



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

**Galatians**

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# **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

## **Galatians**

## Introduction to Galatians

### Part 1: General Introduction

#### Outline of the Book of Galatians

Paul declares his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ; he says that he is surprised by the false teachings that the Christians in Galatia have accepted from other people (1:1-10).

Paul says that people are saved by trusting in Christ alone, not by keeping the law (1:11-2:21).

God puts people right with himself only when they trust in Christ; the example of Abraham; the curse which the law brings (and not a means of salvation); slavery and freedom compared and illustrated by Hagar and Sarah (3:1-4:31).

When people are joined to Christ, they become free from having to keep the law of Moses. They are also free to live as the Holy Spirit guides them. They are free to refuse the demands of sin. They are free to bear each other's burdens (5:1-6:10).

Paul warns the Christians not to trust in being circumcised and in keeping the law of Moses. Instead, they must trust in Christ (6:11-18).

#### Who wrote the Book of Galatians?

Paul from the city of Tarsus was the author. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he began to trust in Jesus Christ, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

It is uncertain when Paul wrote this letter and where he was when he wrote it. Some scholars think Paul was in the city of Ephesus and wrote this letter after the second time he traveled to tell people about Jesus. Other scholars think Paul was in the city of Antioch in Syria and wrote the letter soon after the first time he traveled.

#### What is the Book of Galatians about?

Paul wrote this letter to both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians in the region of Galatia. He wanted to write against the false teachers who said that Christians need to follow the law of Moses. Paul defended the gospel by explaining that a person is saved by believing in Jesus Christ. People are saved as result of God being kind and not as a result of people doing good works. No person can perfectly obey the law. Any attempt to please God by obeying the law of Moses will only result in God condemning them. (See: [good news](#), [gospel](#), [save](#), [saved](#), [safe](#), [salvation](#), [faith](#) and [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#) and [work](#), [works](#), [deeds](#))

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

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Galatians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Galatia." (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

### Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

#### What does it mean to "live like Jews" (2:14)?

To "live like Jews" means to obey the law of Moses, even though one trusts in Christ. The people among the early Christians who taught that this was necessary were called "Judaizers."

## Part 3: Important Translation Issues

### How did Paul use the terms “law” and “grace” in the Book of Galatians?

These terms are used in a unique way in Galatians. There is an important teaching in Galatians about Christian living. Under the law of Moses, righteous or holy living required a person to obey a set of rules and regulations. As Christians, holy living is now motivated by grace. This means that Christians have freedom in Christ and are not required to obey a specific set of rules. Instead, Christians are to live a holy life because they are thankful that God has been so kind to them. This is called “the law of Christ.” (See: [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [unrighteous](#), [unrighteousness](#), [upright](#), [uprightness](#) and [holy](#), [holiness](#), [unholy](#), [sacred](#))

### What did Paul mean by the expression “in Christ,” “in the Lord,” etc.?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:22; 2:4, 17; 3:14, 26, 28; 5:6, 10. Paul meant to express the idea of a very close union with Christ and the believers. At the same time, he often intended other meanings as well. See, for example, “when we seek for God to justify us in Christ” (2:17), where Paul spoke of being justified by means of Christ.

Please see the introduction to the Book of Romans for more details about this kind of expression.

### What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Galatians?

- “Foolish Galatians, whose evil eye has harmed you? Was not Jesus Christ depicted as crucified before your eyes” (3:1)? The ULT, UST, and the other modern versions have this reading. However, older versions of the Bible add, “[so] that ye should not obey the truth.” Translators are advised not to include this expression. However, if in the translators’ region there are older Bible versions that have the passage, the translators can include it. If it is translated, it should be put inside square brackets ([ ]) to indicate that it is probably not original to Galatians. (See: [Textual Variants](#)) (See: [Textual Variants](#))



# Galatians 1

## Galatians 1 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Paul started this letter differently than his other letters. He adds that he was “not an apostle from men nor by human agency, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead ones.” Paul probably included these words because false teachers were opposing him and trying to undermine his authority.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Heresy

God eternally saves people only through the true, biblical gospel. God condemns any other version of the gospel. Paul asks God to curse those who teach a false gospel. They might not be saved. They should be treated as non-Christians. (See: [save](#), [saved](#), [safe](#), [salvation](#), [eternity](#), [everlasting](#), [eternal](#), [forever](#), [good news](#), [gospel](#) and [condemn](#), [condemned](#), [condemnation](#) and [curse](#), [cursed](#), [cursing](#))

#### Paul’s qualifications

Some people in the early church were teaching that Gentiles needed to obey the law of Moses. To refute this teaching, in verses 13-16 Paul explains how he was formerly a zealous Jew. But God still needed to save him and show him the true gospel. As a Jew, and the apostle to Gentile people, Paul was uniquely qualified to address this issue. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “You are turning so quickly to a different gospel”

The Book of Galatians is one of Paul’s earliest letters in Scripture. It shows that heresies troubled even the early church. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

## Galatians 1:1

### General Information:

Unless noted otherwise, all instances of “you” and “your” in this letter refer to the Galatians and are plural. (See: [Forms of You](#))

### Paul (ULT)

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. Use that here. Alternate translations: “From me, Paul” or “I, Paul” (See: [First, Second or Third Person](#))

