translators have sometimes included information about some of the differences between them, either in the ULT footnotes or in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULT and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULT. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

This page answers the question: *Why does the ULT have missing or added verses, and should I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-source-text\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-manuscripts\]\]](#)

Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ [1]

[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest manuscripts. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] [2]

[2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man.” ¹⁶ ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man.” ¹⁶ ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man. ¹⁶ If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.” ^[1]

^[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-chapverse\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-manuscripts\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-terms\]\]](#)
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-original\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 John](#); [1 John 1 General Notes](#); [1:4; Notes](#); [2:14; 2:20; Notes](#); [3:1; Notes](#); [4:3; Notes](#); [5:7](#))

Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) – People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word “medicine.”

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT) – People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread** and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

“We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-transliterate\]\]](#)

[How to Translate Names](#)

(Go back to: [1 John 2:20](#))

Translating Son and Father

Door43 supports Bible translations that represent these concepts when they refer to God.

Biblical Witness

“Father” and “Son” are names that God calls himself in the Bible.

The Bible shows that God called Jesus his Son:

After he was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and ... a voice came out of the heavens saying, **“This is my beloved Son.** I am very pleased with him.” (Matthew 3:16-17 ULT)

The Bible shows that Jesus called God his Father:

Jesus ... said, “I praise you **Father**, Lord of heaven and earth ... no one knows the **Son** except the **Father**, and no one knows the **Father** except the **Son.**” (Matthew 11:25a, 27b ULT) (See also: John 6:26-57)

Christians have found that “Father” and “Son” are the ideas that most essentially describe the eternal relationship of the First and Second Persons of the Trinity to each other. The Bible indeed refers to them in various ways, but no other terms reflect the eternal love and intimacy between these Persons, nor the interdependent eternal relationship between them.

Jesus referred to God in the following terms:

Baptize them into **the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19b ULT)

The intimate, loving relationship between the Father and the Son is eternal, just as they are eternal. The Father **loves** the Son. (See John 3:35-36; 5:19-20 ULT)

I love the Father, and just as the Father commanded me, thus I do. (John 14:31 ULT)

No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son. (Luke 10:22b ULT)

The terms “Father” and “Son” also communicate that the Father and the Son are of the same essence; they are both eternal God.

Jesus said, “Father, ... glorify your Son so that the Son will glorify you ... I glorified you on the earth ... Now Father, glorify me ... with the glory that **I had with you before the world was made.**” (John 17:1, 4a, 5 ULT)

But in these last days, he [God the Father] has spoken to us through a Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things. Through him, he also made the universe. He is the brightness of God’s glory and **the very exact representation of his being.** He holds everything together by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:2-3a ULT)

Jesus said to him, “I have been with you for so long and you still do not know me, Philip? **Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9 ULT)

This page answers the question: *Why are these concepts important in referring to God?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/guidelines-faithful\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/guidelines-sonofgod\]\]](#)

Human Relationships

Human fathers and sons are not perfect, but the Bible still uses those terms for the Father and Son, who are perfect.

Just as today, human father-son relationships during Bible times were never as loving or perfect as the relationship between Jesus and his Father. But this does not mean that the translator should avoid the concepts of father and son. The Scriptures use these terms to refer to God, the perfect Father and Son, as well as to sinful human fathers and sons. In referring to God as Father and Son, choose words in your language that are widely used to refer to a human "father" and "son." In this way you will communicate that God the Father and God the Son are of the same divine essence (they are both God), just as a human father and son are of the same human essence (they are both human and share the same human characteristics).

Translation Strategies

(1) Think through all the possibilities within your language to translate the words "son" and "father." Determine which words in your language best represent the divine "Son" and "Father."

(2) If your language has more than one word for "son," use the word that has the closest meaning to "only son" (or "first son" if necessary).

(3) If your language has more than one word for "father," use the word that has the closest meaning to "birth father," rather than "adoptive father."

(See *God the Father and Son of God* pages in [unfoldingWord® Translation Words](#) for help translating "Father" and "Son.")

(Go back to: 1 John 1:2; 1:3; 1:7; 2:1; 2:14; 2:15; 2:16; 2:22; 2:23; 2:24; 3:1; 3:8; 3:23; 4:9; 4:10; 4:14; 4:15; 5:5; 5:9; 5:10; 5:11; 5:12; 5:13; 5:20)

Verbs

Description

Verbs are words that refer to an action or event or that is used in describing or identifying things. An “action” is something you do. “Event” is more general than “action.” “Events” are things that happen, such as death. A linking verb (“is”) describes a condition of being.

This page answers the question: *What are verbs and what kinds of things are associated with them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech]]

Examples The verbs in the examples below are bolded.

- John **ran**. (“Run” is an action.)
- John **ate** a banana. (“Eat” is an action.)
- John **saw** Mark. (“See” is an event.)
- John **died**. (“Die” is an event.)
- John **is** tall. (The phrase “is tall” describes John. The word “is” is a verb that links “John” with “tall.”)
- John **looks** handsome. (The phrase “is handsome” describes John. The word “looks” here is a verb that links “John” with “handsome.”)
- John **is** my brother. (The phrase “is my brother” identifies John.)

People or Things Associated With a Verb

A verb usually says something about someone or something. All of the example sentences above say something about John. “John” is the **subject** of those sentences. In English the subject usually comes before the verb.

Sometimes there is another person or thing associated with the verb. In the examples below, the bolded word is the verb, and the quoted phrase is the **object**. In English the object usually comes after the verb.

- He **ate** “lunch.”
- He **sang** “a song.”
- He **read** “a book.”
- **He saw** “the book.”

Some verbs never have an object.

- The sun **rose** at six o’clock.
- John **slept** well.
- John **fell** yesterday.

For many verbs in English, where the object is not important in the sentence, the object may not be stated.

- He never **eats** at night.
- He **sings** all the time.
- He **reads** well.
- He cannot **see**.

In some languages, a verb that needs an object must always take one, even if the object is not very important. People who speak those languages might restate the sentences above like this.

- He never **eats food** at night.
- He **sings songs** all the time.
- He **reads words** well.
- He cannot **see anything**.

Subject and Object Marking on Verbs

In some languages, the form of the verb may vary depending on the persons or things associated with it. For example, English speakers sometimes put “s” at the end of the verb when the subject is just one person. In other languages, marking on the verb may show whether the subject is “I,” “you,” or “he”; singular, dual, or plural; male or female, or human or non-human.

- They **eat** bananas every day. (The subject “they” is more than one person.)
- John **eats** bananas every day. (The subject “John” is one person.)

Time and Tense

When we tell about an event, we usually tell whether it is in the past, the present, or the future. Sometimes we do this with words like “yesterday,” “now,” or “tomorrow.”

In some languages the verb may be a little bit different depending on the time associated with it. This kind of marking on a verb is called “tense.” English speakers sometimes put “ed” at the end of the verb when the event happened in the past.

- Sometimes Mary **cooks** meat.
- Yesterday Mary **cooked** meat. (She did this in the past.)

In some languages speakers might add a word to tell something about the time. English speakers use the word “will” when the verb refers to something in the future.

- Tomorrow Mary **will cook** meat.

Aspect

When we tell about an event, sometimes we want to show how the event progressed over a period of time or how the event relates to another event. This is called “aspect.” English speakers sometimes use the verbs “is” or “has” then add “s,” “ing,” or “ed” to the end of the verb in order to show how the event relates to another event or to the present time.

- Mary **cooks** meat every day. (This tells about something Mary often does.)
- Mary **is cooking** the meat. (This tells about something Mary is in the process of doing right now.)
- Mary **cooked** the meat, and John **came** home. (This simply tells about things that Mary and John did.)
- While Mary **was cooking** the meat, John came home. (This tells about something Mary was in the process of doing when John came home)
- Mary **has cooked** the meat, and she wants us to come eat it. (This tells about something Mary did that is still relevant now.)
- Mary **had cooked** the meat by the time John came home. (This tells about something that Mary completed in the past before something else happened.)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

[Active or Passive](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pastforfuture\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [1 John 2:14](#))

Verse Bridges

Description

In some cases, you will see in the unfoldingWord® Simplified Text (UST) that two or more verse numbers are combined, such as 17-18. This is called a verse bridge. This means that the information in the verses was rearranged so that the story or message could be more easily understood.

This page answers the question: *Why are some verse numbers combined in the UST, such as "3-5" or "17-18"?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-bibleorg\]\]](https://www.unfoldingword.com/en/ta/man/translate/translate-bibleorg/)

29 These were the clans of the Horites: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, and Anah, 30 Dishon, Ezer, Dishan: these are clans of the Horites, according to their clan lists in the land of Seir. (Genesis 36:29-30 ULT)

29-30 The people groups who were descendants of Hor lived in Seir land. The names of the people groups are Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. (Genesis 36:29-30 UST)

In the ULT text, verses 29 and 30 are separate, and the information about the people living in Seir is at the end of verse 30. In the UST text, the verses are joined, and the information about them living in Seir is at the beginning. For many languages, this is a more logical order of information.

Examples From the Bible

Where the UST has a verse bridge, the ULT will have separate verses.

⁴⁻⁵ Yahweh our God will bless you in the land that he is giving to you. If you obey Yahweh our God and obey all the commandments that I am giving to you today, there will not be any poor people among you. (Deuteronomy 15:4-5 UST)

⁴ However, there should be no poor among you (for Yahweh will surely bless you in the land that he gives you as an inheritance to possess), ⁵ if only you diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, to keep all these commandments that I am commanding you today. (Deuteronomy 15:4-5 ULT)

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ But Yahweh said to him, "I will not permit you to eat the fruit of the tree that will enable you to know what actions are good to do and what actions are evil to do. If you eat any fruit from that tree, on the day you eat it you will surely die. But I will permit you to eat the fruit of any of the other trees in the park." (Genesis 2:16-17 UST)

¹⁶ Yahweh God commanded the man, saying, "From every tree in the garden you may freely eat. ¹⁷ But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat, for on the day that you eat from it, you will surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17 ULT)

Translation Strategies

Order the information in a way that will be clear to your readers. If the order of information is clear as it is in the ULT, then use that order. But if the order is confusing or gives the wrong meaning, then change the order so that it is more clear.

(1) If you put information from one verse before information from an earlier verse, then combine the verses and put a hyphen between the two verse numbers.

See how to mark verses in [translationStudio](https://www.unfoldingword.com/en/ta/man/translate/translate-bibleorg/).

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If information from one verse is put before information from an earlier verse, then combine the verses and put the verse numbers before the first verse with a hyphen between them.

2 You must select three cities for yourself in the middle of your land that Yahweh your God is giving you to possess. 3 You must build a road and divide the borders of your land into three parts, the land that Yahweh your God is causing you to inherit, so that everyone who kills another person may flee there. (Deuteronomy 19:2-3 ULT)

2-3 You must divide into three parts the land that he is giving to you. Then select a city in each part. You must make good roads in order that people can get to those cities easily. Someone who kills another person can escape to one of those cities to be safe. (Deuteronomy 19:2-3 UST)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-chapverse\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [1 John 1 General Notes](#); [2:16](#); [3:19](#); [5:4](#))

When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate “brother” or “he” when it could refer to anyone, male or female?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)

[Generic Noun Phrases](#)

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says “brothers” when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can be used in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronoun is “his,” but it is not limited to males.

A wise son makes **his** father rejoice
but a foolish son brings grief to **his** mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- In some cultures words like “man,” “brother,” and “son” can only be used to refer to men. If those words are used in a translation in a more general way, people will think that what is being said does not apply to women.
- In some cultures, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can only refer to men. If a masculine pronoun is used, people will think that what is said does not apply to women.

Translation Principles

When a statement applies to both men and women, translate it in such a way that people will be able to understand that it applies to both.

Examples From the Bible

Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

Jesus was not speaking only of men, but of **men and women**.

Caution: Sometimes masculine words are used specifically to refer to men. Do not use words that would lead people to think that they include women. The words below are specifically about men.

Moses said, ‘If **someone** dies, not having children, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like “man,” “brother,” and “he” can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

- (1) Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.
- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)

“The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies.”
 “Wise **people** die just like fools die.”

- (2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) – Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.

“For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia.”

- (3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

“If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”
 (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, “he,” “himself,” and “his” to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, “they,” “themselves,” and “their” in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

>

“If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me.”

(Go back to: [1 John 2:9](#); [2:13](#); [2:14](#); [5:9](#))

When to Keep Information Implicit

Description

Sometimes it is better not to state assumed knowledge or implicit information explicitly. This page gives some direction about when not to do this.

This page answers the question: *When should I not make implicit information explicit?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#)
[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicitinfo]]

Translation Principles

- If a speaker or author intentionally left something unclear, do not try to make it more clear.
- If the original audience did not understand what the speaker meant, do not make it so clear that your readers would find it strange that the original audience did not understand.
- If you need to explicitly state some assumed knowledge or implicit information, try to do it in a way that does not make your readers think that the original audience needed to be told those things.
- Do not make implicit information explicit if it confuses the message or leads the reader to forget what the main point is.
- Do not make assumed knowledge or implicit information explicit if your readers already understand it.

Examples From the Bible

From the eater came forth food;
and from the strong one came forth sweetness. (Judges 14:14 ULT)

This was a riddle. Samson purposely said this in a way that it would be hard for his enemies to know what it meant. Do not make it clear that the eater and the strong thing was a lion and that the sweet thing to eat was honey.

Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." They reasoned among themselves saying, "It is because we did not take bread." (Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Some possible implicit information here is that the disciples should beware of the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But Jesus' disciples did not understand this. They thought that Jesus was talking about real yeast and bread. So it would not be appropriate to state explicitly that the word "yeast" here refers to false teaching. The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant until they heard what Jesus said in Matthew 16:11.

"How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he was not telling them to beware of yeast in bread, but to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16:11-12 ULT)

Only after Jesus explained that he was not talking about bread did they realize that he was talking about the false teaching of the Pharisees. Therefore, it would be wrong to explicitly state the implicit information in Matthew 16:6.

Translation Strategies

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies applied.

(Go back to: [1 John 1:1](#))



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 25

age, aged

Definition:

The term “age” refers to the number of years a person has lived. It also used to refer generally to a time period.

- Other words used to express an extended period of time include “era” and “season.”
- Jesus refers to “this age” as the present time when evil, sin, and disobedience fill the earth.
- There will be a future age when righteousness will reign over a new heaven and a new earth.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “age” could also be translated as “era” or “number of years old” or “time period” or “time.”
- The phrase “at a very old age” could be translated as “at many years old” or “when he was very old” or “when he had lived a very long time.”
- The phrase “this present evil age” means “during this time right now when people are very evil.”

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 29:28
- 1 Corinthians 2:7
- Hebrews 6:5
- Job 5:26

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G165, G1074

(Go back to: [1 John 2:17](#))

amazed, amazement, astonished, marvel, marveled, marvelous, wonder, dumbfounded

Definition:

All these terms refer to being very surprised because of something extraordinary that happened.

- Some of these words are translations of Greek expressions that mean “struck with amazement” or “standing outside of (oneself).” These expressions show how very surprised or shocked the person was feeling. Other languages might also have ways to express this.
- Usually the event that caused the wonder and amazement was a miracle, something only God could do.
- The meaning of these terms can also include feelings of confusion because what happened was totally unexpected.
- Other ways to translate these words could be “extremely surprised” or “very shocked.”
- Related words include “marvelous” (amazing, wonderful), “amazement,” and “astonishment.”
- In general, these terms are positive and express that the people were happy about what had happened.

(See also: miracle, sign)

Bible References:

- Acts 8:9-11
- Acts 9:20-22
- Galatians 1:6
- Mark 2:10-12
- Matthew 7:28
- Matthew 15:29-31
- Matthew 19:25

Word Data:

- Strong's: H926, H2865, H3820, H4159, H6313, H6381, H6382, H6383, H6395, H8074, H8429, H8539, H8540, H8541, G639, G1568, G1569, G1605, G1611, G1839, G2284, G2285, G2296, G2297, G2298, G4023, G4592, G5059

(Go back to: [1 John 3:13](#))

ancestor, father, fathered, forefather, grandfather

Definition:

The term “father” refers to a person’s male parent.

- The terms “father” and “forefather” are often used to refer to a male ancestor(s) of a certain person or people group. This could also be translated a “ancestor” or “ancestral father.”
- The expression “the father of” can figuratively refer to a person who is the leader a group of related people or the source of something. For example, in Genesis 4 “the father of all who live in tents” could mean, “the first clan leader of the first people who ever lived in tents.”
- The apostle Paul figuratively called himself the “father” of those he had helped to become Christians through sharing the gospel with them.

Translation Suggestions

- When talking about a father and his literal son, this term should be translated using the usual term to refer to a father in the language.
- “God the Father” should also be translated using the usual, common word for “father.”
- When referring to forefathers, this term could be translated as “ancestors” or “ancestral fathers.”
- When Paul refers to himself figuratively as a father to believers in Christ, this could be translated as “spiritual father” or “father in Christ.”
- Sometimes the word “father” can be translated as “clan leader,” depending on the context.
- The phrase “father of all lies” could be translated as “source of all lies” or “the one from whom all lies come.”

(See also: [God the Father](#), son, [Son of God](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 7:2
- Acts 7:32
- Acts 7:45
- Acts 22:3
- Genesis 31:30
- Genesis 31:42
- Genesis 31:53
- Hebrews 7:4-6
- John 4:12
- Joshua 24:3-4
- Malachi 3:7
- Mark 10:7-9
- Matthew 1:7
- Matthew 3:9
- Matthew 10:21
- Matthew 18:14
- Romans 4:12

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1, H2, H25, H369, H539, H1121, H1730, H1733, H2524, H3205, H3490, H4940, H5971, H7223, G540, G1080, G3737, G3962, G3964, G3966, G3967, G3970, G3971, G3995, G4245, G4269, G4613

(**Go back to:** [1 John 2:13](#))

anoint, anointed, anointing

Definition:

The term “anoint” means to rub or pour oil on a person or object. Sometimes the oil was mixed with spices, giving it a sweet, perfumed smell. In biblical times, there were several reasons for anointing someone with oil.

- In the Old Testament, priests, kings, and prophets were anointed with oil to set them apart for special service to God.
- Objects such as altars or the tabernacle were also anointed with oil to show that they were to be used to worship and glorify God.
- In the New Testament, sick people were anointed with oil for their healing.
- The New Testament records two times that Jesus was anointed with perfumed oil by a woman, as an act of worship. One time Jesus commented that in doing this she was preparing him for his future burial.
- After Jesus died, his friends prepared his body for burial by anointing it with oils and spices.
- The titles “Messiah” (Hebrew) and “Christ” (Greek) mean “the Anointed (One).”
- Jesus the Messiah is the one who was chosen and anointed as a Prophet, High Priest, and King.
- In biblical times, a woman might anoint herself with perfume to make herself more sexually attractive.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “anoint” could be translated as “pour oil on” or “put oil on” or “consecrate by pouring perfumed oil on.”
- To “be anointed” could be translated as “be consecrated with oil.” or “be appointed” or “be consecrated.”
- In some contexts the term “anoint” could be translated as “appoint.”
- A phrase like “the anointed priest,” could be translated as “the priest who was consecrated with oil” or “the priest who was set apart by the pouring on of oil.”

(See also: [Christ](#), consecrate, high priest, King of the Jews, priest, prophet)

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:20
- 1 John 2:27
- 1 Samuel 16:2-3
- Acts 4:27-28
- Amos 6:5-6
- Exodus 29:5-7
- James 5:13-15

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H47, H430, H1101, H1878, H3323, H4397, H4398, H4473, H4886, H4888, H4899, H5480, H8136, G32, G218, G743, G1472, G2025, G3462, G5545, G5548

(Go back to: [1 John 2:20](#); [2:27](#))

antichrist

Definition:

The term “antichrist” refers to a person or teaching that is against Jesus Christ and his work. There are many antichrists in the world.