### the one who raised him (ULT)

Alternate translation: “who caused him to live again”

### ULT

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle—not from men nor by man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, the one who raised him from the dead—

## Galatians 1:2

### brothers (ULT)

Here, **brothers** means fellow Christians, including both men and women, since all believers in Christ are members of one spiritual family, with God as their heavenly Father. Alternate translation: “brothers and sisters” (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> and all the brothers with me, to the churches of Galatia:

## Galatians 1:3

### Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ (ULT)

After introducing the senders and recipients of the letter, Paul gives a blessing. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: "May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace" (See: [Blessings](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,

If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract nouns **grace** and **peace** with adjectives such as "gracious" and "peaceful." Alternate translation: "May God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be gracious to you and make you peaceful" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

## Galatians 1:4

### for our sins (ULT)

Here, **sins** is a metonym for the punishment for sin. Alternate translation: “to take the punishment we deserved because of our sins” or “to take the punishment for our sins” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### from this present evil age (ULT)

Here, **this present evil age** does not refer to a time period, but to the present attitudes and activities of mankind in contrast to God. Alternate translation: “that he might bring us to a place of safety from the evil powers at work in the world today” or “that he might free us from the evil powers at work in the world today” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> the one who gave himself for our sins so that he might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

## Galatians 1:5

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>5</sup> to him {be} the glory forever {and}  
ever. Amen.

## Galatians 1:6

### I am amazed (ULT)

Paul was very saddened that the people in Galatia were not living a life that showed they were trusting in the Messiah. Alternate translation: "I am surprised" or "I am shocked"

### you are turning away so quickly...from the one who called (ULT)

Here, **you are turning away** is a metaphor for doubting or no longer trusting in God. Alternate translation: "you are so quickly starting to doubt him" or "you are so quickly turning your backs on God" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> I am amazed that you are turning away so quickly to a different gospel from the one who called you by the grace of Christ,

## Galatians 1:7

### causing...trouble (ULT)

Alternate translation: "stiring up" "causing great distress" or "confusing you"

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> which is not another, except certain ones are causing you trouble and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.



## Galatians 1:8

### other than the one we proclaimed (ULT)

Alternate translation: "different from the gospel" or "different from the message"

### let him be cursed (ULT)

If your language has a common way of calling a curse down on someone, you should use that.

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> But even if we or an angel from heaven might proclaim to you a gospel other than the one we proclaimed to you, let him be cursed.

## Galatians 1:9

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>9</sup> As we have said before, and now I say again, "If someone proclaims to you a gospel other than the one you received, let him be cursed."

## Galatians 1:10

### **For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men (ULT)**

These rhetorical questions expect the answer “No.” Alternate translation: “I do not seek the approval of men, but instead I seek the approval of God. I am not seeking to please men.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

#### **ULT**

<sup>10</sup> For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? If I was still pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

### **men? If I was still pleasing...I would not be a servant of Christ (ULT)**

This phrase contrary to fact. Alternate translation: “I am not still trying to please men; I am a servant of Christ”

## Galatians 1:11

Alternate translation: "did not come from a human" or "is not from the thoughts of a person"

### ULT

**11** For I make known to you, brothers,  
that the gospel which was proclaimed  
by me is not according to man.

## Galatians 1:12

### by revelation of Jesus Christ (ULT)

This could mean: (1) "Jesus Christ revealed the gospel to me" (2) "God made me know the gospel when he showed Jesus Christ to me"

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ.

## Galatians 1:13

### former...life (ULT)

Alternate translation: "my behavior at one time" or "my prior life" or "my earlier life"

#### ULT

**13** For you have heard about my former life in Judaism, that I was persecuting the church of God beyond measure, and I was destroying it.

## Galatians 1:14

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**14** And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my {own} race, being extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

## Galatians 1:15

### called me through his grace (ULT)

This could mean: (1) "God called me to serve him because he is gracious" (2) "he called me by means of his grace"

#### ULT

**15** But when the one who had set me apart from the womb of my mother and called me through his grace was pleased



## Galatians 1:16

### to reveal his Son in me (ULT)

This could mean: (1) “to allow me to know his Son” (2) “to to reveal his Son to others through me”

### Son (ULT)

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

### I might preach him (ULT)

Alternate translation: “proclaim that Jesus is God’s Son” or “preach the good news about God’s Son”

### I did...consult with flesh and blood (ULT)

Here, **Consult with flesh and blood** is an idiom that means talking with other people. (See: [Idiom](#))

#### ULT

**16** to reveal his Son in me, so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

## Galatians 1:17

### I did go up to Jerusalem (ULT)

Jerusalem was in a region of high hills, making it necessary to climb many hills in order to get there, and so it was common to describe travel to Jerusalem as “to **go up to Jerusalem**”

### to...I went...Arabia (ULT)

The region of Arabia was located south of Damascus and Jerusalem.

#### ULT

**17** nor I did go up to Jerusalem to those {who were} apostles before me. Instead, I went to Arabia and again returned to Damascus.

## Galatians 1:18

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**18** Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and I stayed with him 15 days.

## Galatians 1:19

### But I did not see another of the apostles except James (ULT)

This double negative emphasizes that James was the only other apostle besides Peter whom Paul saw. Alternate translation: “the only other apostle I saw was James” (See: [Double Negatives](#))

#### ULT

<sup>19</sup> But I did not see another of the apostles except James, the brother of the Lord.

## Galatians 1:20

### In what I write to you, I assure you before God, that I am not lying

Paul uses litotes to emphasize that he is telling the truth. Alternate translation: "I am not lying to you in the messages I write to you" or "in the things I write to you, I am telling you the truth" (See: [Litotes](#))

#### ULT

<sup>20</sup> Now what I write to you, behold, before God, I am not lying.

## Galatians 1:21

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>21</sup> Then I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia.

## Galatians 1:22

### **I was still not personally known to the churches of Judea that are in Christ**

Alternate translation: "None of the people in the churches of Judea that are in Christ had ever met me"

#### **ULT**

<sup>22</sup> Now I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea that {are} in Christ.

## Galatians 1:23

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>23</sup> But they were only hearing, "The one formerly persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith which he formerly was destroying,"



## Galatians 1:24

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

**ULT**

<sup>24</sup> and they glorified God in me.

## Galatians 2

### Galatians 2 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Paul continues to defend the true gospel. This began in Galatians 1:11.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Freedom and slavery

Throughout this letter, Paul contrasts freedom and slavery. The Christian is free in Christ to do many different things. But the Christian who attempts to follow the law of Moses needs to follow the whole law. Paul describes trying to follow the law as a type of slavery. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “I do not negate the grace of God”

Paul teaches that, if a Christian attempts to follow the law of Moses, they do not understand the grace God has shown to them. This is a fundamental error. But Paul uses the words “I do not negate the grace of God” as a type of hypothetical situation. The purpose of this statement could be seen as, “If you could be saved by following the law, then it would negate the grace of God.” (See: [grace](#), [gracious](#) and [Hypothetical Situations](#))

## Galatians 2:1

### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to give the history of how he learned the gospel from God, not the apostles.

### I went up (ULT)

Here, **went up** is used because Jerusalem is located in hilly country. The Jews also viewed Jerusalem as the place on earth that is closest to heaven, so Paul may have been speaking figuratively, or it may be that it was reflecting the difficult, uphill, journey to get to Jerusalem.

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, also taking Titus along with me.

## Galatians 2:2

### the...who seemed to be important (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to those who were recognized as the important overseers of the believers" or "with those who were considered leaders of the church"

### I might run—or had run (ULT)

Paul uses running as a metaphor to compare his work of preaching the gospel to a person running a race. Paul worked hard to preach the gospel. He wanted the gospel that he preached to have lasting effects. Alternate translation: "I did not want to work hard for God uselessly" or "I did not want my hard work to be wasted" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

### lest I might run—or had run—in vain (ULT)

Paul feared that if he did not explain the gospel privately to the leaders, they could misunderstand the gospel, or others would misrepresent him. The double negative can be represented positively. Alternate translation: "to be sure I was doing profitable work" (See: [Double Negatives](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> Now I went up according to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, but privately to those who seemed to be important, lest I might run—or had run—in vain.

## Galatians 2:3

### to be circumcised (ULT)

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “to have someone circumcise him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> But not even Titus, who {was} with me, who was a Greek, was forced to be circumcised.

## Galatians 2:4

### the false brothers who came in secretly (ULT)

Alternate translation: "People who pretended to be Christians came into the church" or "People who said they were Christians but were not came into our group"

### But it was because of (ULT)

**But is was because of** could be: (1) connected to v. 1, which gives the reason for why Paul explained the gospel privately to the leaders in Jerusalem (2) connected to v. 3, which explains why people wanted to circumcise Titus (3) unconnected and begins an unfinished sentence.

### so that they will enslave us (ULT)

Paul is speaking about how these people wanted to force the Galatian believers to follow the Jewish rituals that the law commanded. Alternate translation: "to force us to obey the law" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### so that they will enslave us (ULT)

Paul is speaking about following the law as if it were slavery. Alternate translation: "in order to make us slaves to the law" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> But it was because of the false brothers who came in secretly, who came in secretly to spy on our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus so that they will enslave us,

## Galatians 2:5

### we did...yield in submission (ULT)

Alternate translation: "submit" or "listen" or "accept what they were saying" or "agreed with that they wanted to do"

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> we did not even yield in submission to them for an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

## Galatians 2:6

### to me...added nothing (ULT)

Here, **me** represents what Paul was teaching. Alternate translation: “added nothing to what I teach” or “did not add anything to my message” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> Now from those seeming to be something (what sort they were formerly matters nothing to me; God does not accept the face of man)—indeed, those seeming important added nothing to me.