- The apostle John wrote that a person is the antichrist if he deceives people by saying that Jesus is not the Messiah or if he denies that Jesus is both God and human.
- The Bible also teaches that there is a general spirit of antichrist in the world which opposes Jesus’ work.
- The New Testament book of Revelation explains that there will be a man called “the antichrist” who will be revealed in the end times. This man will attempt to destroy God’s people, but he will be defeated by Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate this term could include a word or phrase that means “Christ-opposer” or “enemy of Christ” or “person who is against Christ.”
- The phrase “spirit of the antichrist” could also be translated as “spirit that is against Christ” or “(someone) teaching lies about Christ” or “attitude of believing lies about Christ” or “spirit that teaches lies about Christ.”
- Also consider how this term is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See also: [Christ](#), [reveal](#), tribulation)

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:18
- 1 John 4:3
- 2 John 1:7

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G500

([Go back to: 1 John 2 General Notes; 2:18; 2:22; 4:3](#))

astray, go astray, went astray, lead astray, stray

Definition:

The terms “stray” and “go astray” mean to disobey God’s will. People who are “led astray” have allowed other people or circumstances to influence them to disobey God.

- The word “astray” gives a picture of leaving a clear path or a place of safety to go down a wrong and dangerous path.
- Sheep who leave the pasture of their shepherd have “strayed.” God compares sinful people to sheep who have left him and “gone astray.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “go astray” could be translated as “go away from God” or “take a wrong path away from God’s will” or “stop obeying God” or “live in a way that goes away from God.”
- To “lead someone astray” could be translated as “cause someone to disobey God” or “influence someone to stop obeying God” or “cause someone to follow you down a wrong path.”

(See also: disobey, shepherd)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:7
- 2 Timothy 3:13
- Exodus 23:4-5
- Ezekiel 48:10-12
- Matthew 18:13
- Matthew 24:5
- Psalms 58:3
- Psalms 119:110

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5080, H7683, H7686, H8582, G4105, G5351

(Go back to: [1 John 2:26](#))

believe, believer, belief, unbeliever, unbelief

Definition:

The terms “believe” and “believe in” are closely related, but have slightly different meanings:

1. believe

- To believe something is to accept or trust that it is true.
- To believe someone is to acknowledge that what that person has said is true.

2. believe in

- To “believe in” someone means to “trust in” that person. It means to trust that the person is who he says he is, that he always speaks the truth, and that he will do what he has promised to do.
- When a person truly believes in something, he will act in such a way that shows that belief.
- The phrase “have faith in” usually has the same meaning as “believe in.”
- To “believe in Jesus” means to believe that he is the Son of God, that he is God himself who also became human and who died as a sacrifice to pay for our sins. It means to trust him as Savior and live in a way that honors him.

3. believer

In the Bible, the term “believer” refers to someone who believes in and relies on Jesus Christ as Savior.

- The term “believer” literally means “person who believes.”
- The term “Christian” eventually came to be the main title for believers because it indicates that they believe in Christ and obey his teachings.

4. unbelief

The term “unbelief” refers to not believing something or someone.

- In the Bible, “unbelief” refers to not believing in or not trusting in Jesus as one’s Savior.
- A person who does not believe in Jesus is called an “unbeliever.”

Translation Suggestions:

- To “believe” could be translated as to “know to be true” or “know to be right.”
- To “believe in” could be translated as “trust completely” or “trust and obey” or “completely rely on and follow.”
- Some translations may prefer to say “believer in Jesus” or “believer in Christ.”
- This term could also be translated by a word or phrase that means “person who trusts in Jesus” or “someone who knows Jesus and lives for him.”
- Other ways to translate “believer” could be “follower of Jesus” or “person who knows and obeys Jesus.”
- The term “believer” is a general term for any believer in Christ, while “disciple” and “apostle” were used more specifically for people who knew Jesus while he was alive. It is best to translate these terms in different ways, in order to keep them distinct.
- Other ways to translate “unbelief” could include “lack of faith” or “not believing.”

- The term “unbeliever” could be translated as “person who does not believe in Jesus” or “someone who does not trust in Jesus as Savior.”

(See also: [believe](#), apostle, Christian, disciple, [faith](#), trust)

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:6
- Genesis 45:26
- Job 9:16-18
- Habakkuk 1:5-7
- Mark 6:4-6
- Mark 1:14-15
- Luke 9:41
- John 1:12
- Acts 6:5
- Acts 9:42
- Acts 28:23-24
- Romans 3:3
- 1 Corinthians 6:1
- 1 Corinthians 9:5
- 2 Corinthians 6:15
- Hebrews 3:12
- 1 John 3:23

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:4** Noah warned the people about the coming flood and told them to turn to God, but they did not **believe** him.
- **4:8** Abram **believed** God’s promise. God declared that Abram was righteous because he **believed** God’s promise.
- **11:2** God provided a way to save the firstborn of anyone who **believed in** him.
- **11:6** But the Egyptians did not **believe** God or obey his commands.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, “I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever **believes in** me will live, even though he dies. Everyone who **believes in** me will never die. Do you **believe** this?”
- **43:1** After Jesus returned to heaven, the disciples stayed in Jerusalem as Jesus had commanded them to do. The **believers** there constantly gathered together to pray.
- **43:3** While the **believers** were all together, suddenly the house where they were was filled with a sound like a strong wind. Then something that looked like flames of fire appeared over the heads of all the **believers**.
- **43:13** Every day, more people became **believers**.
- **46:6** That day many people in Jerusalem started persecuting the followers of Jesus, so the **believers** fled to other places. But in spite of this, they preached about Jesus everywhere they went.
- **46:1** Saul was the young man who guarded the robes of the men who killed Stephen. He did not believe in Jesus, so he persecuted the **believers**.
- **46:9** Some **believers** who fled from the persecution in Jerusalem went far away to the city of Antioch and preached about Jesus. It was at Antioch that **believers** in Jesus were first called “Christians.”
- **47:14** They also wrote many letters to encourage and teach the **believers** in the churches.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0539, H0540, G0543, G0544, G0569, G0570, G0571, G3982, G4100, G4102, G4103, G4135

(Go back to: [1 John 3 General Notes](#); [3:23](#); [4:1](#); [4:16](#); [5:1](#); [5:5](#); [5:10](#); [5:13](#))

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 4:14
- 1 John 3:2
- 1 John 4:7
- Mark 1:11
- Mark 12:6
- Revelation 20:9
- Romans 16:8
- Song of Solomon 1:14

Word Data:

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

(Go back to: [1 John 2:7](#); [3:2](#); [3:21](#); [4:1](#); [4:7](#); [4:11](#))

blood

Definition:

The term “blood” refers to the red liquid that comes out of a person’s skin when there is an injury or wound. Blood brings life-giving nutrients to a person’s entire body. In the Bible, the term “blood” is often used figuratively to mean “life” and/or several other concepts.

- When people made sacrifices to God, they killed an animal and poured its blood on the altar. This symbolized the sacrifice of the animal’s life to pay for people’s sins.
- The expression “flesh and blood” refers to human beings.
- The expression “own flesh and blood” refers to people who are biologically related.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term should be translated with the term that is used for blood in the target language.
- The expression “flesh and blood” could be translated as “people” or “human beings.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “my own flesh and blood” could be translated as “my own family” or “my own relatives” or “my own people.”
- If there is an expression in the target language that is used with this meaning, that expression could be used to translate “flesh and blood.”

(See also: bloodshed; [flesh](#); [life](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:7
- 1 Samuel 14:32
- Acts 2:20
- Acts 5:28
- Colossians 1:20
- Galatians 1:16
- Genesis 4:11
- Psalms 16:4
- Psalms 105:28-30

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:3** Before Joseph’s brothers returned home, they tore Joseph’s robe and dipped it in goat’s **blood**.
- **10:3** God turned the Nile River into **blood**, but Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go.
- **11:5** All the houses of the Israelites had **blood** around the doors, so God passed over those houses and everyone inside was safe. They were saved because of the lamb’s **blood**.
- **13:9** The **blood** of the animal that was sacrificed covered the person’s sin and made that person clean in God’s sight.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, “Drink this. It is my **blood** of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of sins.”
- **48:10** When anyone believes in Jesus, the **blood** of Jesus takes away that person’s sin, and God’s punishment passes over him.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1818, H5332, G129, G130, G131

(Go back to: [1 John 1:7](#); [5:6](#); [5:8](#))

bold, boldness, emboldened

Definition:

These terms all refer to having courage and confidence to speak the truth and do the right thing even when it is difficult or dangerous.

- A “bold” person is not afraid to say and do what is good and right, including defending people who are being mistreated. This could be translated as “courageous” or “fearless.”
- In the New Testament, the disciples continued to “boldly” preach about Christ in public places, in spite of the danger of being put in jail or killed. This could be translated as “confidently” or “with strong courage” or “courageously.”
- The “boldness” of these early disciples in speaking the good news of Christ’s redeeming death on the cross resulted in the gospel being spread throughout Israel and nearby countries and finally, to the rest of the world. “Boldness” could also be translated as “confident courage.”

(See also: [confidence](#), good news, redeem)

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:28
- 1 Thessalonians 2:1-2
- 2 Corinthians 3:12-13
- Acts 4:13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H982, H5797, G662, G2292, G3618, G3954, G3955, G5111, G5112

(**Go back to:** [1 John 2:28](#))

born again, born of God, new birth

Definition:

The term “born again” was first used by Jesus to describe what it means for God to change a person from being dead spiritually to being alive spiritually. The terms “born of God” and “born of the Spirit” also refer to a person being given new spiritual life.

- All humans are born spiritually dead and are given a “new birth” when they accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- At the moment of the spiritual new birth, God’s Holy Spirit begins to live in the new believer and empowers him to produce good spiritual fruit in his life.
- It is God’s work to cause a person to be born again and become his child.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “born again” could include “born anew” or “born spiritually.”
- It is best to translate this term literally and use the normal word in the language that would be used for being born.
- The term “new birth” might be translated as “spiritual birth.”
- The phrase “born of God” could be translated as “caused by God to have new life like a newborn baby” or “given new life by God.”
- In the same way, “born of the Spirit” could be translated as “given new life by the Holy Spirit” or “empowered by the Holy Spirit to become God’s child” or “caused by the Spirit to have new life like a newborn baby.”

(See also: [Holy Spirit](#), [save](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:9
- 1 Peter 1:3
- 1 Peter 1:23
- John 3:4
- John 3:7
- Titus 3:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G313, G509, G1080, G3824

(Go back to: [1 John 2:29](#); [3:9](#); [4:7](#); [5:1](#); [5:4](#); [5:18](#))

brother

Definition:

The term “brother” refers to a male sibling who shares at least one biological parent.

- In the Old Testament, the term “brothers” is also used as a general reference to relatives or associates, such as members of the same tribe, clan, occupation, or people group. When used in this way, the term can refer to both men and women.
- In the New Testament, the apostles often use the term “brothers” to refer to fellow Christians, including both men and women.
- 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 7:26
- Genesis 29:10
- Leviticus 19:17
- Nehemiah 3:1
- Philippians 4:21
- Revelation 1:9

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0251, H0252, H0264, H1730, H2992, H2993, H2994, H7453, G0080, G0081, G2385, G2455, G2500, G4613, G5360, G5569

(Go back to: [1 John 2:9](#); [2:10](#); [2:11](#); [3:10](#); [3:12](#); [3:13](#); [3:14](#); [3:15](#); [3:16](#); [3:17](#); [4:20](#); [4:21](#); [5:16](#))

burden, load, heavy, hard work, hard labor, utterances

Definition:

A burden is a heavy load. It literally refers to a physical load such as a work animal would carry. The term “burden” also has several figurative meanings:

- A burden can refer to a difficult duty or important responsibility that a person has to do. He is said to be “bearing” or “carrying” a “heavy burden.”
- A cruel leader may put difficult burdens on the people he is ruling, for example by forcing them to pay large amounts of taxes.
- A person who does not want to be a burden to someone does not want to cause that other person any trouble.
- The guilt of a person’s sin is a burden to him.
- The “burden of the Lord” is a figurative way of referring to a “message from God” that a prophet must deliver to God’s people.
- The term “burden” can be translated by “responsibility” or “duty” or “heavy load” or “message,” depending on the context.

Bible References:

- 2 Thessalonians 3:6-9
- Galatians 6:1-2
- Galatians 6:3
- Genesis 49:15
- Matthew 11:30
- Matthew 23:4

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2960, H3053, H4614, H4853, H4864, H5445, H5447, H5448, H5449, H5450, H6006, G0004, G0916, G0922, G2347, G2599, G2655, G5413

(Go back to: [1 John 5:3](#))

Cain

Facts:

Cain and his younger brother Abel were the first sons of Adam and Eve mentioned in the Bible.

- Cain was a farmer who produced food crops while Abel was a sheep herder.
- Cain killed his brother Abel in a fit of jealousy because God had accepted Abel's sacrifice but had not accepted Cain's sacrifice.
- As punishment, God sent him away from Eden and told him that the land would no longer yield crops for him.
- God put a mark on Cain's forehead as a sign that God would protect him from being killed by other people as he wandered.

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

(See also: Adam, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:12
- Genesis 4:2
- Genesis 4:9
- Genesis 4:15
- Hebrews 11:4
- Jude 1:11

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7014, G2535

(Go back to: [1 John 3:12](#))

call, call out

Definition:

The terms “call” and “call out” usually mean to speak loudly, but the term “call” can also mean to name or summon a person. There are also some other meanings.

- To “call out” to someone means to shout, to announce, or to proclaim. It can also mean to ask someone for help, especially God.
- Often in the Bible, “call” has a meaning of “summon” or “command to come” or “request to come.”
- God calls people to come to him and be his people. This is their “calling.”
- When God “calls” people, it means that God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to be his servants and proclaimers of his message of salvation through Jesus.
- This term is also used in the context of naming someone. For example, “His name is called John,” means “He is named John” or “His name is John.”
- To be “called by the name of” means that someone is given the name of someone else. God says that he has called his people by his name.
- A different expression, “I have called you by name” means that God has specifically chosen that person.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “call” could be translated by a word that means “summon,” which includes the idea of being intentional or purposeful in calling.
- The expression “call out to you” could be translated as “ask you for help” or “pray to you urgently.”
- When the Bible says that God has “called” us to be his servants, this could be translated as “specially chose us” or “appointed us” to be his servants.
- “You must call his name” can also be translated as “you must name him.”
- “His name is called” could also be translated as “his name is” or “he is named.”
- To “call out” could be translated as “say loudly” or “shout” or “say with a loud voice.” Make sure the translation of this does not sound like the person is angry.
- The expression “your calling” could be translated as “your purpose” or “God’s purpose for you” or “God’s special work for you.”
- To “call on the name of the Lord” could be translated as “seek the Lord and depend on him” or “trust in the Lord and obey him.”
- To “call for” something could be translated by “demand” or “ask for” or “command.”
- The expression “you are called by my name” could be translated as “I have given you my name, showing that you belong to me.”
- When God says, “I have called you by name,” this could be translated as “I know you and have chosen you.”

(See also: [pray](#), cry)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:24
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 1:9
- Ephesians 4:1
- Galatians 1:15
- Matthew 2:15
- Philippians 3:14

Word Data:

- Strong's: H559, H2199, H4744, H6817, H7121, H7123, H7769, H7773, G154, G363, G1458, G1528, G1941, G1951, G2028, G2046, G2564, G2821, G2822, G2840, G2919, G3004, G3106, G3333, G3343, G3603, G3686, G3687, G4316, G4341, G4377, G4779, G4867, G5455, G5537, G5581

(Go back to: [1 John 3:1](#))

children, child, offspring

Definition:

The term “child” (plural “children”) refers to the offspring of a man and woman. The term is often used more generally to refer to anyone who is young in age and is not yet a fully grown adult. The term “offspring” is a general reference to the biological descendants of people or animals.

- In the Bible, disciples or followers are sometimes called “children.”
- Often the term “children” is used to refer to a person’s descendants.
- Often in the Bible, “offspring” has the same meaning as “children” or “descendants.”
- The term “seed” is sometimes used figuratively to refer to offspring.
- 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 the Church. For example, sometimes the New Testament refers to people who believe in Jesus as “children of God.”

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, [seed](#), [promise](#), son, [spirit](#), [believe](#), [beloved](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:28
- 3 John 1:4
- Galatians 4:19
- Genesis 45:11
- Joshua 8:34-35
- Nehemiah 5:5
- Acts 17:29
- Exodus 13:11-13
- Genesis 24:7
- Isaiah 41:8-9
- Job 5:25
- Luke 3:7
- Matthew 12:34

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, H5209, H5271, H5288, H5290, H5759, H5764, H5768, H5953, H6185, H6363, H6529, H6631, H7908, H7909, H7921, G730, G815, G1025, G1064, G1081, G1085, G1471, G3439, G3515, G3516, G3808, G3812, G3813, G3816, G5040, G5041, G5042, G5043, G5044, G5206, G5207, G5388

(Go back to: [1 John 2:1](#); [2:12](#); [2:14](#); [2:18](#); [2:28](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:7](#); [3:10](#); [3:18](#); [4:4](#); [5:2](#); [5:21](#))

Christ, Messiah

Facts:

The terms “Messiah” and “Christ” mean “Anointed One” and refer to Jesus, God’s Son.

- Both “Messiah” and “Christ” are used in the New Testament to refer to God’s Son, whom God the Father appointed to rule as king over his people, and to save them from sin and death.
- In the Old Testament, the prophets wrote prophecies about the Messiah hundreds of years before he came to earth.
- Often a word meaning “anointed (one)” is used in the Old Testament to refer to the Messiah who would come.
- Jesus fulfilled many of these prophecies and did many miraculous works that proves he is the Messiah; the rest of these prophecies will be fulfilled when he returns.
- The word “Christ” is often used as a title, as in “the Christ” and “Christ Jesus.”
- “Christ” also came to be used as part of his name, as in “Jesus Christ.”

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated using its meaning, “the Anointed One” or “God’s Anointed Savior.”
- Many languages use a transliterated word that looks or sounds like “Christ” or “Messiah.” (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))
- The transliterated word could be followed by the definition of the term as in, “Christ, the Anointed One.”
- Be consistent in how this is translated throughout the Bible so that it is clear that the same term is being referred to.
- Make sure the translations of “Messiah” and “Christ” work well in contexts where both terms occur in the same verse (such as John 1:41).

(See also: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [Son of God](#), David, [Jesus](#), [anoint](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 5:1-3
- Acts 2:35
- Acts 5:40-42
- John 1:40-42
- John 3:27-28
- John 4:25
- Luke 2:10-12
- Matthew 1:16

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:7** The **Messiah** was God’s Chosen One who would save the people of the world from sin.
- **17:8** As it happened, the Israelites would have to wait a long time before the **Messiah** came, almost 1,000 years.
- **21:1** From the very beginning, God planned to send the **Messiah**.
- **21:4** God promised King David that the **Messiah** would be one of David’s own descendants.
- **21:5** The **Messiah** would start the New Covenant.
- **21:6** God’s prophets also said that the **Messiah** would be a prophet, a priest, and a king.

- **21:9** The prophet Isaiah prophesied that the **Messiah** would be born from a virgin.
- **43:7** "But God raised him to life again to fulfill the prophecy which says, 'You will not let your **Holy One** rot in the grave.'"
- **43:9** "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both Lord and **Messiah!**"
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus **Christ** so that God will forgive your sins."
- **46:6** Saul reasoned with the Jews, proving that Jesus was the **Messiah**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4899, G3323, G5547

(Go back to: [1 John 1:3](#); [2:1](#); [2:22](#); [3:23](#); [4:2](#); [5:1](#); [5:6](#); [5:20](#))

clean, wash

Definition:

The term “clean” generally refers either to removing dirt or stains from someone/something or to not having any dirt or stain in the first place. The term “wash” refers specifically to action of removing dirt or stains from someone/something.

- “Cleanse” is the process of making something “clean.” It could also be translated as “wash” or “purify.”
- In the Old Testament, God told the Israelites which animals he had specified as ritually “clean” and which ones were “unclean.” Only the clean animals were permitted to be used for eating or for sacrifice. In this context, the term “clean” means that the animal was acceptable to God for use as a sacrifice.
- A person who had certain skin diseases would be unclean until the skin was healed enough to no longer be contagious. Instructions for cleansing the skin had to be obeyed in order for that person to be declared “clean” again.
- Sometimes “clean” is used figuratively to refer to moral purity, meaning to be “clean” from sin.