## Galatians 2:7

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>7</sup> But on the contrary, having seen that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcision, just as Peter to the circumcision

## Galatians 2:8

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>8</sup> (for the one who worked in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcision also worked in me to the Gentiles),

## Galatians 2:9

### seeming to be pillars (ULT)

Here, **pillars** refers to men who were leaders of the believers in Jerusalem and taught people the word of God. Alternate translation: “who were like pillars of the church” or “who were recognized as important leaders” or “who were considered to have authority” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### having understood the grace that had been given to me (ULT)

The abstract noun **grace** refers to how God gave Paul the task to proclaim the gospel to the non-Jews. Alternate translation: “understood that God had been kind to me and gave me this work” or “understood the work God was kind to give me” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me (ULT)

Here, **gave the right hand of fellowship** is an action that symbolizes a pledge of friendship or agreement. Alternate translation: “welcomed Barnabas and me as fellow workers” or “welcomed Barnabas and me with honor” or “shook hands with Barnabas and me as a sign that they agreed with us” or “agreed that Barnabas and me were partners in this work” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> and having understood the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, those seeming to be pillars, gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, so that we would be to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision,

## Galatians 2:10

### the poor...we might remember (ULT)

You may need to make explicit how they were to **remember the poor**. Alternate translation: “remember to take care of the needs of the poor” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

<sup>10</sup> only that we might remember the poor, the same thing that I was also eager to do.

## Galatians 2:11

### I opposed him to his face (ULT)

The phrase **to his face** is a metonym. Alternate translation: “I confronted him in person” or “I challenged his actions in person” or “I opposed him in front of everyone” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**11** Now when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

## Galatians 2:12

### being afraid of those from the circumcision (ULT)

The reason Peter was **afraid** can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "He was afraid that these men who required circumcision would judge that he was doing something wrong" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> For before certain ones came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles. But when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, being afraid of those from the circumcision.

### those from the circumcision (ULT)

Here, **those from the circumcision** represents Jews who had become Christians, but who demanded that those who believe in Christ live according to Jewish customs like circumcision.

### separated himself (ULT)

Alternate translation: "stayed away from" or "avoided"

## Galatians 2:13

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**13** And the rest of the Jews also joined with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

## Galatians 2:14

### they were not walking correctly according to the truth of the gospel (ULT)

Alternate translation: “they were not living like people who believe the true gospel” or “they were not obeying the true gospel”

### how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews (ULT)

This rhetorical question is a rebuke and can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “you are wrong to force the Gentiles to live like Jews.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

### can you force (ULT)

The word **you** is singular and refers to Peter. (See: [Forms of You](#))

#### ULT

<sup>14</sup> But when I saw that they were not walking correctly according to the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of all of them, “If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile, and not a like Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?”



## Galatians 2:15

### not sinners from the Gentiles (ULT)

The term **sinners** was used by Jews as a synonym for non-Jews.  
 Alternate translation: “we are not Gentiles, those people who do not know God” or “we are not people who do not follow the law”

#### ULT

**15** We {are} Jews by birth, and not sinners from the Gentiles;

## Galatians 2:16

### knowing (ULT)

The word **knowing** could refer to: (1) Paul and others, but not the Galatians (exclusive), who were primarily Gentiles (2) Paul and includes the Galatians. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

### no...flesh (ULT)

The word **flesh** is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "no person" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

### ULT

**16** but knowing that no man is justified by the works of the law except through faith in Jesus Christ, we also believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law. For by works of the law no flesh will be justified.

## Galatians 2:17

### seeking to be justified in Christ (ULT)

The phrase **to be justified in Christ** means justified because we are united with Christ and justified by means of what Christ has done.

### we ourselves were also found {to be} sinners (ULT)

The phrase **were also found to be sinner** could mean: (1) they admit they are sinners (2) they are no longer following the law (3) others view them as sinners for not following the law or eating with non-Jews.

### May it never be (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Of course, that is not true!" or "No, never!" This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question **is Christ then a minister of sin?** (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

#### ULT

**17** But if, seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were also found {to be} sinners, {is} Christ then a minister of sin? May it never be!

## Galatians 2:18

### I prove myself to be a transgressor (ULT)

**I prove myself to be a transgressor** could mean: (1) Paul sinned by trying to obey the law again (2) Paul sinned by leaving the law for a time when he believed in the Messiah (3) the law proves Paul is a sinner when he tries to follow it.

#### ULT

**18** For if I again rebuild those things which I destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor.

### For if I again rebuild those things which I destroyed (ULT)

**For if I again rebuild those things which I destroyed** is a metaphor for someone who returns to trying to obey the law after they trusted in the Messiah. He compares trying to follow the law with someone trying to build a building. He compares someone who trusts in the Messiah with someone who destroys the building they are trying to build. He compares someone who returns to trying to follow the law after trusting the Messiah with someone who wants to rebuild the building they destroyed. Alternate translation: "If I believe believe in Christ to be justified before God instead of following the law, and then I change my mind and start following the law again for justification" (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Galatians 2:19

### through the law (ULT)

The phrase **through the law** could refer to: (1) Paul's experience in trying to obey the law (2) how Christ paid the requirements of the law. Alternate translation: "when the Messiah completed the law"

#### ULT

**19** For I, through the law, died to the law so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ,

### I...died to the law (ULT)

The phrase, **I...died to the law** means that the law no longer has any power or authority over Paul. Alternate translation: "I ... am separated from the law"

### I have been crucified with Christ (ULT)

**I have been crucified with Christ** could mean (1) by the Messiah's death, Paul was now separated from the law (2) Paul died spiritually and escaped the dominion of sin and the law.