In the Bible, the term “unclean” is used figuratively to refer to things that God declared to be unfit for his people to touch, eat, or sacrifice.

- God gave the Israelites instructions about which animals were “clean” and which ones were “unclean.” The unclean animals were not permitted to be used for eating or for sacrifice.
- People with certain skin diseases were said to be “unclean” until they were healed.
- If the Israelites touched something “unclean,” they themselves would be considered unclean for a certain period of time.
- Obeying God’s commands about not touching or eating unclean things kept the Israelites set apart for God’s service.
- This physical and ritual uncleanness was also symbolic of moral uncleanness.
- In another figurative sense, an “unclean spirit” refers to an evil spirit.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated with the common word for “clean” or “pure” (in the sense of being not dirty).
- Other ways to translate this could include, “ritually clean” or “acceptable to God.”
- “Cleanse” could be translated by “wash” or “purify.”
- Make sure that the words used for “clean” and “cleanse” can also be understood in a figurative sense.
- The term “unclean” could also be translated as “not clean” or “unfit in God’s eyes” or “physically unclean” or “defiled.”
- When referring to a demon as an unclean spirit, “unclean” could be translated as “evil” or “defiled.”
- The translation of this term should allow for spiritual uncleanness. It should be able to refer to anything that God declared as unfit for touching, eating, or sacrifice.

(See also: defile, demon, holy, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- Genesis 7:2
- Genesis 7:8
- Deuteronomy 12:15
- Psalms 51:7
- Proverbs 20:30
- Ezekiel 24:13
- Matthew 23:27

- Luke 5:13
- Acts 8:7
- Acts 10:27-29
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- James 4:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1249, H1252, H1305, H2134, H2135, H2141, H2398, H2548, H2834, H2889, H2890, H2891, H2893, H2930, H2931, H2932, H3001, H3722, H5079, H5352, H5355, H5356, H6172, H6565, H6663, H6945, H7137, H8552, H8562, G167, G169, G2511, G2512, G2513, G2839, G2840, G3394, G3689

(Go back to: [1 John 1:7](#); [1:9](#))

command, commandment

Definition:

The term “command” means to order someone to do something. The term “commandment” refers to the thing that a person is commanded to do.

- The term “commandment” sometimes refers to certain commands of God which are more formal and permanent, such as the “Ten Commandments.”
- A command can be positive (“Honor your parents”) or negative (“Do not steal”).
- To “take command” means to “take control” or “take charge” of something or someone.

Translation Suggestions

- It is best to translate this term differently from the term, “law.” Also compare with the definitions of “decree” and “statute.”
- Some translators may prefer to translate “command” and “commandment” with the same word in their language.
- Others may prefer to use a special word for commandment that refers to lasting, formal commands that God has made.

(See decree, statute, law, Ten Commandments)

Bible References:

- Luke 1:6
- Matthew 1:24
- Matthew 22:38
- Matthew 28:20
- Numbers 1:17-19
- Romans 7:7-8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H559, H560, H565, H1296, H1696, H1697, H1881, H2706, H2708, H2710, H2941, H2942, H2951, H3027, H3982, H3983, H4406, H4662, H4687, H4929, H4931, H4941, H5057, H5713, H5749, H6213, H6310, H6346, H6490, H6673, H6680, H7101, H7218, H7227, H7262, H7761, H7970, H8269, G1263, G1291, G1296, G1297, G1299, G1690, G1778, G1781, G1785, G2003, G2004, G2008, G2036, G2753, G3056, G3726, G3852, G3853, G4367, G4483, G4487, G5506

(Go back to: [1 John 2:3](#); [2:4](#); [2:7](#); [2:8](#); [3:22](#); [3:23](#); [3:24](#); [4:21](#); [5:2](#); [5:3](#))

condemn, condemned, condemnation

Definition:

The terms “condemn” and “condemnation” refer to judging someone for doing something wrong.

- Often the word “condemn” includes punishing that person for what they did wrong.
- Sometimes “condemn” means to falsely accuse someone or to judge someone harshly.
- The term “condemnation” refers to the act of condemning or accusing someone.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, this term could be translated as “harshly judge” or “criticize falsely.”
- The phrase “condemn him” could be translated as “judge that he is guilty” or “state that he must be punished for his sin.”
- The term “condemnation” could be translated as “harsh judging” or “declaring to be guilty” or “punishment of guilt.”

(See also: [judge](#), [punish](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:20
- Job 9:29
- John 5:24
- Luke 6:37
- Matthew 12:7
- Proverbs 17:15-16
- Psalms 34:22
- Romans 5:16

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6064, H7034, H7561, H8199, G176, G843, G2607, G2613, G2631, G2632, G2633, G2917, G2919, G2920, G5272, G6048

(Go back to: [1 John 3:20](#); [3:21](#))

confess, confession

Definition:

To confess means to admit or assert that something is true. A “confession” is a statement or admission that something is true.

- The term “confess” can refer to boldly stating the truth about God. It can also refer to admitting that we have sinned.
- The Bible says that if people confess their sins to God, he will forgive them.
- James the apostle wrote in his letter that when believers confess their sins to each other, this brings spiritual healing.
- The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians that someday everyone will confess or declare that Jesus is Lord.
- Paul also said that if people confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead, they will be saved.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “confess” could include, “admit” or “testify” or “declare” or “acknowledge” or “affirm.”
- Different ways to translate “confession” could be, “declaration” or “testimony” or “statement about what we believe” or “admitting sin.”

(See also: [faith](#), [testimony](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:8-10
- 2 John 1:7-8
- James 5:16
- Leviticus 5:5-6
- Matthew 3:4-6
- Nehemiah 1:6-7
- Philippians 2:9-11
- Psalms 38:17-18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3034, H8426, G1843, G3670, G3671

(Go back to: [1 John 1:9](#); [2:23](#); [4:2](#); [4:3](#); [4:15](#))

confidence, confident

Definition:

The term “confidence” refers to being sure that something is true or certain to happen.

- In the Bible, the term “hope” often means to wait expectantly for something that is sure to happen. The ULT often translates this as “confidence” or “confidence for the future” or “future confidence” especially when it means to be assured of receiving what God has promised to believers in Jesus.
- Often the term “confidence” refers especially to the certainty that believers in Jesus have that they will someday be with God forever in heaven.
- The phrase, “have confidence in God” means to fully expect to receive and experience what God has promised.
- Being “confident” means believing in God’s promises and acting with the assurance that God will do what he has said. This term can also have the meaning of acting boldly and courageously.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “confident” could be translated as “assured” or “very sure.”
- The phrase “be confident” could also be translated as “trust completely” or “be completely sure about” or “know for certain.”
- The term “confidently” could also be translated as “boldly” or “with certainty.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate “confidence” could include, “complete assurance” or “sure expectation” or “certainty.”

(See also: [believe](#), [believe](#), [bold](#), [faithful](#), [hope](#), [trust](#))

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H982, H983, H986, H3689, H3690, H4009, G2292, G3954, G3982, G4006, G5287

(Go back to: [1 John 3:21](#); [4:17](#); [5:14](#))

darkness

Definition:

The term “darkness” literally means an absence of light. There are also several figurative meanings of this term:

- As a metaphor, “darkness” means “impurity” or “evil” or “spiritual blindness.”
- It also refers to anything related to sin and moral corruption.
- The expression “dominion of darkness” refers to all that is evil and ruled by Satan.
- The term “darkness” can also be used as a metaphor for death. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- People who do not know God are said to be “living in darkness,” which means they do not understand or practice righteousness.
- God is light (righteousness) and the darkness (evil) cannot overcome that light.
- The place of punishment for those who reject God is sometimes referred to as “outer darkness.”

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term literally, with a word in the project language that refers to the absence of light. This could also be a term that refers to the darkness of a room with no light or to the time of day when there is no light.
- For the figurative uses, it is also important to keep the image of darkness in contrast to light, as a way to describe evil and deception in contrast to goodness and truth.
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could be, “darkness of night” (as opposed to “light of day”) or “not seeing anything, like at night” or “evil, like a dark place”.

(See also: corrupt, dominion, kingdom, [light](#), redeem, [righteous](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:6
- 1 John 2:8
- 1 Thessalonians 5:5
- 2 Samuel 22:12
- Colossians 1:13
- Isaiah 5:30
- Jeremiah 13:16
- Joshua 24:7
- Matthew 8:12

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0652, H0653, H2816, H2821, H2822, H2825, H3990, H3991, H4285, H5890, H6205, G2217, G4652, G4653, G4655, G4656

(Go back to: [1 John 1:5](#); [1:6](#); [2:8](#); [2:9](#); [2:11](#))

day

Definition:

The term “day” generally refers to the time it takes for the alternating periods of light and darkness in the sky to complete one cycle (that is, 24 hours). However, in the Bible the same term is often used to refer to a shorter period of time (such as the time between sunrise and sunset) or a longer period of time that is often not specified.

- “Day” is sometimes used in contrast to “night.” In these cases, the term refers to the period of time when the sky is light.
- The term may also refer to a specific point in time, such as “today.”
- Sometimes the term “day” is used figuratively to refer to a longer period of time, such as the “day of Yahweh” or “last days.” Some languages will use a different expression to translate these figurative uses or will translate “day” non-figuratively.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term literally as “day” or “daytime” using the word in your language that refers to the part of the day when there is light.
- Other translations of “day” could include “daytime,” “time,” “season,” “occasion” or “event,” depending on the context.

(See also: time, judgment day, [last day](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 20:6
- Daniel 10:4
- Ezra 6:15
- Ezra 6:19
- Matthew 9:15

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H3118, H6242, G2250

(Go back to: [1 John 4:17](#))

deceive, lie, deception, illusions

Definition:

The term “deceive” means to cause someone to believe something that is not true, often by telling a “lie.” The act of deceiving someone is called “lying,” “deceit,” or “deception.”

- Someone who causes others to believe something false is a “deceiver.” For example, Satan is called a “deceiver.” The evil spirits that he controls are also deceivers.
- To “lie” is to say something that is not true.
- A person, action, or message that is not truthful can be described as “deceptive.”
- The terms “deceit” and “deception” have the same meaning, but there are some small differences in how they are used.
- The descriptive terms “deceitful” and “deceptive” have the same meaning and are used in the same contexts.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “deceive” could include “lie to” or “cause to have a false belief” or “cause someone to think something that is not true.”
- The term “deceived” could also be translated as “caused to think something false” or “lied to” or “tricked” or “fooled” or “misled.”
- “Deceiver” could be translated as “liar” or “one who misleads” or “someone who deceives.”
- Depending on the context, the terms “deception” or “deceit” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “falsehood” or “lying” or “trickery” or “dishonesty.”
- The terms “deceptive” or “deceitful” could be translated as “untruthful” or “misleading” or “lying” to describe a person who speaks or acts in a way that causes other people to believe things that are not true.

(See also: [true](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:8
- 1 Timothy 2:14
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4
- Genesis 3:12-13
- Genesis 31:26-28
- Leviticus 19:11-12
- Matthew 27:64
- Micah 6:11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H898, H2048, H3577, H3584, H3868, H4123, H4820, H4860, H5230, H5377, H5558, H6121, H6231, H6601, H7411, H7423, H7683, H7686, H7952, H8267, H8496, H8582, H8591, H8649, G538, G539, G1386, G1387, G1388, G1818, G3884, G4105, G4106, G4108, G5422, G5423

(Go back to: [1 John 1:8](#); [3:7](#); [4:6](#))

declare, proclaim, announce

Definition:

The terms “declare” and “declaration” refer to making a formal or public statement, often to emphasize something. Other terms with similar meaning include “proclaim,” “proclamation,” “announce,” and “announcement.”

- A “declaration” not only emphasizes the importance of what is being proclaimed, but it also calls attention to the one making the declaration.
- For example, in the Old Testament, a message from God is often preceded by “the declaration of Yahweh” or “this is what Yahweh declares.” This expression emphasizes that it is Yahweh himself who is saying this. The fact that the message comes from Yahweh shows how important that message is.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “declare” could also be translated as “proclaim” or “publicly state” or “strongly say” or “emphatically state.”
- The term “declaration” could also be translated as “statement” or “proclamation.”
- The phrase “this is Yahweh’s declaration” could be translated as “this is what Yahweh declares” or “this is what Yahweh says.”

(See also: preach, decree)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 16:24
- 1 Corinthians 15:31-32
- 1 Samuel 24:17-18
- Amos 2:16
- Ezekiel 5:11-12
- Matthew 7:21-23

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H262, H559, H816, H874, H1696, H3045, H4853, H5002, H5042, H5046, H5608, H6567, H7121, H7561, H7878, H8085, G312, G518, G669, G1229, G1344, G1555, G1718, G1834, G2097, G2511, G2605, G2607, G3140, G3670, G3724, G3822, G3870, G3955, G4296

(Go back to: [1 John 1:2](#); [1:3](#); [1:5](#))

die, dead, deadly, death

Definition:

The term “death” refers to being physically dead instead of alive.

1. Physical death

- To “die” means to stop living. Death is the end of physical life.
- The expression “put to death” refers to killing or murdering someone, especially when a king or other ruler gives an order for someone to be killed.

2. Eternal death

- Eternal death is the separation of a person from God.
- This is the kind of death that happened to Adam when he sinned and disobeyed God. His relationship with God was broken. He became ashamed and tried to hide from God.
- This same kind of death happens to every person, because we sin. But God gives us eternal life when we have faith in Jesus Christ.

Translation Suggestions:

- To translate this term, it is best to use the everyday, natural word or expression in the target language that refers to death.
- In some languages, to “die” may be expressed as to “not live.” The term “dead” may be translated as “not alive” or “not having any life” or “not living.”
- Many languages use figurative expressions to describe death, such as to “pass away” in English. However, in the Bible it is best to use the most direct term for death that is used in everyday language.
- In the Bible, eternal life and eternal death are often compared to physical life and physical death. It is important in a translation to use the same word or phrase for both physical death and eternal death.
- In some languages it may be more clear to say “eternal death” when the context requires that meaning. Some translators may also feel it is best to say “physical death” in contexts where it is being contrasted to spiritual death.
- The expression “the dead” is a nominal adjective that refers to people who have died. Some languages will translate this as “dead people” or “people who have died.” (See: [nominal adjective](#))
- The expression “put to death” could also be translated as “kill” or “murder” or “execute.”

(See also: [believe](#), [faith](#), [life](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:21
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Acts 10:42
- Acts 14:19
- Colossians 2:15
- Colossians 2:20
- Genesis 2:15-17
- Genesis 34:27
- Matthew 16:28
- Romans 5:10

- Romans 5:12
- Romans 6:10

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:11** God told Adam that he could eat from any tree in the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he ate from this tree, he would **die**.
- **2:11** "Then you will **die**, and your body will return to dirt."
- **7:10** Then Isaac **died**, and Jacob and Esau buried him.
- **37:5** Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he **dies**. Everyone who believes in me will never **die**."
- **40:8** Through his **death**, Jesus opened a way for people to come to God.
- **43:7** "Although Jesus **died**, God raised him from the dead."
- **48:2** Because they sinned, everyone on earth gets sick and everyone **dies**.
- **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: H0006, H1478, H1826, H1934, H2491, H4191, H4192, H4193, H4194, H4463, H5038, H5315, H6297, H6757, H7496, H7523, H8045, H8546, H8552, G0336, G0337, G0520, G0599, G0615, G0622, G1634, G1935, G2079, G2253, G2286, G2287, G2288, G2289, G2348, G2837, G2966, G3498, G3499, G3500, G4430, G4880, G4881, G5053, G5054

(Go back to: [1 John 3:14](#); [Notes](#); [5:16](#); [5:17](#))

eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever

Definition:

The terms “everlasting” and “eternal” have very similar meanings and refer to something that will always exist or that lasts forever.

- The term “eternity” refers to a state of being that has no beginning or end. It can also refer to life that never ends.
- After this present life on earth, humans will spend eternity either in heaven with God or in hell apart from God.
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” are used in the New Testament to refer to living forever with God in heaven.

The term “forever” refers to never-ending time.

- The phrase “forever and ever” has the idea of time that never ends and expresses what eternity or eternal life is like. It emphasizes that something will always happen or exist. It refers to time that never ends.
- God said that David’s throne would last “forever.” This is referred to the fact that David’s descendant Jesus will reign as king forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “eternal” or “everlasting” could include “unending” or “never stopping” or “always continuing.”
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” could also be translated as “life that never ends” or “life that continues without stopping” or “the raising up of our bodies to live forever.”
- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “eternity” could include “existing outside of time” or “unending life” or “life in heaven.”
- Also consider how this word is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))
- “Forever” could also be translated by “always” or “never ending.”
- The phrase “will last forever” could also be translated as “always exist” or “will never stop” or “will always continue.”
- The emphatic phrase “forever and ever” could also be translated as “for always and always” or “not ever ending” or “which never, ever ends.”
- David’s throne lasting forever could be translated as “David’s descendant will reign forever” or “a descendant of David will always be reigning.”

(See also: David, reign, [life](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 17:8
- Genesis 48:4
- Exodus 15:17
- 2 Samuel 3:28-30
- 1 Kings 2:32-33
- Job 4:20-21
- Psalms 21:4
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Isaiah 40:27-28
- Daniel 7:18

- Luke 18:18
- Acts 13:46
- Romans 5:21
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Hebrews 10:11-14
- 1 John 1:2
- 1 John 5:12
- Revelation 1:4-6
- Revelation 22:3-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit **eternal life**?”
- **28:1** One day, a rich young ruler came up to Jesus and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to have **eternal life**?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only One who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have **eternal life**, obey God’s laws.”
- **28:10** Jesus answered, “Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or property for my name’s sake, will receive 100 times more and will also receive **eternal life**.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H4481, H5331, H5703, H5705, H5769, H5865, H5957, H6924, G126, G165, G166, G1336

(Go back to: [1 John 1:2](#); [2:25](#); [Notes](#); [3:15](#); [5:11](#); [5:13](#); [5:20](#))

evil, wicked, unpleasant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “evil” can refer either to the concept of moral wickedness or emotional unpleasantness. The context will usually make it clear which meaning is intended in the specific instance of the term.

- 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 24:11
- 1 Timothy 6:10
- 3 John 1:10
- Genesis 2:17
- Genesis 6:5-6
- Job 1:1
- Job 8:20
- Judges 9:57
- Luke 6:22-23
- Matthew 7:11-12
- Proverbs 3:7
- Psalms 22:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:4** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand good and **evil** like he does.”
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were living in the world. They had become very **wicked** and violent.
- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a righteous man living among **wicked** people.
- **4:2** God saw that if they all kept working together to do **evil**, they could do many more sinful things.
- **8:12** “You tried to do **evil** when you sold me as a slave, but God used the **evil** for good!”
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false gods and did many **evil** things.
- **17:1** 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**.
- **29:8** The king was so angry that he threw the **wicked** servant into prison until he could pay back all of his debt.

- **45:2** 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: H0205, H0605, H1100, H1681, H1942, H2154, H2162, H2254, H2617, H3399, H3415, H4209, H4849, H5753, H5766, H5767, H5999, H6001, H6090, H7451, H7455, H7489, H7561, H7562, H7563, H7564, G0092, G0113, G0459, G0932, G0987, G0988, G1426, G2549, G2551, G2554, G2555, G2556, G2557, G2559, G2560, G2635, G2636, G4151, G4189, G4190, G4191, G5337

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 John](#); [1 John 2 General Notes](#); [3:12](#))

faith

Definition:

In general, the term “faith” refers to a belief, trust or confidence in someone or something.

- To “have faith” in someone is to believe that what he says and does is true and trustworthy.
- To “have faith in Jesus” means to believe all of God’s teachings about Jesus. It especially means that people trust in Jesus and his sacrifice to cleanse them from their sin and to rescue them from the punishment they deserve because of their sin.
- True faith or belief in Jesus will cause a person to produce good spiritual fruits or behaviors because the Holy Spirit is living in him.
- Sometimes “faith” refers generally to all the teachings about Jesus, as in the expression “the truths of the faith.”
- In contexts such as “keep the faith” or “abandon the faith,” the term “faith” refers to the state or condition of believing all the teachings about Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, “faith” can be translated as “belief” or “conviction” or “confidence” or “trust.”
- For some languages these terms will be translated using forms of the verb “believe.” (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- The expression “keep the faith” could be translated by “keep believing in Jesus” or “continue to believe in Jesus.”
- The sentence “they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith” could be translated by “they must keep believing all the true things about Jesus that they have been taught.”
- The expression “my true son in the faith” could be translated by something like “who is like a son to me because I taught him to believe in Jesus” or “my true spiritual son, who believes in Jesus.”

(See also: [believe](#), [faithful](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:7
- Acts 6:7
- Galatians 2:20-21
- James 2:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:6** When Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham’s **faith** by saying, “Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a sacrifice to me.”
- **31:7** Then he (Jesus) said to Peter, “You man of little **faith**, why did you doubt?”
- **32:16** Jesus said to her, “Your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace.”
- **38:9** Then Jesus said to Peter, “Satan wants to have all of you, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your **faith** will not fail.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H529, H530, G1680, G3640, G4102, G6066

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 John](#); [1 John 5:4](#))

faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy

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.

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.”

(See also: [believe](#), [faith](#), [believe](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 24:49
- Leviticus 26:40
- Numbers 12:7
- Joshua 2:14
- Judges 2:16-17
- 1 Samuel 2:9
- Psalm 12:1
- Proverbs 11:12-13
- Isaiah 1:26
- Jeremiah 9:7-9
- Hosea 5:7
- Luke 12:46
- Luke 16:10
- Colossians 1:7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:24
- 3 John 1:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:5** 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.
- **17:9** 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.
- **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.
- **50:4** “If you remain **faithful** to me to the end, then God will save you.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0529, H0530, H0539, H540, H571, H898, H2181, H4603, H4604, H4820, G569, G571, G4103

(Go back to: [1 John 1:9](#))

false prophet

Definition:

A false prophet is a person who wrongly claims that his message comes from God.

- The prophecies of false prophets are not usually fulfilled. That is, they do not come true.
- False prophets teach messages that partially or totally contradict what the Bible says.
- This term could also be translated as “person who falsely claims to be God’s spokesman” or “someone who falsely claims to speak God’s words.”
- The New Testament teaches that in the end times there will be many false prophets who will try to deceive people into thinking that they come from God.

(See also: fulfill, prophet, [true](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:1-3
- 2 Peter 2:1
- Acts 13:6-8
- Luke 6:26
- Matthew 7:16
- Matthew 24:23-25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G5578

(Go back to: [1 John 4:1](#))

fear, afraid, frighten

Definition:

The terms “fear” refers to the unpleasant emotion a person feels when experiencing a potential threat to their safety or well-being. In the Bible, however, the term “fear” can also mean an attitude of worship, respect, awe, or obedience toward another person, usually someone powerful such as God or a king.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “fear” can be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: “be afraid;” “deeply respect;” or “deep respect;” “revere;” or “reverence;” or perhaps “be in awe of.”
- The phrase “fear not” could also be translated as “do not be afraid” or “stop being afraid.”
- The sentence “The fear of God fell on all of them” might be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: “Suddenly they all felt a deep awe and respect for God;” or “Immediately, they all felt very amazed and revered God deeply;” or “Right then, they all felt very afraid of God (because of his great power).”

(See also: awe, Yahweh, Lord, [marvel](#), power)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:18
- Acts 2:43
- Acts 19:15-17
- Genesis 50:21
- Isaiah 11:3-5
- Job 6:14
- Jonah 1:9
- Luke 12:5
- Matthew 10:28
- Proverbs 10:24-25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H367, H926, H1204, H1481, H1672, H1674, H1763, H2119, H2296, H2727, H2729, H2730, H2731, H2844, H2849, H2865, H3016, H3025, H3068, H3372, H3373, H3374, H4032, H4034, H4035, H4116, H4172, H6206, H6342, H6343, H6345, H6427, H7264, H7267, H7297, H7374, H7461, H7493, H8175, G870, G1167, G1168, G1169, G1630, G1719, G2124, G2125, G2962, G5398, G5399, G5400, G5401

(Go back to: [1 John 4:18](#))

fellowship

Definition:

In general, the term “fellowship” refers to friendly interactions between members of a group of people who share similar interests and experiences.

- In the Bible, the term “fellowship” usually refers to the unity of believers in Christ.
- Christian fellowship is a shared relationship that believers have with one another through their relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- The early Christians expressed their fellowship through listening to the teaching of God’s Word and praying together, through the sharing of their belongings, and through eating meals together.
- Christians also have fellowship with God through their faith in Jesus and his sacrificial death on the cross which removed the barrier between God and people.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “fellowship” could include “a sharing together” or “relationship” or “companionship” or “Christian community.”

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:3
- Acts 2:40-42
- Philippians 1:3-6
- Philippians 2:1
- Philippians 3:10
- Psalms 55:12-14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2266, H8667, G2842, G2844, G3352, G4790

(Go back to: [1 John 1:3](#); [1:6](#); [1:7](#))

flesh

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “flesh” literally refers to the soft tissue of the physical body of a human being or animal.

- The Bible also uses the term “flesh” in a figurative way to refer to all human beings or all living creatures.
- In the New Testament, the term “flesh” is used to refer to the sinful nature of human beings. This is often used in contrast to their spiritual nature.
- The expression “own flesh and blood” refers to someone who is biologically related to another person, such as a parent, sibling, child, or grandchild.
- The expression “flesh and blood” can also refer to a person’s ancestors or descendants.
- The expression “one flesh” refers to the physical uniting of a man and woman in marriage.

Translation Suggestions:

- In the context of an animal’s body, “flesh” could be translated as “body” or “skin” or “meat.”
- When it is used to refer generally to all living creatures, this term could be translated as “living beings” or “everything that is alive.”
- When referring in general to all people, this term could be translated as “people” or “human beings” or “everyone who lives.”
- The expression “flesh and blood” could also be translated as “relatives” or “family” or “kinfolk” or “family clan.” There may be contexts where it could be translated as “ancestors” or “descendants.”
- Some languages may have an expression that is similar in meaning to “flesh and blood.”
- The expression “become one flesh” could be translated as “unite sexually” or “become as one body” or “become like one person in body and spirit.” The translation of this expression should be checked to make sure it is acceptable in the project language and culture. (See: euphemism). It should also be understood that this is figurative, and does not mean that a man and a woman who “become one flesh” literally become one person.

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:16
- 2 John 1:7
- Ephesians 6:12
- Galatians 1:16
- Genesis 2:24
- John 1:14
- Matthew 16:17
- Romans 8:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H829, H1320, H1321, H2878, H3894, H4207, H7607, H7683, G2907, G4559, G4560, G4561

(Go back to: [1 John 2:16](#); [4:2](#))

forgive, forgiven, forgiveness, pardon, pardoned

Definition:

To forgive someone means to not hold a grudge against that person even though they did something hurtful. "Forgiveness" is the act of forgiving someone.

- Forgiving someone often means not punishing that person for something he has done wrong.
- This term can be used figuratively to mean "cancel," as in the expression "forgive a debt."
- When people confess their sins, God forgives them based on Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross.
- Jesus taught his disciples to forgive others as he has forgiven them.

The term "pardon" means to forgive and not punish someone for his sin.

- This word has the same meaning as "forgive" but may also include the meaning of a formal decision to not punish someone who is guilty.
- In a court of law, a judge can pardon a person found guilty of a crime.
- Even though we are guilty of sin, Jesus Christ pardoned us from being punished in hell, based on his sacrificial death on the cross.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, "forgive" could be translated as "pardon" or "cancel" or "release" or "not hold against" (someone).
- The term "forgiveness" could be translated by a word or phrase that means "practice of not resenting" or "declaring (someone) as not guilty" or "the act of pardoning."
- If the language has a word for a formal decision to forgive, that word could be used to translate "pardon."

(See also: guilt)

Bible References:

- Genesis 50:17
- Numbers 14:17-19
- Deuteronomy 29:20-21
- Joshua 24:19-20
- 2 Kings 5:17-19
- Psalms 25:11
- Psalms 25:17-19
- Isaiah 55:6-7
- Isaiah 40:2
- Luke 5:21
- Acts 8:22
- Ephesians 4:31-32
- Colossians 3:12-14
- 1 John 2:12

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **7:10** But Esau had already **forgiven** Jacob, and they were happy to see each other again.
- **13:15** Then Moses climbed the mountain again and prayed that God would **forgive** the people. God listened to Moses and **forgave** them.
- **17:13** David repented of his sin and God **forgave** him.

- **21:5** In the New Covenant, God would write his law on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would **forgive** their sins.
- **29:1** One day Peter asked Jesus, "Master, how many times should I **forgive** my brother when he sins against me?"
- **29:8** I **forgave** your debt because you begged me.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the **forgiveness** of sins."

Word Data:

- H5546, H5547, H3722, H5375, H5545, H5547, H7521, G859, G863, G5483

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 John](#); [1 John 1:9](#); [2:12](#))

God

Definition:

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” or “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.”
NOTE: In the biblical text, when a person who does not worship Yahweh speaks about Yahweh and uses the word “god,” it is acceptable to render the term without a capital letter in reference to Yahweh (see Jonah 1:6, 3:9).
- 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 1:7
- 1 Samuel 10:7-8
- 1 Timothy 4:10
- Colossians 1:16
- Deuteronomy 29:14-16
- Ezra 3:1-2
- Genesis 1:2
- Hosea 4:11-12
- Isaiah 36:6-7
- James 2:20
- Jeremiah 5:5
- John 1:3
- Joshua 3:9-11
- Lamentations 3:43
- Micah 4:5
- Philippians 2:6
- Proverbs 24:12

- Psalms 47:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:1 God** created the universe and everything in it in six days.
- **1:15 God** made man and woman in his own image.
- **5:3** "I am **God** Almighty. I will make a covenant with you."
- **9:14 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.'"
- **10:2** Through these plagues, **God** showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's gods.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the true **God**.
- **22:7** "You, my son, will be called the prophet of the **Most High God** who will prepare the people to receive the Messiah!"
- **24:9** 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.
- **25:7** "Worship only the Lord your **God** and only serve him."
- **28:1** "There is only one who is good, and that is **God**."
- **49:9** 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

(Go back to: [1 John 1:5](#); [2:5](#); [2:17](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:9](#); [3:10](#); [3:17](#); [3:20](#); [3:21](#); [4:1](#); [4:2](#); [4:3](#); [4:4](#); [4:6](#); [4:7](#); [4:8](#); [4:9](#); [4:10](#); [4:11](#); [4:12](#); [4:15](#); [4:16](#); [4:20](#); [4:21](#); [5:1](#); [5:2](#); [5:3](#); [5:4](#); [5:9](#); [5:10](#); [5:11](#); [5:18](#); [5:19](#); [5:20](#))

God the Father, heavenly Father, Father

Facts:

The terms “God the Father” and “heavenly Father” refer to Yahweh, the one true God. Another term with the same meaning is “Father,” used most often when Jesus was referring to him.

- God exists as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each one is fully God, and yet they are only one God. This is a mystery that mere humans cannot fully understand.
- God the Father sent God the Son (Jesus) into the world and he sends the Holy Spirit to his people.
- Anyone who believes in God the Son becomes a child of God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit comes to live in that person. This is another mystery that human beings cannot fully understand.

Translation Suggestions:

- In translating the phrase “God the Father,” it is best to translate “Father” with the same word that the language naturally uses to refer to a human father.
- The term “heavenly Father” could be translated by “Father who lives in heaven” or “Father God who lives in heaven” or “God our Father from heaven.”
- Usually “Father” is capitalized when it, refers to God.

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

(See also: [ancestor](#), [God](#), [heaven](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [Jesus](#), [Son of God](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 8:4-6
- 1 John 2:1
- 1 John 2:23
- 1 John 3:1
- Colossians 1:1-3
- Ephesians 5:18-21
- Luke 10:22
- Matthew 5:16
- Matthew 23:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **24:9** 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.
- **29:9** Then Jesus said, “This is what my **heavenly Father** will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
- **37:9** Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “**Father**, thank you for hearing me.”
- **40:7** Then Jesus cried out, “It is finished! **Father**, I give my spirit into your hands.”
- **42:10** “So go, make disciples of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of **the Father**, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
- **43:8** “Jesus is now exalted to the right hand of **God the Father**.”
- **50:10** “Then the righteous ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of **God their Father**.”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1, H2, G3962

(Go back to: [1 John 1:2](#); [1:3](#); [2:1](#); [2:14](#); [2:15](#); [2:16](#); [2:22](#); [2:23](#); [2:24](#); [3:1](#); [4:14](#))

god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry

Definition:

A false god is something that people worship instead of the one true God. The term “goddess” refers specifically to a female false god.

- These false gods or goddesses do not exist. Yahweh is the only God.
- People sometimes make objects into idols to worship as symbols of their false gods.
- In the Bible, God’s people frequently turned away from obeying him in order to worship false gods.
- Demons often deceive people into believing that the false gods and idols they worship have power.
- Baal, Dagon, and Molech were three of the many false gods that were worshiped by people in Bible times.
- Asherah and Artemis (Diana) were two of the goddesses that ancient peoples worshiped.

An idol is an object that people make so they can worship it. Something is described as “idolatrous” if it involves giving honor to something other than the one true God.

- People make idols to represent the false gods that they worship.
- These false gods do not exist; there is no God besides Yahweh.
- Sometimes demons work through an idol to make it seem like it has power, even though it does not.
- Idols are often made of valuable materials like gold, silver, bronze, or expensive wood.
- An “idolatrous kingdom” means a “kingdom of people who worship idols” or a “kingdom of people who worship earthly things.”
- The term “idolatrous figure” is another word for a “carved image” or an “idol.”

Translation Suggestions:

- There may already be a word for “god” or “false god” in the language or in a nearby language.
- The term “idol” could be used to refer to false gods.
- In English, a lower case “g” is used to refer to false gods, and upper case “G” is used to refer to the one true God. Other languages also do that.
- Another option would be to use a completely different word to refer to the false gods.
- Some languages may add a word to specify whether the false god is described as male or female.

(See also: [God](#), Asherah, Baal, Molech, demon, image, kingdom, worship)

Bible References:

- Genesis 35:2
- Exodus 32:1
- Psalms 31:6
- Psalms 81:8-10
- Isaiah 44:20
- Acts 7:41
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 15:20
- Acts 19:27
- Romans 2:22
- Galatians 4:8-9
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **10:2** Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's **gods**.
- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other **gods**."
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false **gods** and did many evil things.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite **gods** instead of Yahweh, the true God.
- **18:13** But most of Judah's kings were evil, corrupt, and they worshiped idols. Some of the kings even sacrificed their children to false **gods**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H205, H367, H410, H426, H430, H457, H1322, H1544, H1892, H2553, H3649, H4656, H4906, H5236, H5566, H6089, H6090, H6091, H6456, H6459, H6673, H6736, H6754, H7723, H8163, H8251, H8267, H8441, H8655, G1493, G1494, G1495, G1496, G1497, G2299, G2712

(Go back to: [1 John 5:21](#))

hand

Definition:

The word “hand” refers to the part of the body at the end of the arm. This term is often used figuratively to refer to a person’s power, control, or action, whether it be in reference to God or in reference to a human person.

Some of the various uses of the term “hand” include the following:

- The term “hand” can be used figuratively to refer to the position of being “beside” a person, an object, or a location.
- To “lay a hand on” means to “harm.” To “save from the hand of” means to prevent someone from being harmed by another person.
- The position of being “on the right hand” means “on the right side” or “to the right.”
- The expression “by the hand of” someone means “by” or “through” the action of that person. For example, the phrase “by the hand of the Lord” means that God caused something to happen.
- Expressions such as “hand over to” or “deliver into the hands of” refer to causing someone to be under the control or power of someone else.
- The term “laying on of hands” can refer to placing a hand on a person in order to dedicate that person to God’s service, to pray for healing, or to ask God to bless that person.
- When Paul says “written by my hand,” it means that he himself wrote that part of the letter rather than speaking it to someone else to write down.

Translation Suggestions

- These expressions and other figures of speech could be translated using other figurative expressions that have the same meaning. Or the meaning could be translated using direct, literal language (see examples above).
- The expression “handed him the scroll” could also be translated as “gave him the scroll” or “put the scroll in his hand.” It was not given to him permanently, but just for the purpose of using it at that time.
- An expression such as “delivered them into the hands of their enemies” or “handed them over to their enemies,” could be translated as “allowed their enemies to conquer them” or “caused them to be captured by their enemies” or “empowered their enemies to gain control over them.”
- To “die by the hand of” could be translated as “be killed by.”
- The expression “on the right hand of” could be translated as “on the right side of.”
- In regard to Jesus being “seated at the right hand of God,” if this does not communicate in the language that it refers to a position of high honor and equal authority, a different expression with that meaning could be used. Or a short explanation could be added: “on the right side of God, in the position of highest authority.”

(See also: power, right hand, honor, bless)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:25
- Acts 8:17
- Acts 11:21
- Genesis 9:5
- Genesis 14:20
- John 3:35
- Mark 7:32
- Matthew 6:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2026, H2651, H2947, H2948, H3027, H3028, H3225, H3231, H3233, H3709, H7126, H7138, H8040, H8042, H8168, G710, G1188, G1448, G1451, G2176, G2902, G4084, G4474, G5495, G5496, G5497

(Go back to: [1 John 1:1](#))

heart

Definition:

The term “heart” refers to the internal bodily organ that pumps blood throughout the body in people and animals. However, in the Bible the term “heart” is often used figuratively to refer to a person’s thoughts, emotions, desires, or will.

- To have a “hard heart” is a common expression that means a person stubbornly refuses to obey God.
- The expressions “with all my heart” or “with my whole heart” mean to do something with complete sincerity, commitment, or willingness, holding nothing back.
- The expression “take it to heart” means to treat something seriously and apply it to one’s life.
- The term “brokenhearted” describes a person who is very sad. That person has been deeply hurt emotionally.

Translation Suggestions

- Some languages use a different body part such as “stomach” or “liver” to refer to these ideas.
- Other languages may use one word to express some of these concepts and another word to express others.
- If “heart” or other body part does not have this meaning, some languages may need to express this literally with terms such as “thoughts” or “emotions” or “desires.”
- Depending on the context, “with all my heart” or “with my whole heart” could be translated as “with all my energy” or “with complete dedication” or “completely” or “with total commitment.”
- The expression “take it to heart” could be translated as “treat it seriously” or “carefully think about it.”
- The expression “hard-hearted” could also be translated as “stubbornly rebellious” or “refusing to obey” or “continually disobeying God.”
- Ways to translate “brokenhearted” could include “very sad” or “feeling deeply hurt.”

(See also: hard)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:17
- 1 Thessalonians 2:4
- 2 Thessalonians 3:13-15
- Acts 8:22
- Acts 15:9
- Luke 8:15
- Mark 2:6
- Matthew 5:8
- Matthew 22:37

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1079, H2436, H2504, H2910, H3519, H3629, H3820, H3821, H3823, H3824, H3825, H3826, H4578, H5315, H5640, H7130, H7307, H7356, H7907, G674, G1282, G1271, G2133, G2588, G2589, G4641, G4698, G5590

(Go back to: [1 John 3:19](#); [3:20](#); [3:21](#))

Holy One

Definition:

The term “Holy One” is a title in the Bible that almost always refers to God.

- In the Old Testament, this title often occurs in the phrase “Holy One of Israel.”
- In the New Testament, Jesus is also referred to as the “Holy One.”
- The term “holy one” is sometimes used in the Bible to refer to an angel.

Translation Suggestions:

- The literal term is “the Holy” (with “One” being implied.) Many languages (like English) will translate this with the implied noun included (such as “One” or “God”).
- This term could also be translated as “God, who is holy” or “the Set Apart One.”
- The phrase “the Holy One of Israel” could be translated as “the Holy God whom Israel worships” or “the Holy One who rules Israel.”
- It is best to translate this term using the same word or phrase that is used to translate “holy.”