## Galatians 2:20

### of...Son of God (ULT)

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

#### ULT

<sup>20</sup> and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. But that which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith that {is} of the Son of God, the one who loved me and gave himself for me.

## Galatians 2:21

### I do not set aside (ULT)

Paul states a negative to emphasize the positive. Paul is defending a charge others made against him. He does not reject God's grace when he rejects following the law. This phrase can be translated positively. Alternate translation: "I confirm the value of" or "I do not reject God's kindness" or "I do not ignore God's kindness" (See: [Litotes](#))

#### ULT

**21** I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness {is} through the law, then Christ died for nothing!

### if...righteousness {is} through the law, then Christ died for nothing (ULT)

Paul is describing a situation that never existed. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

### if...righteousness {is} through the law (ULT)

Alternate translation: "if people could become righteous by obeying the law" or "if it were possible for a person to become righteous in God's sight by obeying the law"

### then Christ died for nothing (ULT)

Alternate translation: "then Christ would have accomplished nothing by dying" or "then it was pointless for Christ to die"

## Galatians 3

### Galatians 3 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Equality in Christ

All Christians are equally united to Christ. Ancestry, gender, and status do not matter. All are equal with each other. All are equal in the eyes of God.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to convince the Galatians of their sin. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [sin, sinful, sinner, sinning](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Flesh

This is a complex issue. “Flesh” is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that the physical part of man is sinful. “Flesh” is used in this chapter to contrast with that which is spiritual. (See: [flesh](#))

#### “Those of faith are children of Abraham”

Scholars are divided on what this means. Some believe Christians inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham, so Christians replace the physical descendants of Israel. Others believe Christians spiritually follow Abraham, but they do not inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham. In light of Paul’s other teachings and the context here, Paul is probably writing about the Jewish and Gentile Christians sharing the same faith as Abraham did. (See: [spirit](#), [wind](#), [breath](#) and [Metaphor](#))



## Galatians 3:1

### General Information:

Paul is rebuking the Galatians by asking rhetorical questions.

### Who bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified (ULT)

Paul is using a rhetorical question to say that the Galatians are acting as though someone has put a spell on them. Alternate translation: "You behave as if someone has put a spell on you, even though you know for a fact that Jesus Christ was crucified!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> O foolish Galatians! Who bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?

### Who bewitched you (ULT)

Paul does not really believe that someone has put a spell on them. (See: [Irony](#))

### foolish (ULT)

Alternate translation: "without understanding" or "stupid"

### bewitched you (ULT)

Alternate translation: "done magic on you" or "done witchcraft on you"

### before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified (ULT)

This metaphor describes how the Galatian believers heard the gospel message preached so clearly that it was as if Jesus was crucified before their own eyes. Alternate translation: "You yourselves heard the clear teaching about Jesus being crucified" (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Galatians 3:2

### I want to learn only this from you (ULT)

This continues the irony from verse 1. Paul knows the answers to the rhetorical questions he is about to ask. (See: [Irony](#))

### Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing of faith (ULT)

Alternate translation: "You received the Spirit, not by doing what the law says, but by believing what you heard."  
(See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> I want to learn only this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing of faith?

## Galatians 3:3

### Are you so foolish (ULT)

Alternate translation: "You are very foolish!" or "Don't be so foolish!" or "Are you crazy!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? Having begun by Spirit, are you now finishing by flesh?

### by flesh (ULT)

The word **flesh** is a metonym and refers to an independent reliance on one's own effort through outward deeds. Alternate translation: "by your own effort" or "by your own work" (See: [Metonymy](#))

## Galatians 3:4

### Have you suffered so many things for nothing (ULT)

Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Galatians that when they were suffering, they believed that they would receive some benefit. Alternate translation: “Surely you did not think that you were suffering so many things for nothing...!” or “Surely you knew that there was some good purpose for suffering so many things...!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> Have you suffered so many things for nothing—if indeed it was really for nothing?

### Have you suffered (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) suffering from persecution (2) the spiritual benefits they have experienced.

### Have you suffered so many things for nothing (ULT)

It can be stated clearly that they had suffered these things because of people who opposed them for their faith in Christ. Alternate translation: “Have you suffered so many things by those who opposed you for your faith in Christ for nothing” or “You believed in Christ, and you suffered many things by those who oppose Christ. Were your belief and suffering for nothing” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### for nothing (ULT)

Alternate translation: “uselessly” or “in vain”

### if indeed it was really for nothing (ULT)

This could mean: (1) Paul warns them not to let their experiences be for nothing. Alternate translation: “Do not let it be for nothing!” or “Do not stop believing in Jesus Christ and let your suffering be for nothing.” (2) their suffering was already in vain. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

## Galatians 3:5

### is it} by works of the law, or by hearing of faith (ULT)

Paul asks another rhetorical question to remind the Galatians how people receive the Spirit. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

### is it} by works of the law (ULT)

This represents people doing the works that the law requires. Alternate translation: “because you do what the law tells us to do”

### by hearing of faith (ULT)

Your language may require that what the people heard and whom they trusted be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: “because you heard the message and had faith in Jesus” or “because you listened to the message and trusted in Jesus” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the one providing the Spirit to you and working miracles among you, {is it} by works of the law, or by hearing of faith?