(See also: [holy](#), [God](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:20
- 2 Kings 19:22
- Acts 2:27
- Acts 3:13-14
- Isaiah 5:15-17
- Isaiah 41:14
- Luke 4:33-34

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2623, H376, H6918, G40, G3741

([Go back to: 1 John 2:20](#))

Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit

Facts:

These terms all refer to the Holy Spirit, who is God. The one true God exists eternally as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit is also referred to as “the Spirit” and “Spirit of Yahweh” and “Spirit of truth.”
- Because the Holy Spirit is God, he is absolutely holy, infinitely pure, and morally perfect in all his nature and in everything he does.
- Along with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit was active in creating the world.
- When God’s Son, Jesus, returned to heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to his people to lead them, teach them, comfort them, and enable them to do God’s will.
- The Holy Spirit guided Jesus and he guides those who believe in Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could simply be translated with the words used to translate “holy” and “spirit.”
- Ways to translate this term could also include “Pure Spirit” or “Spirit who is Holy” or “God the Spirit.”

(See also: holy, [spirit](#), [God](#), Lord, [God the Father](#), [Son of God](#), gift)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 10:10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8
- Acts 8:17
- Galatians 5:25
- Genesis 1:1-2
- Isaiah 63:10
- Job 33:4
- Matthew 12:31
- Matthew 28:18-19
- Psalms 51:10-11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:1** But **God’s Spirit** was there over the water.
- **24:8** When Jesus came up out of the water after being baptized, **the Spirit of God** appeared in the form of a dove and came down and rested on him.
- **26:1** After overcoming Satan’s temptations, Jesus returned in the power of **the Holy Spirit** to the region of Galilee where he lived.
- **26:3** Jesus read, “God has given me **his Spirit** so that I can proclaim good news to the poor, freedom to captives, recovery of sight for the blind, and release to the oppressed.”
- **42:10** “So go, make disciples of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and **the Holy Spirit** and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
- **43:3** They were all filled with the **Holy Spirit** and they began to speak in other languages.
- **43:8** “And Jesus has sent the **Holy Spirit** just as he promised he would do. The **Holy Spirit** is causing the things that you are now seeing and hearing.”
- **43:11** Peter answered them, “Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your sins. Then he will also give you the gift of the **Holy Spirit.**”
- **45:1** He (Stephen) had a good reputation and was full of the **Holy Spirit** and of wisdom.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3068, H6944, H7307, G40, G4151

(Go back to: [1 John 3:24](#); [4:2](#); [4:13](#); [5:6](#); [5:8](#))

hope, hoped

Definition:

Hope is strongly desiring something to happen. Hope can imply either certainty or uncertainty regarding a future event.

- In the Bible, the term “hope” also has the meaning of “trust,” as in “my hope is in the Lord.” It refers to a sure expectation of receiving what God has promised his people.
- Sometimes the ULT translates the term in the original language as “confidence.” This happens mostly in the New Testament in situations where people who believe in Jesus as their Savior have the assurance (or confidence or hope) of receiving what God has promised.
- To have “no hope” means to have no expectation of something good happening. It means that it is actually very certain that it will not happen.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, the term to “hope” could also be translated as to “wish” or to “desire” or to “expect.”
- The expression “nothing to hope for” could be translated as “nothing to trust in” or “no expectation of anything good”
- To “have no hope” could be translated as “have no expectation of anything good” or “have no security” or “be sure that nothing good will happen.”
- The expression “have set your hopes on” could also be translated as “have put your confidence in” or “have been trusting in.”
- The phrase “I find hope in your Word” could also be translated as “I am confident that your Word is true” or “Your Word helps me trust in you” or “When I obey your Word, I am certain to be blessed.”
- Phrases such as “hope in” God could also be translated as “trust in God” or “know for sure that God will do what he has promised” or “be certain that God is faithful.”

(See also: bless, [confidence](#), good, [obey](#), trust, [word of God](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 29:14-15
- 1 Thessalonians 2:19
- Acts 24:14-16
- Acts 26:6
- Acts 27:20
- Colossians 1:5
- Job 11:20

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H982, H983, H986, H2620, H2976, H3175, H3176, H3689, H4009, H4268, H4723, H7663, H7664, H8431, H8615, G91, G560, G1679, G1680, G2070

(Go back to: [1 John 3:3](#))

hour

Definition:

In addition to being used to refer to when or how long something took place, the term “hour” is also used in several figurative ways:

- Sometimes “hour” refers to a regular, scheduled time to do something, such as the “hour of prayer.”
- When the text says that the “hour had come” for Jesus to suffer and be put to death, this means that it was the appointed time for this to happen—the time that God had selected long ago.
- The term “hour” is also used to mean “at that moment” or “right then.”
- When the text talks about the “hour” being late, this means that it was late in the day, when the sun would soon be setting.

Translation Suggestions:

- When used figuratively, the term “hour” can be translated as “time” or “moment” or “appointed time.”
- The phrase “in that very hour” or “the same hour” could be translated as “at that moment” or “at that time” or “immediately” or “right then.”
- The expression “the hour was late” could be translated as “it was late in the day” or “it would soon be getting dark” or “it was late afternoon.”

(See also: hour)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:30
- Acts 10:30
- Mark 14:35

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G5610

(Go back to: [1 John 2:18](#))

Jesus, Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus

Facts:

Jesus is God's Son. The name "Jesus" means "Yahweh saves." The term "Christ" is a title that means "anointed one" and is another word for Messiah.

- The two names are often combined as "Jesus Christ" or "Christ Jesus." These names emphasize that God's Son is the Messiah, who came to save people from being punished eternally for their sins.
- In a miraculous way, the Holy Spirit caused the eternal Son of God to be born as a human being. His mother was told by an angel to call him "Jesus" because he was destined to save people from their sins.
- Jesus did many miracles that revealed that he is God and that he is the Christ, or the Messiah.

Translation Suggestions:

- In many languages "Jesus" and "Christ" are spelled in a way that keeps the sounds or spelling as close to the original as possible. For example, "Jesucristo," "Jezus Christus," "Yesus Kristus", and "Hesukristo" are some of the ways that these names are translated into different languages.
- For the term "Christ," some translators may prefer to use only some form of the term "Messiah" throughout.
- Also consider how these names are spelled in a nearby local or national language.

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

(See also: [Christ](#), [God](#), [God the Father](#), high priest, kingdom of God, Mary, [Savior](#), [Son of God](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:11
- 1 John 2:2
- 1 John 4:15
- 1 Timothy 1:2
- 2 Peter 1:2
- 2 Thessalonians 2:15
- 2 Timothy 1:10
- Acts 2:23
- Acts 5:30
- Acts 10:36
- Hebrews 9:14
- Hebrews 10:22
- Luke 24:20
- Matthew 1:21
- Matthew 4:3
- Philippians 2:5
- Philippians 2:10
- Philippians 4:21-23
- Revelation 1:6

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **22:4** The angel said, "You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You are to name him **Jesus** and he will be the Messiah."

- **23:2** "Name him **Jesus** (which means, 'Yahweh saves'), because he will save the people from their sins."
- **24:7** So John baptized him (Jesus), even though **Jesus** had never sinned.
- **24:9** 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**.
- **25:8** **Jesus** did not give in to Satan's temptations, so Satan left him.
- **26:8** Then **Jesus** went throughout the region of Galilee, and large crowds came to him. They brought many people who were sick or handicapped, including those who could not see, walk, hear, or speak, and **Jesus** healed them.
- **31:3** Then **Jesus** finished praying and went to the disciples. He walked on top of the water across the lake toward their boat!
- **38:2** He (Judas) knew that the Jewish leaders denied that **Jesus** was the Messiah and that they were plotting to kill him.
- **40:8** Through his death, **Jesus** opened a way for people to come to God.
- **42:11** Then **Jesus** was taken up to heaven, and a cloud hid him from their sight. **Jesus** sat down at the right hand of God to rule over all things.
- **50:17** **Jesus** and his people will live on the new earth, and he will reign forever over everything that exists. He will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, evil, pain, or death. **Jesus** will rule his kingdom with peace and justice, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: G2424, G5547

(Go back to: [1 John 1:3](#); [1:7](#); [2:1](#); [2:22](#); [3:23](#); [4:2](#); [4:3](#); [4:15](#); [5:1](#); [5:5](#); [5:6](#); [5:20](#))

joy, joyful, rejoice, glad

Definition:

joy

The term “joy” refers to a feeling of delight or deep satisfaction. 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.

rejoice

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 8:10
- Psalm 48:2
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- Matthew 2:9-10
- Luke 15:7
- Luke 19:37-38
- John 3:29
- Acts 16:32-34
- Romans 5:1-2
- Romans 15:30-32
- Galatians 5:23
- Philippians 4:10-13

- 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16
- Philemon 1:4-7
- James 1:2
- 3 John 1:1-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **33:7** "The rocky ground is a person who hears God's word and accepts it with **joy**."
- **34:4** "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."
- **41:7** 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, H2302, H2304, H2305, H2654, H2898, H4885, H5937, H5947, H5965, H5970, H6342, H6670, H7440, H7442, H7444, H7445, H7797, H7832, H8055, H8056, H8057, H8342, H8643, G20, G21, G2165, G2167, G2744, G4640, G4796, G4913, G5463, G5479

(Go back to: [1 John 1:4](#))

judge, judgment

Definition:

The terms “judge” and “judgment” often refer to making a decision about whether or not something is good, wise, or right. However, these terms can also refer to actions performed by a person as the result of a decision, usually in the context of deciding that something is bad, wrong, or evil.

- The terms “judge” and “judgment” can also mean “to cause harm to” (usually because God has decided a person or nation’s actions are wicked).
- The “judgment of God” often refers to his decision to condemn something or someone as sinful.
- God’s judgment usually includes punishing people for their sin.
- The term “judge” can also mean “condemn.” God instructs his people not to judge each other in this way.
- Another meaning is “arbitrate between” or “judge between,” as in deciding which person is right in a dispute between them.
- In some contexts, God’s “judgments” are what he has decided is right and just. They are similar to his decrees, laws, or precepts.
- “Judgment” can refer to wise decision-making ability. A person who lacks “judgment” does not have the wisdom to make wise decisions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate to “judge” could include to “decide” or to “condemn” or to “punish” or to “decree.”
- The term “judgment” could be translated as “punishment” or “decision” or “verdict” or “decree” or “condemnation.”
- In some contexts, the phrase “in the judgment” could also be translated as “on judgment day” or “during the time when God judges people.”

(See also: decree, judge, judgment day, just, law, law)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:17
- 1 Kings 3:9
- Acts 10:42-43
- Isaiah 3:14
- James 2:4
- Luke 6:37
- Micah 3:9-11
- Psalm 54:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would **judge** them as guilty, and he would punish them.
- **21:8** A king is someone who rules over a kingdom and **judges** the people. The Messiah would come would be the perfect king who would sit on the throne of his ancestor David. He would reign over the whole world forever, and who would always **judge** honestly and make the right decisions.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted to the other religious leaders, “We do not need any more witnesses! You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your **judgment?**”

- **50:14** But God will **judge** everyone who does not believe in Jesus. He will throw them into hell, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H148, H430, H1777, H1778, H1779, H1780, H1781, H1782, H2940, H4055, H4941, H6414, H6415, H6416, H6417, H6419, H6485, H8196, H8199, H8201, G144, G350, G968, G1106, G1252, G1341, G1345, G1348, G1349, G2917, G2919, G2920, G2922, G2923, G4232

(Go back to: [1 John 4:17](#))

know, knowledge, unknown, distinguish

Definition:

The term “know” and “knowledge” means generally to understand something or someone. It can also mean to be aware of a fact or to be familiar with a person. The expression “to make known” means to tell information.

- The term “knowledge” refers to information that people know. It can apply to knowing physical concepts or abstract concepts.
- To “know about” God means to understand facts about him because of what he has revealed to us.
- To “know” God means to have a relationship with him. This also applies to knowing people.
- To know God’s will means to be aware of what he has commanded, or to understand what he wants a person to do.
- To “know the Law” means to be aware of what God has commanded or to understand what God has instructed in the laws he gave to Moses.
- Sometimes “knowledge” is used as a synonym for “wisdom,” which includes living in a way that is pleasing to God.
- The “knowledge of God” is sometimes used as a synonym for the “fear of Yahweh.”
- When used of a man and a woman to “know” is often an euphemism that refers to having sexual intercourse.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “know” could include “understand” or “be familiar with” or “be aware of” or “be acquainted with” or “be in relationship with.”
- In the context of understanding the difference between two things, the term is usually translated as “distinguish.” When used in this way, the term is often followed by the preposition “between.”
- Some languages have two different words for “know,” one for knowing facts and one for knowing a person and having a relationship with him.
- The term “make known” could be translated as “cause people to know” or “reveal” or “tell about” or “explain.”
- To “know about” something could be translated as “be aware of” or “be familiar with.”
- The expression “know how to” means to understand the process or method of getting something done. It could also be translated as “be able to” or “have the skill to.”
- The term “knowledge” could also be translated as “what is known” or “wisdom” or “understanding,” depending on the context.

(See also: law, [reveal](#), [understand](#), wise)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 2:12-13
- 1 Samuel 17:46
- 2 Corinthians 2:15
- 2 Peter 1:3-4
- Deuteronomy 4:39-40
- Genesis 19:5
- Luke 1:77

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1843, H1844, H1847, H1875, H3045, H3046, H4093, H4486, H5046, H5234, H5475, H5869, G50, G56, G1097, G1107, G1108, G1492, G1921, G1922, G1987, G2467, G2589, G4267, G4894

(Go back to: 1 John 2:3; 2:4; 2:5; 2:11; 2:13; 2:14; 2:18; 2:20; 2:21; 2:29; 3:1; 3:2; 3:5; 3:6; 3:14; 3:15; 3:16; 3:19; 3:20; 3:24; 4:2; 4:6; 4:7; 4:8; 4:13; 4:16; 5:2; 5:13; 5:15; 5:18; 5:19; 5:20)

last day, latter days

Definition:

The term “last days” or “latter days” refers generally to the time period at the end of the current age.

- This time period will have an unknown duration.
- The “last days” are a time of judgment upon those who have turned away from God.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “last days” can also be translated as “final days” or “end times.”
- In some contexts, this could be translated as “end of the world” or “when this world ends.”

(See also: day of the Lord, [judge](#), turn, [world](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 3:3-4
- Daniel 10:14-15
- Hebrews 1:2
- Isaiah 2:2
- James 5:3
- Jeremiah 23:19-20
- John 11:24-26
- Micah 4:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H319, H3117, G2078, G2250

([Go back to: 1 John 2 General Notes](#))

lawful, unlawful, not lawful, lawless, lawlessness

Definition:

The term “lawful” refers to something that is permitted to be done according to a law or other requirement. The opposite of this is “unlawful,” which simply means “not lawful.”

- In the Bible, something was “lawful” if it was permitted by God’s moral law, or by the Law of Moses and other Jewish laws. Something that was “unlawful” was “not permitted” by those laws.
- To do something “lawfully” means to do it “properly” or “in the right way.”
- Many of the things that the Jewish laws considered lawful or not lawful were not in agreement with God’s laws about loving others.
- Depending on the context, ways to translate “lawful” could include “permitted” or “according to God’s law” or “following our laws” or “proper” or “fitting.”
- The phrase “Is it lawful?” could also be translated as “Do our laws allow?” or “Is that something our laws permit?”

The terms “unlawful” and “not lawful” are used to describe actions that break a law.

- In the New Testament, the term “unlawful” is not only used to refer to breaking God’s laws, but also often refers to breaking Jewish man-made laws.
- Over the years, the Jews added to the laws that God gave to them. The Jewish leaders would call something “unlawful” if it did not conform to their man-made laws.
- When Jesus and his disciples were picking grain on a Sabbath day, the Pharisees accused them of doing something “unlawful” because it was breaking the Jewish laws about not working on that day.
- When Peter stated that eating unclean foods was “unlawful” for him, he meant that if he ate those foods he would be breaking the laws God had given the Israelites about not eating certain foods.

The term “lawless” describes a person who does not obey laws or rules. When a country or group of people are in a state of “lawlessness,” there is widespread disobedience, rebellion, or immorality.

- A lawless person is rebellious and does not obey God’s laws.
- The apostle Paul wrote that in the last days there will be a “man of lawlessness,” or a “lawless one,” who will be influenced by Satan to do evil things.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term “unlawful” should be translated using a word or expression that means “not lawful” or “lawbreaking.”
- Other ways to translate “unlawful” could be “not permitted” or “not according to God’s law” or “not conforming to our laws.”
- The expression “against the law” has the same meaning as “unlawful.”
- The term “lawless” could also be translated as “rebellious” or “disobedient” or “law-defying”.
- The term “lawlessness” could be translated as “not obeying any laws” or “rebellion (against God’s laws).”
- The phrase “man of lawlessness” could be translated as “man who does not obey any laws” or “man who rebels against God’s laws.”
- It is important to keep the concept of “law” in this term, if possible.
- Note that the term “unlawful” has a different meaning from this term.

(See also: law, law, Moses, Sabbath)

Bible References:

- Matthew 7:21-23

- Matthew 12:2
- Matthew 12:4
- Matthew 12:10
- Mark 3:4
- Luke 6:2
- Acts 2:23
- Acts 10:28
- Acts 22:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3
- Titus 2:14
- 1 John 3:4-6

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6530, G111, G113, G266, G458, G459, G1832, G3545

(Go back to: [1 John 3:4](#))

life, live, living, alive

Definition:

The term “life” refers to being physically alive as opposed to being physically dead.

1. Physical life

- A “life” can also refer to an individual person as in “a life was saved”.
- Sometimes the word “life” refers to the experience of living as in, “his life was enjoyable.”
- It can also refer to a person’s lifespan, as in the expression, “the end of his life.”
- The term “living” may refer to being physically alive, as in “my mother is still living.” It may also refer to dwelling somewhere as in, “they were living in the city.”
- In the Bible, the concept of “life” is often contrasted with the concept of “death.”

2. Eternal life

- A person has eternal life when he believes in Jesus. God gives that person a transformed life with the Holy Spirit living in him.
- The opposite of eternal life is eternal death, which means being separated from God and experiencing eternal punishment.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “life” can be translated as “existence” or “person” or “soul” or “being” or “experience.”
- The term “live” could be translated by “dwell” or “reside” or “exist.”
- The expression “end of his life” could be translated as “when he stopped living.”
- The expression “spared their lives” could be translated as “allowed them to live” or “did not kill them.”
- The expression “they risked their lives” could be translated as “they put themselves in danger” or “they did something that could have killed them.”
- When the Bible text talks about eternal life, the term “life” could be translated in the following ways: “eternal life” or “God making us alive in our spirits” or “new life by God’s Spirit” or “being made alive in our inner self.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “give life” could also be translated as “cause to live” or “give eternal life” or “cause to live eternally.”

(See also: [death](#), [everlasting](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 1:3
- Acts 10:42
- Genesis 2:7
- Genesis 7:22
- Hebrews 10:20
- Jeremiah 44:2
- John 1:4
- Judges 2:18
- Luke 12:23
- Matthew 7:14

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:10** So God took some dirt, formed it into a man, and breathed **life** into him.
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were *_living_* in the world.
- **8:13** When Joseph's brothers returned home and told their father, Jacob, that Joseph was still **alive**, he was very happy.
- **17:9** However, toward the end of his [David's] **life** he sinned terribly before God.
- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal **life**?"
- **35:5** Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the **Life**."
- **44:5** "You are the ones who told the Roman governor to kill Jesus. You killed the author of **life**, but God raised him from the dead."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1934, H2416, H2417, H2421, H2425, H5315, G198, G222, G227, G806, G590

(Go back to: [1 John 1:1](#); [1:2](#); [2:16](#); [2:25](#); [3:14](#); [3:15](#); [3:16](#); [4:9](#); [5:11](#); [5:12](#); [5:13](#); [5:16](#); [5:20](#))

light, luminary, shine, brighten, enlighten

Definition:

The term “light” is used figuratively in various ways in the Bible. Light is often used as a metaphor for wisdom, life, righteousness, truth, or happiness.

- Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” to express that he brings God’s true message to the world and rescues people from the darkness of their sin.
- Christians are commanded to “walk in the light,” which means they should be living the way God wants them to and avoiding evil.
- The apostle John stated that “God is light” and in him there is no darkness at all.
- Jesus said that he was “the light of the world” and that his followers should shine like lights in the world by living in a way that clearly shows how great God is.
- “Walking in the light” represents living in a way that pleases God, doing what is good and right. Walking in darkness represents living in rebellion against God, doing evil things.

Translation Suggestions:

- When translating, it is important to keep the literal terms “light” and “darkness” even when they are used figuratively.
- It may be necessary to explain the comparison in the text. For example, “walk as children of light” could be translated as “live openly righteous lives, like someone who walks in bright sunlight.”
- Make sure that the translation of “light” does not refer to an object that gives light, such as a lamp. The translation of this term should refer to the light itself.

(See also: [darkness](#), wisdom, [life](#), [righteous](#), [true](#), [joy](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:7
- 1 John 2:8
- 2 Corinthians 4:6
- Acts 26:18
- Isaiah 2:5
- John 1:5
- Matthew 5:16
- Matthew 6:23
- Nehemiah 9:12-13
- Revelation 18:23-24

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0216, H0217, H3313, H3974, H5051, H5094, H5105, H5216, H7837, G0681, G0796, G1645, G2985, G3088, G5338, G5457, G5458, G5460, G5462

(Go back to: [1 John 1:5](#); [1:7](#); [2:8](#); [2:9](#); [2:10](#))

like, likeminded, likeness, likewise, alike, unlike, as if

Definition:

The terms “like” and “likeness” refer to something being the same as, or similar to, something else.

- The word “like” is also often used in a figurative expressions called a “simile” in which something is compared to something else, usually highlighting a shared characteristic. For example, “his clothes shined like the sun” and “the voice boomed like thunder.” (See: Simile)
- To “be like” or “sound like” or “look like” something or someone means to have qualities that are similar to the thing or person being compared to.
- People were created in God’s “likeness,” that is, in his “image.” It means that they have qualities or characteristics that are “like” or “similar to” qualities that God has, such as the ability to think, feel, and communicate.
- To have “the likeness of” something or someone means to have characteristics that look like that thing or person.

Translation Suggestions

- In some contexts, the expression “the likeness of” could be translated as “what looked like” or “what appeared to be.”
- The expression “in the likeness of his death” could be translated as “sharing in the experience of his death” or “as if experiencing his death with him.”
- The expression “in the likeness of sinful flesh” could be translated as “being like a sinful human being” or to “be a human being.” Make sure the translation of this expression does not sound like Jesus was sinful.
- “In his own likeness” could also be translated as to “be like him” or “having many of the same qualities that he has.”
- The expression “the likeness of an image of perishable man, of birds, of four-footed beasts and of creeping things” could be translated as “idols made to look like perishable humans, or animals, such as birds, beasts, and small, crawling things.”

(See also: [beast](#), [flesh](#), [image of God](#), [image](#), [perish](#))

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 1:5
- Mark 8:24
- Matthew 17:2
- Matthew 18:3
- Psalms 73:5
- Revelation 1:12-13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1823, H8403, H8544, G1503, G1504, G2509, G2531, G2596, G3664, G3665, G3666, G3667, G3668, G3669, G3697, G4833, G5108, G5613, G5615, G5616, G5618, G5619

(Go back to: [1 John 1:7](#); [2:6](#); [2:18](#); [2:27](#); [3:2](#); [3:3](#); [3:7](#); [3:12](#); [3:23](#); [4:17](#))

love, beloved

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:

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.

- 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.
- 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.
- In the ULT, the word “love” refers to this kind of sacrificial love, unless a Translation Note indicates a different meaning.

Another word in the New Testament refers to brotherly love, or love for a friend or family member.

- This term refers to natural human love between friends or relatives.
- 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.

The word “love” can also refer to romantic love between a man and a woman.

Translation Suggestions:

- Unless indicated otherwise in a Translation Note, the word “love” in the ULT 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 13:7
- 1 John 3:2
- 1 Thessalonians 4:10
- Galatians 5:23
- Genesis 29:18
- Isaiah 56:6
- Jeremiah 2:2

- John 3:16
- Matthew 10:37
- Nehemiah 9:32-34
- Philippians 1:9
- Song of Solomon 1:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:2** 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."
- **33:8** "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."
- **36:5** 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."
- **47:1** She (Lydia) **loved** and worshiped God.
- **48:1** When God created the world, everything was perfect. There was no sin. Adam and Eve **loved** each other, and they **loved** God.
- **49:3** He (Jesus) taught that you need to **love** other people the same way you love yourself.
- **49:4** He (Jesus) also taught that you need to **love** God more than you **love** anything else, including your wealth.
- **49:7** Jesus taught that God **loves** sinners very much.
- **49:9** 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

(Go back to: [1 John 2:5](#); [2:10](#); [2:15](#); [3:1](#); [3:10](#); [3:11](#); [3:14](#); [3:16](#); [3:17](#); [3:18](#); [3:23](#); [4:7](#); [4:8](#); [4:9](#); [4:10](#); [4:11](#); [4:12](#); [4:16](#); [4:17](#); [4:18](#); [4:19](#); [4:20](#); [4:21](#); [5:1](#); [5:2](#); [5:3](#))

lust, lustful, passions, desires

Definition:

Lust is a very strong desire, usually in the context of wanting something sinful or immoral. To lust is to have lust.

- In the Bible, “lust” usually referred to sexual desire for someone other than one’s own spouse.
- Sometimes this term was used in a figurative sense to refer to worshiping idols.
- Depending on the context, “lust” could be translated as “wrong desire” or “strong desire” or “wrongful sexual desire” or “strong immoral desire” or to “strongly desire to sin.”
- The phrase to “lust after” could be translated as to “wrongly desire” or to “think immorally about” or to “immorally desire.”

(See also: adultery, [false god](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:16
- 2 Timothy 2:22
- Galatians 5:16
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Genesis 39:7-9
- Matthew 5:28

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H183, H185, H310, H1730, H2181, H2183, H2530, H5178, H5375, H5689, H5691, H5869, H7843, G766, G1937, G1939, G2237, G3715, G3806

(**Go back to:** [1 John 2:16](#); [2:17](#))

name

Definition:

The term “name” refers to the word by which a specific person or thing is called. In the Bible, however, the term “name” is used in several different ways to refer to several different concepts.

- In some contexts, “name” could refer to a person’s reputation, as in “let us make a name for ourselves.”
- The term “name” could also refer to the memory of something. For example, “cut off the names of the idols” means to destroy those idols so that they are no longer remembered or worshiped.
- Speaking “in the name of God” meant speaking with his power and authority, or as his representative.
- The “name” of someone could refer to the entire person, as in “there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.” (See: [metonymy](#))

Translation Suggestions:

- An expression like “his good name” could be translated as “his good reputation.”
- Doing something “in the name of” could be translated as “with the authority of” or “with the permission of” or “as the representative of” that person.
- The expression “make a name for ourselves” could be translated “cause many people to know about us” or “make people think we are very important.”
- The expression “call his name” could be translated as “name him” or “give him the name.”
- The expression “those who love your name” could be translated as “those who love you.”
- The expression “cut off the names of idols” could be translated as “get rid of pagan idols so that they are not even remembered” or “cause people to stop worshiping false gods” or “completely destroy all idols so that people no longer even think about them.”

(See also: [call](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:12
- 2 Timothy 2:19
- Acts 4:7
- Acts 4:12
- Acts 9:27
- Genesis 12:2
- Genesis 35:10
- Matthew 18:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5344, H7121, H7761, H8034, H8036, G2564, G3686, G3687, G5122

(Go back to: [1 John 2:12](#); [3:23](#); [5:13](#))

obey, keep

Definition:

The term “obey” means to do what has been commanded by a person or law. The term “obedient” describes someone who obeys. Sometimes a command prohibits doing something, as in “do not steal.” In this case, to “obey” means not to steal. In the Bible, often the term “keep” means “to obey.”

- Usually the term “obey” is used in the context of obeying the commands or laws of a person in authority. For example, people obey laws which are created by the leaders of a country, kingdom, or other organization.
- Children obey their parents, people obey God, and citizens obey the laws of their country.
- When someone in authority commands people not to do something, they obey by not doing that.
- Ways to translate obey could include a word or phrase that means “do what is commanded” or “follow orders” or “do what God says to do.”
- The term “obedient” could be translated as “doing what was commanded” or “following orders” or “doing what God commands.”

(See also: citizen, [command](#), disobey, kingdom, law)

Bible References:

- Acts 5:32
- Acts 6:7
- Genesis 28:6-7
- James 1:25
- James 2:10
- Luke 6:47
- Matthew 7:26
- Matthew 19:20-22
- Matthew 28:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:4** Noah **obeyed** God. He and his three sons built the boat just the way God had told them.
- **5:6** Again Abraham **obeyed** God and prepared to sacrifice his son.
- **5:10** “Because you (Abraham) have *obeyed* me, all the families of the world will be blessed through your family”
- **5:10** But the Egyptians did not believe God or **obey** his commands.
- **13:7** If the people **obeyed** these laws, God promised that he would bless and protect them.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1697, H2388, H3349, H4928, H6213, H7181, H8085, H8086, H8104, G191, G3980, G3982, G5083, G5084, G5218, G5219, G5255, G5292, G5293, G5442

(Go back to: [1 John 2:3](#); [2:4](#); [2:5](#); [3:22](#); [3:24](#); [5:2](#); [5:3](#))

perfect, complete

Definition:

In the New Testament, the term “perfect” means to be mature in our Christian life. To perfect something means to work at it until it is excellent and without flaws. Old Testament sacrifices needed to be “perfect” or “complete,” that is, without blemish.

- Being perfect and mature means that a Christian is obedient, not sinless.
- The term “perfect” also has the meaning of being “complete” or “whole.”
- The New Testament book of James states that persevering through trials will produce completeness and maturity in the believer.
- When Christians study the Bible and obey it, they will become more spiritually perfect and mature because they will be more like Christ in their character.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “without flaw” or “without error” or “flawless” or “without fault” or “not having any faults.”

(See also: blemish)

Bible References:

- Hebrews 12:2
- James 3:2
- Matthew 5:46-48
- Psalms 19:7-8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3632, H3634, H4359, H8003, H8503, H8537, H8549, H8552, G199, G2675, G2676, G3647, G5046, G5047, G5048, G5050

(Go back to: [1 John 2:5](#); [4:12](#); [4:17](#); [4:18](#))

pray, prayer

Definition:

The terms “pray” and “prayer” refer to talking with God. These terms are also 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 3:9
- Acts 8:24
- Acts 14:26
- Colossians 4:4
- John 17:9
- Luke 11:1
- Matthew 5:43-45
- Matthew 14:22-24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **6:5** 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.
- **19:8** Then the prophets of Baal **prayed** to Baal, “Hear us, O Baal!”
- **21:7** 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

(Go back to: [1 John 5:16](#))

promise, promised

Definition:

When used as a verb, the term “promise” refers to the action of a person saying that he will do something in such way that he obligates himself to fulfill what he has said. When used as a noun, the term “promise” refers to the thing that a person obligates himself to do.

- The Bible records many promises that God has made for his people.
- Promises are an important part of formal agreements such as covenants.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “promise” could be translated as “commitment” or “assurance” or “guarantee.”
- To “promise to do something” could be translated as “assure someone that you will do something” or “commit to doing something.”

(See also: covenant, oath, vow)

Bible References:

- Galatians 3:15-16
- Genesis 25:31-34
- Hebrews 11:9
- James 1:12
- Numbers 30:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, “I **promise** I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are sinful from the time they are children.”
- **3:16** God then made the first rainbow as a sign of his **promise**. Every time the rainbow appeared in the sky, God would remember what he **promised** and so would his people.
- **4:8** God spoke to Abram and **promised** again that he would have a son and as many descendants as the stars in the sky. Abram believed God’s **promise**.
- **5:4** “Your wife, Sarai, will have a son—he will be the son of **promise**.”
- **8:15** The covenant **promises** that God gave to Abraham were passed on to Isaac, then to Jacob, and then to Jacob’s twelve sons and their families.
- **17:14** Though David had been unfaithful to God, God was still faithful to his **promises**.
- **50:1** Jesus **promised** he would return at the end of the world. Though he has not yet come back, he will keep his **promise**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H559, H562, H1696, H8569, G1843, G1860, G1861, G1862, G3670, G4279

(Go back to: [1 John 2:25](#))

propitiation

Definition:

The term “propitiation” refers to a sacrifice that is made to satisfy or fulfill the justice of God and to appease his wrath.

- The offering of the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ is the propitiation to God for mankind’s sins.
- Jesus’ death on the cross appeased God’s wrath against sin. This provided a way for God to look on people with favor and offer them eternal life.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “appeasement” or “causing God to forgive sins and grant favor to people.”
- The word “atonement” is close in meaning to “propitiation.” It is important to compare how these two terms are used.

(See also: atonement, [everlasting](#), [forgive](#), sacrifice)

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:2
- 1 John 4:10
- Romans 3:25-26

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G2434, G2435

(Go back to: [1 John 2:2](#); [4:10](#))

punish, punished, punishment, unpunished

Definition:

The term “punish” means to cause someone to suffer a negative consequence for doing something wrong. The term “punishment” refers to the negative consequence that is given as a result of that wrong behavior.

- Often punishment is intended to motivate a person to stop sinning.
- God punished the Israelites when they disobeyed him, especially when they worshiped false gods. Because of their sin, God allowed their enemies to attack and capture them.
- God is righteous and just, so he has to punish sin. Every human being has sinned against God and deserves punishment.
- Jesus was punished for all the evil things that every person has ever done. He received each person’s punishment on himself even though he did nothing wrong and did not deserve that punishment.
- The expressions “go unpunished” and “leave unpunished” mean to decide not to punish people for their wrongdoing. God often allows sin to go unpunished as he waits for people to repent.

(See also: just, repent, [righteous](#), [sin](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:18
- 2 Thessalonians 1:9
- Acts 4:21
- Acts 7:59-60
- Genesis 4:15
- Luke 23:16
- Matthew 25:46

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:7** God also gave many other laws and rules to follow. If the people obeyed these laws, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they disobeyed them, God would **punish** them.
- **16:2** Because the Israelites kept disobeying God, he **punished** them by allowing their enemies to defeat them.
- **19:16** The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would judge them as guilty, and he would **punish** them.
- **48:6** Jesus was the perfect high priest because he took the **punishment** for every sin that anyone has ever committed.
- **48:10** When anyone believes in Jesus, the blood of Jesus takes away that person’s sin, and God’s **punishment** passes over him.
- **49:9** 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.
- **49:11** Jesus never sinned, but he chose to be **punished** and die as the perfect sacrifice to take away your sins and the sins of every person in the world.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3027, H3256, H4148, H4941, H5221, H5414, H6031, H6064, H6213, H6485, H7999, H8011, H8199, G1349, G1556, G1557, G2849, G3811, G5097

(Go back to: [1 John 4:18](#))

pure, purify, purification

Definition:

To be “pure” means to have no flaw or to have nothing mixed in that is not supposed to be there. To purify something is to cleanse it and remove anything that contaminates or pollutes it.

- In regard to Old Testament laws, “purify” and “purification” refer mainly to the cleansing from things that make an object or a person ritually unclean, such as disease, body fluids, or childbirth.
- The Old Testament also had laws telling people how to be purified from sin, usually by the sacrifice of an animal. This was only temporary and the sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again.
- In the New Testament, to be purified often refers to being cleansed from sin.
- The only way that people can be completely and permanently purified from sin is through repenting and receiving God’s forgiveness, through trusting in Jesus and his sacrifice.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “purify” could be translated as “make pure” or “cleanse” or “cleanse from all contamination” or “get rid of all sin.”
- A phrase such as “when the time for their purification was over” could be translated as “when they had purified themselves by waiting the required number of days.”
- The phrase “provided purification for sins” could be translated as “provided a way for people to be completely cleansed from their sin.”
- Other ways to translate “purification” could include “cleansing” or “spiritual washing” or “becoming ritually clean.”

(See also: atonement, [clean](#), [spirit](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 1:5
- Exodus 31:6-9
- Hebrews 9:13-15
- James 4:8
- Luke 2:22
- Revelation 14:4

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1249, H1252, H1253, H1305, H1865, H2134, H2135, H2141, H2212, H2398, H2403, H2561, H2889, H2890, H2891, H2892, H2893, H3795, H3800, H4795, H5343, H5462, H6337, H6884, H6942, H8562, G48, G49, G53, G54, G1506, G2511, G2512, G2513, G2514

(Go back to: [1 John 3:3](#))

receive, welcome, taken up, acceptance

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 5:9
- 1 Thessalonians 1:6
- 1 Thessalonians 4:1
- Acts 8:15
- Jeremiah 32:33
- Luke 9:5
- Malachi 3:10-12
- Psalms 49:14-15

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.
- **45:5** As Stephen was dying, he cried out, “Jesus, **receive** my spirit.”
- **49:6** 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: H3557, H3947, H6901, H6902, H8254, G308, G324, G353, G354, G568, G588, G618, G1183, G1209, G1523, G1653, G1926, G2865, G2983, G3028, G3335, G3336, G3549, G3858, G3880, G4327, G4355, G4356, G4687, G5264, G5562

(Go back to: [1 John 2:27](#); [3:22](#); [5:9](#))

reveal, revealed, revelation

Definition:

The term “reveal” means to cause something to be known. A “revelation” is something that has been made known.

- God has revealed himself through everything he has created and through his communication with people by spoken and written messages.
- God also reveals himself through dreams or visions.
- When Paul said that he received the gospel by “revelation from Jesus Christ,” he means that Jesus himself explained the gospel to him.
- In the New Testament book “Revelation” is about God revealed events that will happen in the end times. He revealed them to the apostle John through visions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “reveal” could include “make known” or “disclose” or “show clearly.”
- Depending on the context, possible ways to translate “revelation” could be “communication from God” or “things that God has revealed” or “teachings about God.” It is best to keep the meaning of “reveal” in the translation.
- The phrase “where there is no revelation” could be translated as “when God is not revealing himself to people” or “when God is not speaking to people” or “among people whom God has not communicating.”

(See also: good news, good news, dream, vision)

Bible References:

- Daniel 11:1-2
- Ephesians 3:5
- Galatians 1:12
- Lamentations 2:13-14
- Matthew 10:26
- Philippians 3:15
- Revelation 1:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H241, H1540, H1541, G601, G602, G5537

(Go back to: [1 John 2:19](#); [3:2](#); [3:10](#))

righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness

Definition:

The term “righteousness” refers to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. Having these qualities makes God “righteous.” Because God is righteous, he must condemn sin.

- These terms are also often used to describe a person who obeys God and is morally good. However, because all people have sinned, no one except God is completely righteous.
- Examples of people the Bible who were called “righteous” include Noah, Job, Abraham, Zachariah, and Elisabeth.
- When people trust in Jesus to save them, God cleanses them from their sins and declares them to be righteous because of Jesus’ righteousness.

The term “unrighteous” means to be sinful and morally corrupt. “Unrighteousness” refers to sin or the condition of being sinful.

- These terms especially refer to living in a way that disobeys God’s teachings and commands.
- Unrighteous people are immoral in their thoughts and actions.
- Sometimes “the unrighteous” refers specifically to people who do not believe in Jesus.

The terms “upright” and “uprightness” refer to acting in a way that follows God’s laws.