## Galatians 3:6

### Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers that even Abraham received righteousness by faith and not by the law.

### it was credited to him as righteousness (ULT)

God saw Abraham's faith in God, so then God considered Abraham righteous.

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> Just as Abraham "believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness,"

## Galatians 3:7

### those by faith (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those who believe" (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

### these are sons of Abraham (ULT)

Since Abraham was saved by faith, Abraham's true children are those who are also saved by faith as he was. This phrase goes against the opponents who claimed that the Galatian believers must be circumcised and obey the law in order to be a genuine son of Abraham. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> know, then, that those by faith, these are sons of Abraham.

## Galatians 3:8

### But the scripture, having foreseen (ULT)

Here, **the scripture** is a personification and is equivalent to saying “the Lord” or “God.” Alternate translation: “God predicted” or “the Lord saw ahead of time” (See: [Personification](#))

### In you (ULT)

The word **you** refers to Abraham and is singular. Alternate translation: “Because of you” or “Because of what you have done” or “Because I have blessed you” (See: [Forms of You](#))

### the Gentiles...all (ULT)

God was emphasizing that he was not favoring only the Jewish people, his chosen group. His plan of salvation was for both Jews and non-Jews.

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> But the scripture, having foreseen that God justifies the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, “In you all the nations will be blessed.”



## Galatians 3:9

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>9</sup> So then, those by faith are blessed  
along with the faithful Abraham.

## Galatians 3:10

### For as many as are of works of the law...are (ULT)

Alternate translation: "All people who follow the law are" or "Everyone who tries to be justified through obeying the law is"

### For as many as are of works of the law are under a curse (ULT)

Here, **under a curse** refers to eternal punishment. Alternate translation: "God will eternally punish everyone who is trying to serve God by the works of the law" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### are under a curse (ULT)

Here, **under a curse** represents being cursed by God. Alternate translation: "are cursed" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>10</sup> For as many as are of works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed {is} everyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the law to do them."

## Galatians 3:11

### is} clear (ULT)

Alternate translation: "it is obvious that" or "it is evident that"

### no one is justified before God by the law (ULT)

Alternate translation: "God justifies no one by the law"

### The righteous will live by faith (ULT)

The nominal adjective **righteous** refers to people who righteous. Alternate translation: "Righteous people will live by faith" or "The person who is righteous because he believes will live" or "It is through believing that a person becomes righteous and obtains eternal life" (See: [Nominal Adjectives](#))

#### ULT

**11** Now, that no one is justified before God by the law {is} clear, because, "The righteous will live by faith."

## Galatians 3:12

### will live in them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "will live because of them" or "will because he obeyed them"

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> Now the law is not by faith, but, "The one who does these things will live in them."

## Galatians 3:13

### from the curse of the law (ULT)

The word **curse** is a metonym for God condemning the person whom he has cursed. Alternate translation: “from God condemn us because we broke the law” or “from being cursed because of the law” or “from being cursed for not obeying the law” (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

<sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed {is} everyone who hangs on a tree”—

### who hangs on a tree (ULT)

Paul expected his audience to understand that he was referring to Jesus hanging on the cross.

## Galatians 3:14

### so that...the blessing of Abraham might come (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Because Christ became a curse for us, the blessing of Abraham will come"

### we might receive (ULT)

The word **we** includes the people who would read the letter. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

#### ULT

<sup>14</sup> so that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that through faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

## Galatians 3:15

### Brothers (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Galatians 1:2](#).

### according to man (ULT)

Alternate translation: “from a human standpoint” or “with a human analogy”

#### ULT

<sup>15</sup> Brothers, I speak according to man.  
Nevertheless, no one sets aside or adds  
to a covenant established by man.

## Galatians 3:16

### Now (ULT)

This word shows that Paul has stated a general principle and is now beginning to introduce a specific case.

### as to many (ULT)

Alternate translation: "referring to many descendants"

### to your seed (ULT)

The word **your** is singular and refers to a specific person who is a descendant of Abraham (and that descendant is identified as "Christ"). (See: [Forms of You](#))

### ULT

**16** Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It does not say, "and to seeds," as to many, but as to one, "and to your seed," who is Christ.



## Galatians 3:17

### The...after 430 years (ULT)

Alternate translation: "four hundred and thirty years" (See: [Numbers](#))

#### ULT

**17** Now I say this: The law, having come after 430 years, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God to nullify the promise.

## Galatians 3:18

### For if the inheritance {is} from the law, {it is} no longer from promise (ULT)

Paul is speaking of a situation that did not exist to emphasize that the inheritance came only by means of the promise. Alternate translation: “the inheritance comes to us by means of the promise, because we could not keep the demands of God’s law” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

#### ULT

<sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance {is} from the law, {it is} no longer from promise. But God has shown kindness to Abraham through a promise.