- The meaning of these words includes the idea of standing up straight and looking directly ahead.
- A person who is “upright” is someone who obeys God’s rules and does not do things that are against his will.
- Terms such as “integrity” and “righteous” have similar meanings and are sometimes used in parallelism constructions, such as “integrity and uprightness.” (See: [parallelism](#))

Translation Suggestions:

- When it describes God, the term “righteous” could be translated as “perfectly good and just” or “always acting rightly.”
- God’s “righteousness” could also be translated as “perfect faithfulness and goodness.”
- When it describes people who are obedient to God, the term “righteous” could also be translated as “morally good” or “just” or “living a God-pleasing life.”
- The phrase “the righteous” could also be translated as “righteous people” or “God-fearing people.”
- Depending on the context, “righteousness” could also be translated with a word or phrase that means “goodness” or “being perfect before God” or “acting in a right way by obeying God” or “doing perfectly good.”
- The term “unrighteous” could simply be translated as “not righteous.”
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could include “wicked” or “immoral” or “people who rebel against God” or “sinful.”
- The phrase “the unrighteous” could be translated as “unrighteous people.”
- The term “unrighteousness” could be translated as “sin” or “evil thoughts and actions” or “wickedness.”
- If possible, it is best to translate this in a way that shows its relationship to “righteous, righteousness.”
- Ways to translate “upright” could include “acting rightly” or “one who acts rightly” or “following God’s laws” or “obedient to God” or “behaving in a way that is right.”
- The term “uprightness” could be translated as “moral purity” or “good moral conduct” or “rightness.”
- The phrase “the upright” could be translated as “people who are upright” or “upright people.”

(See also: [evil](#), [faithful](#), good, holy, integrity, just, law, law, [obey](#), [pure](#), [righteous](#), [sin](#), [unlawful](#))

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 19:16
- Job 1:8
- Psalms 37:30
- Psalms 49:14
- Psalms 107:42
- Ecclesiastes 12:10-11
- Isaiah 48:1-2
- Ezekiel 33:13
- Malachi 2:6
- Matthew 6:1
- Acts 3:13-14
- Romans 1:29-31
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- Galatians 3:7
- Colossians 3:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 1 Peter 3:18-20
- 1 John 1:9
- 1 John 5:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- **4:8** God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God's promise.
- **17:2** David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **23:1** Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to, was a **righteous** man.
- **50:10** Then the **righteous** ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H205, H1368, H2555, H3072, H3474, H3476, H3477, H3483, H4334, H4339, H4749, H5228, H5229, H5324, H5765, H5766, H5767, H5977, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6665, H6666, H6968, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G93, G94, G458, G1341, G1342, G1343, G1344, G1345, G1346, G2118, G3716, G3717

(Go back to: [1 John 1:9](#); [2:1](#); [2:29](#); [3:7](#); [3:10](#); [3:12](#); [5:17](#))

Satan, devil, evil one

Facts:

Although the devil is a spirit being that God created, he rebelled against God and became God's enemy. The devil is also called "Satan" and "the evil one."

- The devil hates God and all that God created because he wants to take the place of God and be worshiped as God.
- Satan tempts people to rebel against God.
- God sent his Son, Jesus, to rescue people from Satan's control.
- The name "Satan" means "adversary" or "enemy."
- The word "devil" means "accuser."

Translation Suggestions:

- The word "devil" could also be translated as "the accuser" or "the evil one" or "the king of evil spirits" or "the chief evil spirit."
- "Satan" could be translated as "Opponent" or "Adversary" or some other name that shows that he is the devil.
- These terms should be translated differently from demon and evil spirit.
- Consider how these terms are translated in a local or national language.

(See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

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

(See also: demon, [evil](#), kingdom of God, tempt)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:8
- 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20
- 1 Timothy 5:15
- Acts 13:10
- Job 1:8
- Mark 8:33
- Zechariah 3:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **21:1** The snake who deceived Eve was **Satan**. The promise meant that the Messiah who would come would defeat **Satan** completely.
- **25:6** Then **Satan** showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory and said, "I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me."
- **25:8** Jesus did not give in to **Satan's** temptations, so **Satan** left him.
- **33:6** So Jesus explained, "The seed is the word of God. The path is a person who hears God's word, but does not understand it, and the **devil** takes the word from him."
- **38:7** After Judas took the bread, **Satan** entered into him.
- **48:4** God promised that one of Eve's descendants would crush **Satan's** head, and **Satan** would wound his heel. This meant that **Satan** would kill the Messiah, but God would raise him to life again, and then the Messiah will crush the power of **Satan** forever.
- **49:15** God has taken you out of **Satan's** kingdom of darkness and put you into God's kingdom of light.

- **50:9** "The weeds represent the people who belong to the **evil one**. The enemy who planted the weeds represents the **devil**."
- **50:10** "When the world ends, the angels will gather together all the people who belong to the **devil** and throw them into a raging fire, where they will cry and grind their teeth in terrible suffering."
- **50:15** When Jesus returns, he will completely destroy **Satan** and his kingdom. He will throw **Satan** into hell where he will burn forever, along with everyone who chose to follow him rather than to obey God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7700, H7854, H8163, G1139, G1140, G1141, G1142, G1228, G4190, G4566, G4567

(Go back to: [1 John 2:13](#); [2:14](#); [3:8](#); [3:10](#); [3:12](#); [Notes](#); [5:18](#); [5:19](#))

save, saved, safe, salvation

Definition:

The term “save” refers to keeping someone from experiencing something bad or harmful. To “be safe” means to be protected from harm or danger.

- In a physical sense, people can be saved or rescued from harm, danger, or death.
- In a spiritual sense, if a person has been “saved,” then God, through Jesus’ death on the cross, has forgiven him and rescued him from being punished in hell for his sin.
- People can save or rescue people from danger, but only God can save people from being punished eternally for their sins.

The term “salvation” refers to being saved or rescued from evil and danger.

- In the Bible, “salvation” usually refers to the spiritual and eternal deliverance granted by God to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus.
- The Bible also talks about God saving or delivering his people from their physical enemies.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “save” could include “deliver” or “keep from harm” or “take out of harm’s way” or “keep from dying.”
- In the expression “whoever would save his life,” the term “save” could also be translated as “preserve” or “protect.”
- The term “safe” could be translated as “protected from danger” or “in a place where nothing can harm.”
- The term “salvation” could also be translated using words related to “save” or “rescue,” as in “God’s saving people (from being punished for their sins)” or “God’s rescuing his people (from their enemies).”
- “God is my salvation” could be translated as “God is the one who saves me.”
- “You will draw water from the wells of salvation” could be translated as “You will be refreshed as with water because God is rescuing you.”

(See also: [cross](#), [deliver](#), [punish](#), [sin](#), [Savior](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 49:18
- Genesis 47:25-26
- Psalms 80:3
- Jeremiah 16:19-21
- Micah 6:3-5
- Luke 2:30
- Luke 8:36-37
- Acts 4:12
- Acts 28:28
- Acts 2:21
- Romans 1:16
- Romans 10:10
- Ephesians 6:17
- Philippians 1:28
- 1 Timothy 1:15-17
- Revelation 19:1-2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:8** Moses tried to **save** his fellow Israelite.
- **11:2** God provided a way to **save** the firstborn son of anyone who believed in him.
- **12:5** Moses told the Israelites, "Stop being afraid! God will fight for you today and **save** you."
- **12:13** The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to praise God because he **saved** them from the Egyptian army.
- **16:17** This pattern repeated many times: the Israelites would sin, God would punish them, they would repent, and God would send a deliverer to **save** them.
- **44:8** "You crucified Jesus, but God raised him to life again! You rejected him, but there is no other way to be **saved** except through the power of Jesus!"
- **47:11** The jailer trembled as he came to Paul and Silas and asked, "What must I do to be **saved**?" Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the Master, and you and your family will be **saved**."
- **49:12** Good works cannot **save** you.
- **49:13** God will **save** everyone who believes in Jesus and receives him as their Master. But he will not **save** anyone who does not believe in him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H983, H2421, H2502, H3444, H3467, H3468, H4190, H4422, H4931, H5338, H6308, H6403, H7682, H7951, H7965, H8104, H8199, H8668, G803, G804, G806, G1295, G1508, G4982, G4991, G4992, G5198

(Go back to: [1 John 3 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

Savior, savior

Facts:

The term “savior” refers to a person who saves or rescues others from danger. It can also refer to someone who gives strength to others or provides for them.

- In the Old Testament, God is referred to as Israel’s Savior because he often rescued them from their enemies, gave them strength, and provided them with what they needed to live.
- In the Old Testament, God appointed judges to protect the Israelites by leading them in battle against other people groups who came to attack them. These judges are sometimes called “saviors.” The Old Testament book of Judges records the time in history when these judges were governing Israel.
- In the New Testament, “Savior” is used as a description or title for Jesus Christ because he saves people from being eternally punished for their sin. He also saves them from being controlled by their sin.

Translation Suggestions:

- If possible, “Savior” should be translated with a word that is related to the words “save” and “salvation.”
- Ways to translate this term could include “the One who saves” or “God, who saves” or “who delivers from danger” or “who rescues from enemies” or “Jesus, the one who rescues (people) from sin.”

(See also: deliver, [Jesus](#), [save](#), [save](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 4:10
- 2 Peter 2:20
- Acts 5:29-32
- Isaiah 60:15-16
- Luke 1:47
- Psalms 106:19-21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3467, G4990

(Go back to: [1 John 4:14](#))

seed, semen

Definition:

A “seed” is the part of a plant that gets planted in the ground to reproduce more of the same kind of plant. However, in the Bible the term “seed” is used figuratively to mean several different things.

- The term “seed” is used figuratively and euphemistically to refer to the tiny cells inside a man that combine with cells of a woman to cause a baby to grow inside her. A collection of these cells is called “semen.”
- Related to this, “seed” is also used to refer to a person’s offspring or descendants.
- This word often has a plural meaning, referring to more than one seed grain or more than one descendant.
- In the parable of the farmer planting seeds, Jesus compared his seeds to the Word of God, which is planted in people’s hearts in order to produce good spiritual fruit.
- The apostle Paul also uses the term “seed” to refer to the Word of God.

Translation Suggestions:

- For a literal seed, it is best to use the literal term for “seed” that is used in the target language for what a farmer plants in his field.
- The literal term should also be used in contexts where it refers figuratively to God’s Word.
- For the figurative use that refers to people who are of the same family line, it may be more clear to use the word “descendant” or “descendants” instead of “seed.” Some languages may have a word that means “children and grandchildren.”
- For a man or woman’s “seed,” consider how the target expresses this in a way that will not offend or embarrass people. (See: euphemism)

(See also: [children](#), descendant,)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:32
- Genesis 1:11
- Jeremiah 2:21
- Matthew 13:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2232, H2233, H3610, H6507, G4615, G4687, G4690, G4701, G4703

(Go back to: [1 John 3:9](#))

send, sent, send out

Definition:

To “send” is to cause someone or something to go somewhere. To “send out” someone is to tell that person to go on an errand or a mission.

- Often a person who is “sent out” has been appointed to do a specific task.
- Phrases like “send rain” or “send disaster” mean to “cause...to come.” This type of expression is usually used in reference to God causing these things to happen.
- The term “send” is also used in expressions such as to “send word” or to “send a message,” which means to give someone a message to tell someone else.
- To “send” someone “with” something can mean to “give” that thing “to” someone else, usually moving it some distance in order for the person to receive it.
- Jesus frequently used the phrase “the one who sent me” to refer to God the Father, who “sent” him to earth to redeem and save people. This could also be translated as “the one who commissioned me.”

(See also: appoint, redeem, castout)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:33-34
- Acts 8:14-17
- John 20:21-23
- Matthew 9:37-38
- Matthew 10:5
- Matthew 10:40
- Matthew 21:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H935, H1540, H1980, H2199, H2904, H3318, H3474, H3947, H4916, H4917, H5042, H5130, H5375, H5414, H5674, H6963, H7368, H7725, H7964, H7971, H7972, H7993, H8421, H8446, G782, G375, G630, G649, G652, G657, G1026, G1032, G1544, G1599, G1821, G3333, G3343, G3936, G3992, G4311, G4341, G4369, G4842, G4882

(Go back to: [1 John 4:9](#); [4:10](#); [4:14](#))

shame, ashamed, disgrace, humiliate, reproach

Definition:

The term “shame” refers to the painful feeling of being disgraced or humiliated that a person feels when they do something that others consider dishonorable or improper.

- Something that is “shameful” is “improper” or “dishonorable.”
- The term “ashamed” describes how a person feels when he has done something improper or dishonorable.
- The term “humiliate” means to cause someone to feel shamed or disgraced, usually publicly. The act of shaming someone is called “humiliation.”
- To “reproach” someone means to criticize or disapprove of that person’s character or behavior.
- The phrase “put to shame” means to defeat people or expose their actions so that they feel ashamed of themselves. The prophet Isaiah said that those who make and worship idols will be put to shame.
- The term “disgraceful” can be used to describe a sinful act or the person who did it. When a person does something sinful, it can cause him to be in a state of disgrace or dishonor.
- Sometimes a person who is doing good things is treated in a way that causes him disgrace or shame. For example, when Jesus was killed on a cross, this was a disgraceful way to die. Jesus had done nothing wrong to deserve this disgrace.
- When God humbles someone, it means that he is causing a prideful person to experience failure to help him overcome his pride. This is different from humiliating someone, which is often done in order to hurt that person.
- Saying that a person is “above reproach” or “beyond reproach” or “without reproach” means that this person behaves in a God-honoring way and there is little or nothing that could be said in criticism of him.

Translation Suggestions

- Ways to translate “disgrace” could include “shame” or “dishonor.”
- Ways to translate “disgraceful” could include “shameful” or “dishonoring.”
- To “humiliate” could also be translated as to “shame” or to “cause to feel shame” or to “embarrass.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate “humiliation” could include “shame” or “degrading” or “disgrace.”
- The word “reproach” could also be translated as “accusation” or “shame” or “disgrace.”
- To “reproach” could also be translated as to “rebuke” or to “accuse” or to “criticize,” depending on the context.

(See also: dishonor, accuse, rebuke, [false god](#), humble, Isaiah, worship)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 3:15-17
- 2 Kings 2:17
- 2 Samuel 13:13
- Luke 20:11
- Mark 8:38
- Mark 12:4-5
- 1 Timothy 3:7
- Genesis 34:7
- Hebrews 11:26
- Lamentations 2:1-2
- Psalms 22:6
- Deuteronomy 21:14
- Ezra 9:5

- Proverbs 25:7-8
- Psalms 6:8-10
- Psalms 123:3
- 1 Timothy 5:7-8
- 1 Timothy 6:13-14
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- Job 16:9-10
- Proverbs 18:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H937, H954, H955, H1317, H1322, H1421, H1442, H1984, H2490, H2616, H2617, H2659, H2778, H2781, H2865, H3001, H3637, H3639, H3640, H3971, H5007, H5034, H5039, H6030, H6031, H6172, H6256, H7022, H7034, H7036, H7043, H7511, H7817, H8103, H8213, H8216, H8217, H8589, G149, G152, G153, G410, G422, G423, G808, G818, G819, G821, G1788, G1791, G1870, G2617, G3059, G3679, G3680, G3681, G3856, G5014, G5195, G5196, G5484

(Go back to: [1 John 2:28](#))

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: [disobey](#), [evil](#), [flesh](#), [tax collector](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31

- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **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**.
- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**."
- **43:11** Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**."
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H817, H819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G264, G265, G266, G268, G361, G3781, G3900, G4258

(Go back to: [Introduction to 1 John](#); [1 John 1:7](#); [1:8](#); [1:9](#); [1:10](#); [2:1](#); [2:2](#); [2:12](#); [3:4](#); [3:5](#); [3:6](#); [3:8](#); [3:9](#); [4:10](#); [5:16](#); [5:17](#); [5:18](#))

Son of God, the Son

Facts:

The term “Son of God” refers to Jesus, the Word of God, who came into the world as a human being. He is also often referred to as “the Son.”

- The Son of God has the same nature as God the Father, and is fully God.
- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all of one essence.
- Unlike human sons, the Son of God has always existed.
- In the beginning, the Son of God was active in creating the world, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Because Jesus is God’s Son, he loves and obeys his Father, and his Father loves him.

Translation Suggestions:

- For the term “Son of God,” it is best to translate “Son” with the same word the language would naturally use to refer to a human son.
- Make sure the word used to translate “son” fits with the word used to translate “father” and that these words are the most natural ones used to express a true father-son relationship in the project language.
- Using a capital letter to begin “Son” may help show that this is talking about God.
- The phrase “the Son” is a shortened form of “the Son of God,” especially when it occurs in the same context as “the Father.”

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

(See also: [Christ](#), [ancestor](#), [God](#), [God the Father](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [Jesus](#), [son](#), [sons of God](#))

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:10
- Acts 9:20
- Colossians 1:17
- Galatians 2:20
- Hebrews 4:14
- John 3:18
- Luke 10:22
- Matthew 11:27
- Revelation 2:18
- Romans 8:29

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **22:5** The angel explained, “The Holy Spirit will come to you, and the power of God will overshadow you. So the baby will be holy, the **Son of God.**”
- **24:9** God had told John, “The Holy Spirit will come down and rest on someone you baptize. That person is **the Son of God.**”
- **31:8** The disciples were amazed. They worshiped Jesus, saying to him, “Truly, you are **the Son of God.**”
- **37:5** Martha answered, “Yes, Master! I believe you are the Messiah, the **Son of God.**”
- **42:10** “So go, make disciples of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father, **the Son**, and the Holy Spirit, and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
- **46:6** Right away, Saul began preaching to the Jews in Damascus, saying, “Jesus is the **Son of God!**”

- **49:9** 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.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H426, H430, H1121, H1247, G2316, G5207

(Go back to: [1 John 1:3](#); [1:7](#); [2:22](#); [2:23](#); [2:24](#); [3:8](#); [3:23](#); [4:9](#); [4:10](#); [4:14](#); [4:15](#); [5:5](#); [5:9](#); [5:10](#); [5:11](#); [5:12](#); [5:13](#); [5:20](#))

spirit, wind, breath

Definition:

The term “spirit” refers to the non-physical part of a person which cannot be seen. In biblical times, the concept of a person’s spirit was closely related to the concept of a person’s breath. The term can also refer to wind, that is, the movement of air in the natural world.

- The term “spirit” can refer to a being that does not have a physical body, such as an evil spirit.
- In general, the term “spiritual” describes things in the non-physical world.
- The term “spirit of” can also mean “having the characteristics of,” such as in “spirit of wisdom” or “in the spirit of Elijah.” Sometimes the Bible applies this term in the context of a person’s attitude or emotional state, such as “spirit of fear” and “spirit of jealousy.”
- Jesus said that God is a spirit.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, some ways to translate “spirit” might include “non-physical being” or “inside part” or “inner being.”
- In some contexts, the term “spirit” could be translated as “evil spirit” or “evil spirit being.”
- Sometimes the term “spirit” is used to express the feelings of a person, as in “my spirit was grieved in my inmost being.” This could also be translated as “I felt grieved in my spirit” or “I felt deeply grieved.”
- The phrase “spirit of” could be translated as “character of” or “influence of” or “attitude of” or “thinking (that is) characterized by.”
- Depending on the context, “spiritual” could be translated as “non-physical” or “from the Holy Spirit” or “God’s” or “part of the non-physical world.”
- The phrase “spiritual maturity” could be translated as “godly behavior that shows obedience to the Holy Spirit.”
- The term “spiritual gift” could be translated as “special ability that the Holy Spirit gives.”
- Sometimes this term can be translated as “wind” when referring to the simple movement of air or “breath” when referring to air movement caused by living beings.

(See also: soul, [Holy Spirit](#), demon, breath)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:5
- 1 John 4:3
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- Acts 5:9
- Colossians 1:9
- Ephesians 4:23
- Genesis 7:21-22
- Genesis 8:1
- Isaiah 4:4
- Mark 1:23-26
- Matthew 26:41
- Philippians 1:27

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:3** Three days later, after the people had prepared themselves **spiritually**, God came down on top of Mount Sinai with thunder, lightning, smoke, and a loud trumpet blast.
- **40:7** Then Jesus cried out, "It is finished! Father, I give my **spirit** into your hands." Then he bowed his head and gave up his **spirit**.
- **45:5** As Stephen was dying, he cried out, "Jesus, receive my **spirit**."
- **48:7** All the people groups are blessed through him, because everyone who believes in Jesus is saved from sin, and becomes a **spiritual** descendant of Abraham.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H178, H1172, H5397, H7307, H7308, G4151, G4152, G4153, G5326, G5427

(Go back to: [1 John 4:1](#); [4:2](#); [4:3](#); [4:6](#))

strength, strengthen, strong

Facts:

The term “strength” refers to physical, emotional, or spiritual power. To “strengthen” someone or something means to make that person or object stronger.

- “Strength” can also refer to the power to withstand some kind of opposing force.
- A person has “strength of will” if he is able to avoid sinning when tempted.
- One writer of the Psalms called Yahweh his “strength” because God helped him to be strong.
- If a physical structure like a wall or building is being “strengthened,” people are rebuilding the structure, reinforcing it with more stones or brick so that it can withstand an attack.

Translation Suggestions

- In general, the term “strengthen” can be translated as “cause to be strong” or “make more powerful.”
- In a spiritual sense, the phrase “strengthen your brothers” could also be translated as “encourage your brothers” or “help your brothers to persevere.”
- The following examples show the meaning of these terms, and therefore how they can be translated, when they are included in longer expressions.
 - “puts strength on me like a belt” means “causes me to be completely strong, like a belt that completely surrounds my waist.”
 - “in quietness and trust will be your strength” means “acting calmly and trusting in God will make you spiritually strong.”
 - “will renew their strength” means “will become stronger again.”
 - “by my strength and by my wisdom I acted” means “I have done all this because I am so strong and wise.”
 - “strengthen the wall” means “reinforce the wall” or “rebuild the wall.”
 - “I will strengthen you” means “I will cause you to be strong”
 - “in Yahweh alone are salvation and strength” means “Yahweh is the only one who saves us and strengthens us.”
 - “the rock of your strength” means “the faithful one who makes you strong”
 - “with the saving strength of his right hand” means “he strongly rescues you from trouble like someone who holds you safely with his strong hand.”
 - “of little strength” means “not very strong” or “weak.”
 - “with all my strength” means “using my best efforts” or “strongly and completely.”

(See also: [faithful](#), persevere, right hand, [save](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 18:19-21
- 2 Peter 2:11
- Luke 10:27
- Psalm 21:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H193, H202, H353, H360, H386, H410, H553, H556, H1369, H1396, H2220, H2388, H2391, H2392, H2393, H2428, H3027, H3028, H3559, H3581, H3811, H3955, H4581, H5326, H5331, H5582, H5797, H5807, H5810, H5934, H5975, H6106, H6109, H6697, H6965, H7292, H7307, H8003, H8443, H8632, H8633, G461, G950,

G1411, G1412, G1743, G1765, G1840, G1991, G2479, G2480, G2901, G2904, G3619, G3756, G4599, G4732, G4733, G4741

(Go back to: [1 John 2:14](#))

stumbling block, stone of stumbling

Definition:

The term “stumbling block” or “stone of stumbling” refers to a physical object that causes a person to trip and fall.

- A figurative stumbling block is anything that causes a person to fail in a moral or spiritual sense.
- Also figuratively, a “stumbling block” or “stone of stumbling” can be something that prevents someone from having faith in Jesus or that causes someone to not grow spiritually.
- Often it is sin that is like a stumbling block to oneself or to others.
- Sometimes God places a stumbling block in the way of people who are rebelling against him.

Translation Suggestions:

- If a language has a term for an object that triggers a trap, that word could be used to translate this term.
- This term could also be translated as “stone that causes stumbling” or “something that causes someone to not believe” or “obstacle that causes doubt” or “obstacle to faith” or “something that causes someone to sin.”

(See also: [stumble](#), [sin](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 1:23
- Galatians 5:11
- Matthew 5:29-30
- Matthew 16:23
- Romans 9:33

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4383, G3037, G4349, G4625

(Go back to: [1 John 2:10](#))

teach, teaching, untaught

Definition:

To “teach” someone is to tell him something he doesn’t already know. It can also mean to “provide information” in general, with no reference to the person who is learning. Usually the information is given in a formal or systematic way. A person’s “teaching” is or his “teachings” are what he has taught.

- A “teacher” is someone who teaches. The past action of “teach” is “taught.”
- When Jesus was teaching, he was explaining things about God and his kingdom.
- Jesus’ disciples called him “Teacher” as a respectful form of address for someone who taught people about God.
- The information that is being taught can be shown or spoken.
- The term “doctrine” refers to a set of teachings from God about himself as well as God’s instructions about how to live. This could also be translated as “teachings from God” or “what God teaches us.”
- The phrase “what you have been taught” could also be translated as “what these people have taught you” or “what God has taught you,” depending on the context.
- Other ways to translate “teach” could include “tell” or “explain” or “instruct.”
- Often this term can be translated as “teaching people about God.”

(See also: instruct, teacher, [word of God](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 1:3
- Acts 2:40-42
- John 7:14
- Luke 4:31
- Matthew 4:23
- Psalms 32:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H502, H2094, H2449, H3045, H3046, H3256, H3384, H3925, H3948, H7919, H8150, G1317, G1321, G1322, G2085, G2605, G2727, G3100, G2312, G2567, G3811, G4994

(Go back to: [1 John 2:27](#))

test, tested, testing, testing in the fire

Definition:

The term “test” refers to a difficult or painful experience that reveals a person’s strengths and weaknesses.

- God tests people, but he does not tempt them to sin. Satan, however, tempts people to sin.
- God sometimes uses tests to expose people’s sin. A test helps a person to turn away from sin and to draw closer to God.
- Gold and other metals are tested with fire to find out how pure and strong they are. This is a picture of how God uses painful circumstances to test his people.
- To “put to the test” can mean, “challenge something or someone to prove its value.”
- In the context of putting God to the test, it means to try to make him do a miracle for us, taking advantage of his mercy.
- Jesus told Satan that it is wrong to put God to the test. He is the almighty, holy God who is above everything and everyone.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term to “test” could also be translated as, to “challenge” or to “cause to experience difficulties” or to “prove.”
- Ways to translate “a test” could be, “a challenge” or “a difficult experience.”
- To “put to the test” could be translated as to “test” or to “set up a challenge” or to “force to prove oneself.”
- In the context of testing God, this could be translated as “trying to force God to prove his love.”
- In some contexts, when God is not the subject, the term “test” can mean “tempt.”

(See also: tempt)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:1
- 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- Acts 15:10
- Genesis 22:1
- Isaiah 7:13
- James 1:12
- Lamentations 3:40-43
- Malachi 3:10
- Philippians 1:10
- Psalm 26:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5254, H5713, H5715, H5749, H6030, H8584, G1242, G1263, G1303, G1382, G1957, G3140, G3141, G3142, G3143, G3984, G4303, G4451, G4828, G6020

(Go back to: [1 John 4:1](#))

testimony, testify, witness, eyewitness

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 31:28
- Micah 6:3
- Matthew 26:60

- Mark 1:44
- John 1:7
- John 3:33
- Acts 4:32-33
- Acts 7:44
- Acts 13:31
- Romans 1:9
- 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12
- 1 Timothy 5:19-20
- 2 Timothy 1:8
- 2 Peter 1:16-18
- 1 John 5:6-8
- 3 John 1:12
- Revelation 12:11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **39:2** Inside the house, the Jewish leaders put Jesus on trial. They brought many **false witnesses** who lied about him.
- **39:4** 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?"
- **42:8** "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."
- **43:7** "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

(Go back to: [1 John 1:2](#); [4:14](#); [5:6](#); [5:7](#); [5:9](#); [5:10](#); [5:11](#))

tongue, language

Definition:

The term “tongue” refers to the organ inside a person’s mouth that is used to speak. The term is often used figuratively to mean “language” or “speaking.” There also several other figurative meanings as well.

- In the Bible, the most common figurative meaning for this term is “language” or “speech.”
- Sometimes “tongue” may refer to a human language spoken by a certain people group.
- Other times it refers to a supernatural language that the Holy Spirit gives believers in Christ as one of the “gifts of the Spirit.”
- In the book of Acts, the expression “tongues” of fire refers to “flames” of fire, presumably shaped like tongues.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, the term “tongue” can be translated as “language” or “supernatural language.” If it is not clear which one it is referring to, it is better to translate it as “language.”
- When referring to fire, this term could be translated as “flames.”
- The expression “my tongue rejoices” could be translated as “I rejoice and praise God” or “I am joyfully praising God.”
- The phrase, “tongue that lies” could be translated as “person who tell lies” or “people who lie.”
- Phrases such as “with their tongues” could be translated as “with what they say” or “by their words.”

(See also: [gift](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [joy](#), [praise](#), [rejoice](#), [spirit](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 12:10
- 1 John 3:18
- 2 Samuel 23:2
- Acts 2:26
- Ezekiel 36:3
- Philippians 2:11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3956, G1100, G1258, G2084

(Go back to: [1 John 3:18](#))

true, truth

Definition:

The term “truth” refers to facts, events, and statements that correspond with reality. True facts describe the universe as it really exists. True events are events that actually happened. True statements are statements that are not false according to the real world.

- “True” things are real, genuine, actual, rightful, legitimate, and factual.
- “Truth” means understandings, beliefs, facts, or statements that are true.
- To say that a prophecy “came true” or “will come true” means that it actually happened as predicted or that it will happen that way.
- In the Bible the concept of “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.
- The Bible is truth. It 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 5:6-8
- 1 John 1:5-7
- 1 John 2:8
- 3 John 1:8
- Acts 26:24-26
- Colossians 1:6
- Genesis 47:29-31
- James 1:18
- James 3:14
- James 5:19
- Jeremiah 4:2
- John 1:9
- John 1:16-18
- John 1:51
- John 3:31-33
- Joshua 7:19-21
- Lamentations 5:19-22
- Matthew 8:10
- Matthew 12:17
- Psalm 26:1-3

- Revelation 1:19-20
- Revelation 15:3-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:4** The snake responded to the woman, "That is not **true**! You will not die."
- **14:6** 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!"
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the *true* God.
- **31:8** 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

(Go back to: [1 John 1:6](#); [1:8](#); [2:4](#); [2:5](#); [2:8](#); [2:21](#); [2:27](#); [3:18](#); [3:19](#); [4:6](#); [5:6](#); [5:20](#))

understand, understanding, thinking

Definition:

The term “understand” means to hear or receive information and know what it means.

- The term “understanding” can refer to “knowledge” or “wisdom” or realizing how to do something.
- To understand someone can also mean to know how that person is feeling.
- While walking on the road to Emmaus, Jesus caused the disciples to understand the meaning of the scriptures about the Messiah.
- Depending on the context, the term “understand” could be translated by “know” or “believe” or “comprehend” or “know what (something) means.”
- Often the term “understanding” can be translated by “knowledge” or “wisdom” or “insight.”

(See also: [believe](#), [know](#), wise)

Bible References:

- Job 34:16-17
- Luke 2:47
- Luke 8:10
- Matthew 13:12
- Matthew 13:14
- Proverbs 3:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H995, H998, H999, H1847, H2940, H3045, H3820, H3824, H4486, H7200, H7919, H7922, H7924, H8085, H8394, G50, G145, G191, G801, G1097, G1108, G1271, G1921, G1922, G1987, G1990, G2657, G3539, G3563, G4907, G4908, G4920, G5424, G5428, G5429

(Go back to: [1 John 5:20](#))

walk, walked

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 1:7
- 1 Kings 2:4
- Colossians 2:7
- Galatians 5:25
- Genesis 17:1
- Isaiah 2:5
- Jeremiah 13:10
- Micah 4:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1869, H1980, H1981, H3212, H4108, G1704, G4043, G4198, G4748

(Go back to: [1 John 1:6](#); [1:7](#); [2:6](#); [2:11](#))

water, deep

Definition:

In addition to its primary meaning, “water” also often refers to a body of water, such as an ocean, sea, lake, or river.

- The term “waters” refers to bodies of water or many sources of water. It can also be a general reference for a large amount of water.
- A figurative use of “waters” refers to great distress, difficulties, and suffering. For example, God promises that when we “go through the waters” he will be with us.
- The phrase “many waters” emphasizes how great the difficulties are.
- To “water” livestock and other animals means to “provide water for” them. In Bible times, this usually involved drawing water from a well with a bucket and pouring the water into a trough or other container for the animals to drink from.
- The “deep” refers to a deep body of water, such as the watery depths at the beginning of creation or bodies of water that extend deep under the earth’s surface such as oceans, seas, etc.
- In the Old Testament, God is referred to as the spring or fountain of “living waters” for his people. This means he is the source of spiritual power and refreshment.
- In the New Testament, Jesus used the phrase “living water” to refer to the Holy Spirit working in a person to transform and bring new life.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase, “draw water” could be translated as “pull water up from a well with a bucket.”
- “Streams of living water will flow from them” could be translated as “the power and blessings from the Holy Spirit will flow out of them like streams of water.” Instead of “blessings” the term “gifts” or “fruits” or “godly character” could be used.
- When Jesus is talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, the phrase “living water” could be translated as “water that gives life” or “lifegiving water.” In this context, the imagery of water must be kept in the translation.
- Depending on the context, the term “waters” or “many waters” could be translated as “great suffering (that surrounds you like water)” or “overwhelming difficulties (like a flood of water)” or “large amounts of water.”

(See also: [life](#), [spirit](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [power](#))

Bible References:

- Acts 8:36-38
- Exodus 14:21
- John 4:10
- John 4:14
- John 4:15
- Matthew 14:28-30

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2222, H4325, H4529, H4857, H7301, H7783, H8248, H8415, G504, G4215, G4222, G5202, G5204

(Go back to: [1 John 5:6](#); [5:8](#))

will of God

Definition:

The “will of God” refers to God’s desires and plans.

- God’s will especially relates to his interactions with people and how he wants people to respond to him.
- It also refers to his plans or desires for the rest of his creation.
- The term to “will” means to “determine” or to “desire.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The “will of God” could also be translated as “what God desires” or “what God has planned” or “God’s purpose” or “what is pleasing to God.”

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:15-17
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6
- Colossians 4:12-14
- Ephesians 1:1-2
- John 5:30-32
- Mark 3:33-35
- Matthew 6:8-10
- Psalms 103:21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6310, H6634, H7522, G1012, G1013, G2307, G2308, G2309, G2596

(Go back to: [1 John 2:17](#); [5:14](#))

word of God, word of Yahweh, word of the Lord, word of truth, scripture

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “word of God” refers to anything that God has communicated to people. This includes spoken and written messages. Jesus is also called “the Word of God.”

- The term “scriptures” means “writings.” It is only used in the New Testament and refers to the Hebrew scriptures, which is the Old Testament. These writings were God’s message that he had told people to write down so that many years in the future people could still read it.
- The related terms “word of Yahweh” and “word of the Lord” often refer to a specific message from God that was given to a prophet or other person in the Bible.
- Sometimes this term occurs as simply “the word” or “my word” or “your word” (when talking about God’s word).
- In the New Testament, Jesus is called “the Word” and “the Word of God.” These titles mean that Jesus fully reveals who God is, because he is God himself.

The term “word of truth” is another way of referring to “God’s word,” which is his message or teaching. It does not refer to just one word.

- God’s word of truth includes everything that God has taught people about himself, his creation, and his plan of salvation through Jesus.
- This term emphasizes the fact that what God has told us is true, faithful, and real.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “the message of Yahweh” or “God’s message” or “the teachings from God.”
- It may be more natural in some languages to make this term plural and say “God’s words” or “the words of Yahweh.”
- The expression “the word of Yahweh came” is often used to introduce something that God told his prophets or his people. This could be translated as “Yahweh spoke this message” or “Yahweh spoke these words.”
- The term “scripture” or “scriptures” could be translated as “the writings” or “the written message from God.” This term should be translated differently from the translation of the term “word.”
- When “word” occurs alone and it refers to God’s word, it could be translated as “the message” or “God’s word” or “the teachings.” Also consider the alternate translations suggested above.
- When the Bible refers to Jesus as “the Word,” this term could be translated as “the Message” or “the Truth.”
- “Word of truth” could be translated as “God’s true message” or “God’s word, which is true.”
- It is important for the translation of this term to include the meaning of being true.

(See also: prophet, [true](#), Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:1
- 1 Kings 13:1
- Jeremiah 36:1-3
- Luke 8:11
- John 5:39
- Acts 6:2
- Acts 12:24
- Romans 1:2

- 2 Corinthians 6:7
- Ephesians 1:13
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- James 1:18
- James 2:8-9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **25:7** In **God's word** he commands his people, "Worship only the Lord your God and only serve him."
- **33:6** So Jesus explained, "The seed is the **word of God**."
- **42:3** Then Jesus explained to them what **God's word** says about the Messiah.
- **42:7** Jesus said, "I told you that everything written about me in **God's word** must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds so they could understand **God's word**.
- **45:10** Philip also used other **scriptures** to tell him the good news of Jesus.
- **48:12** But Jesus is the greatest prophet of all. He is the **Word of God**.
- **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: H561, H565, H1697, H3068, G3056, G4487

(Go back to: [1 John 2:14](#))

work, works, deeds

Definition:

The term “work” refers generally either to the action of expending effort in order to accomplish something, or to the result of that action. The term “works” refers generally to actions as a whole (that is, things that have been done or that need to be done).

- In the Bible, these terms are commonly used both in reference to God and humans.
- When used in reference to God, the term “work” in the Bible often refers to God’s action of creating the universe or saving his people (either from enemies, from sin, or both).
- God’s works 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 works or deeds that a person does can be either good or evil.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “works” could be “deeds” or “actions” or “things that are done.”
- God’s “works” or “deeds” or the “work of his hands” could also be translated as “miracles” or “mighty acts” or “things that God does.”
- The expression “the work of God” could be translated as “the things that God is doing” or “the miracles God does” or “everything that God has accomplished.”
- The term “work” can just be the singular of “works” as in “every good work” or “every good deed.”
- When work is done for God or others, it can be translated as “service” or “ministry.”

(See also: fruit, [Holy Spirit](#), miracle)

Bible References:

- 1 John 3:12
- Acts 2:8-11
- Daniel 4:37
- Exodus 34:10-11
- Galatians 2:15-16
- James 2:17
- Matthew 16:27-28
- Micah 2:7
- Romans 3:28
- Titus 3:4-5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4399, H4566, H4567, H4611, H4659, H5949, G2041

(Go back to: [1 John 3:8](#); [3:12](#); [3:18](#))

world, worldly

Definition:

The term “world” usually refers to the part of the universe where people live: the earth. The term “worldly” describes the evil values and behaviors of people living in this world.

- In its most general sense, the term “world” refers to the heavens and the earth, as well as everything in them.
- In many contexts, “world” actually means “people in the world.”
- Sometimes it is implied that this refers to the evil people on earth or the people who do not obey God.
- The apostles also used “world” to refer to the selfish behaviors and corrupt values of the people living in this world. This can include self-righteous religious practices which are based on human efforts.
- People and things characterized by these values are said to be “worldly.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “world” could also be translated as “universe” or “people of this world” or “corrupt things in the world” or “evil attitudes of people in the world.”
- The phrase “all the world” often means “many people” and refers to the people living in a certain region. For example, “all the world came to Egypt” could be translated as “many people from the surrounding countries came to Egypt” or “people from all the countries surrounding Egypt came there.”
- Another way to translate “all the world went to their hometown to be registered in the Roman census” would be “many of the people living in regions ruled by the Roman empire went...”
- Depending on the context, the term “worldly” could be translated as “evil” or “sinful” or “selfish” or “ungodly” or “corrupt” or “influenced by the corrupt values of people in this world.”
- The phrase “saying these things in the world” can be translated as “saying these things to the people of the world.”
- In other contexts, “in the world” could also be translated as “living among the people of the world” or “living among ungodly people.”

(See also: corrupt, heaven, Rome, godly)

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:15
- 1 John 4:5
- 1 John 5:5
- John 1:29
- Matthew 13:36-39

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0776, H2309, H2465, H5769, H8398, G1093, G2886, G2889, G3625

(Go back to: [1 John 2:2](#); [2:15](#); [2:16](#); [2:17](#); [3:1](#); [3:13](#); [3:17](#); [4:1](#); [4:3](#); [4:4](#); [4:5](#); [4:9](#); [4:14](#); [4:17](#); [5:4](#); [5:5](#); [5:19](#))

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