### inheritance (ULT)

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were an **inheritance** of property. (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Galatians 3:19

### What, then, {is} the law (ULT)

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I will tell you what the purpose of the law is." or "Let me tell you why God gave the law." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

### It was added (ULT)

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God added it" or "God added the law" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

**19** What, then, {is} the law? It was added because of transgressions, having been put into effect through angels by the hand of a mediator until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

### having been put into effect through angels by the hand of a mediator (ULT)

God used angels to give the law to Moses. Moses is referred here as a **mediator** between God and the people of Israel. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God issued the law with the help of angels, and a mediator put it into force" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### the hand of a mediator (ULT)

Alternate translation: "given through a middleman"

## Galatians 3:20

### Now a mediator implies more than one person, but God is one

God gave his promise to Abraham without a mediator, but he gave the law to Moses, who was a mediator between God and the people of Israel.

#### ULT

<sup>20</sup> Now a mediator is not for one, but God is one.

## Galatians 3:21

### General Information:

The word **us** in this section is inclusive and refers to all Christians.  
(See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

### against the promises (ULT)

Alternate translation: "opposed to the promises" or "in conflict with the promises"

### righteousness would have come by the law (ULT)

Alternate translation: "we could have become righteous by obeying that law"

#### ULT

**21** Therefore {is} the law against the promises? May it never be! For if a law was given that was able to make alive, then righteousness would have come by the law.

## Galatians 3:22

### the scripture (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) a particular passage of Scripture (2) all of scripture (3) a metonymy for God himself. (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**22** But the scripture imprisoned all things under sin so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those believing.

## Galatians 3:23

### **we were held captive under the law, imprisoned (ULT)**

The way the law controlled us is spoken of as if the law were a prison guard holding us as captives. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### **ULT**

<sup>23</sup> Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned to the faith about to be revealed.

### **we were held captive under the law, imprisoned (ULT)**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the law held us captive in prison” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### **to the faith about to be revealed (ULT)**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “until God would reveal that he justifies those who have faith in Christ” or “until God would reveal that he justifies those who trust in Christ” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

## Galatians 3:24

### guardian (ULT)

A **guardian** was usually a slave who was responsible for enforcing rules and behaviors given by the parent and would report to the parent on the child's actions. (See: [Personification](#))

#### ULT

**24** So then the law became our guardian until Christ, so that we might be justified by faith.

### so that...we might be justified (ULT)

Before Christ came, God had planned to justify us. When Christ came, he carried out his plan to justify us. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God would declare us to be righteous" (See: [Active or Passive](#))



## Galatians 3:25

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>25</sup> But faith having come, we are no longer under a guardian.

## Galatians 3:26

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

**ULT**

<sup>26</sup> For you are all sons of God through  
faith in Christ Jesus.

## Galatians 3:27

### For as many as have been baptized into Christ (ULT)

Alternate translation: "For all of you who were baptized into Christ"

#### ULT

<sup>27</sup> For as many as have been baptized into Christ put on Christ.

### put on Christ (ULT)

This is a metaphor that means they have been united to Christ and have put on his character of righteousness and virtue. (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Galatians 3:28

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

## Galatians 3:29

### heirs (ULT)

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**29** Now if you {are} of Christ, then you are seed of Abraham, heirs according to promise.

## Galatians 4

### Galatians 4 General Notes

#### Structure and formatting

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with verse 27, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

#### Special concepts in this chapter

##### Sonship

Sonship is a complex issue. Scholars have many views on Israel's sonship. Paul uses sonship to teach how being under the law differs from being free in Christ. Not all of Abraham's physical descendants inherited God's promises to him. Only his descendants through Isaac and Jacob inherited the promises. And God only adopts into his family those who follow Abraham spiritually through faith. They are children of God with an inheritance. Paul calls them "children of promise." (See: [inherit](#), [inheritance](#), [heir](#), [promise](#), [promised](#), [spirit](#), [wind](#), [breath](#) and [faith](#) and [adoption](#), [adopt](#), [adopted](#))

#### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

##### Abba, Father

"Abba" is an Aramaic word. In ancient Israel, people used it to informally refer to their fathers. Paul "transliterates" its sounds by writing them with Greek letters. (See: [Copy or Borrow Words](#))

## Galatians 4:1

### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the Galatian believers that Christ came to redeem those who were under the law, and that he rescued them from their enslavement to the law and to sin and has made them God's children.

### ULT

<sup>1</sup> Now I say, for as much time as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, being master of all.

## Galatians 4:2

### guardians (ULT)

The word **guardians** refers to people with legal responsibility for the personal life of a child. Alternate translation: “people supervise the child”

### stewards (ULT)

The word **stewards** refers to people who watch over the property and finances of the child. Alternate translation: “people manage the child’s possessions”

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> But he is under guardians and stewards until the date appointed by {his} father.



## Galatians 4:3

### we were (ULT)

Here, **we** refers to all Christians, including Paul's readers. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

### when we were children (ULT)

Here **children** is a metaphor for the time before someone trusts in the Messiah. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### the elemental principles of the world (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the laws, knowledge, or moral principles of the world (2) the spiritual beings, which some people thought control what happens on earth (3) the Jewish religion.

### were being enslaved (ULT)

Here, **we were being enslaved** is a metaphor for being unable to stop one's self from doing something. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### were being enslaved (ULT)

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the spirits that ruled the world had made us their slaves" or "the spirits that ruled the world had caused us to serve them like slaves" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> So also, when we were children, we were being enslaved by the elemental principles of the world.

## Galatians 4:4

### Son (ULT)

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

### the fullness of time (ULT)

Here, **the fullness of time** shows that God was working his purposes throughout history. It emphasizes a time designated by God to deliver people from their helplessness and enslavement to the Law and to those forces that are opposed to God. Alternate translation: “at the proper time” or “at the designated time”

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, having been born from a woman, having been born under the law,

## Galatians 4:5

### he might redeem (ULT)

Paul uses the metaphor of a person buying back lost property or buying the freedom of a slave as a picture of Jesus paying for his people's sins by dying on the cross. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> in order that he might redeem those under the law, so that we might receive the adoption as sons.

## Galatians 4:6

### you are sons (ULT)

Paul uses the word for male child here because the subject is inheritance. In his culture and that of his readers, inheritance passed most commonly, but not always, to male children. He was neither specifying nor excluding female children here.

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> Now because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father."

### of his Son (ULT)

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. (See: [Translating Son and Father](#)) The Holy Spirit is intimately linked to God's Son. The Spirit was the promise of the Son (Jn. 14) as well as of the Father. It is by the Spirit that Christ lives in our hearts.

### into our hearts (ULT)

The heart is metonym for the center and source of the whole inner life of a person. It is the source of thinking, feeling, and volition. Alternate translation: "to live in us" (See: [Metonymy](#))

### crying out (ULT)

The Spirit is the subject of the one **crying out**. Yet this also expresses the believer's attitude as well. it is important to avoid translating this verb in a way that would suggest either shouting or weeping.

### God...Abba...Father (ULT)

By calling out **Abba, Father** the Spirit assures us that we are God's children and he loves us. **Abba** is an Aramaic word that was used by a child to address their father.

## Galatians 4:7

### a son (ULT)

Paul uses **son** here because the subject is inheritance. In his culture and that of his readers, inheritance passed most commonly, but not always, to male children. He was neither specifying nor excluding female children here.

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> So then, you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, also an heir through God.

### you are (ULT)

Paul is addressing his readers as though they are one person, so **you** here is singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

### an heir (ULT)

The word **heir** refers to how believers inherit the promises God made to Abraham like a person inherits property and wealth from a family member. (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Galatians 4:8

### Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers that they are again trying to live under God's laws rather than living by faith.

### those by nature not being gods (ULT)

The phrase, **those, by nature, not being gods** refers to the beings which the Galatians served when they were pagans and were considered by them to be gods, but they were not really gods

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> But at that time, not having known God, you were enslaved to those by nature not being gods.

## Galatians 4:9

### are you turning again (ULT)

Here, **turning again** is a metaphor for starting to follow and obey their former false religion practices. Alternate translation: “are you beginning to obey again” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### how are you turning again to the weak and worthless elemental principles, to which once more you want to be enslaved again (ULT)

This is the first of two rhetorical questions Paul gives. Alternate translation: “you should not turn again to the weak and worthless elemental principles, which once more will enslave you!” or “you should not follow again the weak and elemental principles that will enslave you again!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

### the weak and worthless elemental principles (ULT)

See how you translated this phrase in [Galatians 4:3](#).

### to which once more you want to be enslaved again (ULT)

Paul uses this rhetorical question to rebuke the Galatian believers for behaving in a way that would make them like slaves. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

### to which once more you want to be enslaved again (ULT)

Here, **to be enslaved again** is a metaphor for being obligated to obey certain rules or customs. Alternate translation: “Do you want to have to obey rules again like a slave must obey his master?” or “It seems that you want to be controlled by these rules all over again!” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> But now, having come to know God, or rather, having come to be known by God, how are you turning again to the weak and worthless elemental principles, to which once more you want to be enslaved again?

## Galatians 4:10

### **You observe days and new moons and seasons and years**

Paul is speaking of their being careful to celebrate certain times, thinking that doing that will make them right with God. Alternate translation: "You carefully celebrate days and new moons and seasons and years"

#### **ULT**

**10** You observe days and months and seasons and years!



## Galatians 4:11

### for nothing (ULT)

Alternate translation: "may have been useless" or "has not had any effect"

#### ULT

**11** I am afraid for you lest I have labored among you for nothing.

## Galatians 4:12

### Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers how kindly they treated him when he was with them, and he encourages them to continue to trust him while he is not there with them.

### brothers (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Galatians 1:2](#) and [3:15](#).

### You did me no harm (ULT)

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “You treated me well” or “You treated me as you should have”

#### ULT

<sup>12</sup> I beg you, brothers, become as I am, for I also {am} as you. You did me no harm.

## Galatians 4:13

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>13</sup> Now you know that because of a weakness of the flesh I proclaimed the gospel to you the first time.

## Galatians 4:14

### And...your trial in my flesh (ULT)

This could mean: (1) they endured the difficulty of welcoming Paul when he was sick (2) they resisted the temptation to reject Paul when he was sick.

### you did not despise (ULT)

Alternate translation: "you did not scorn" or "you did not hate"

#### ULT

**14** And you did not despise your trial in my flesh nor reject me, but you welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.

## Galatians 4:15

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>15</sup> Where, then, {is} your blessing? For I testify to you that, if possible, having torn out your eyes, you would have given them to me.

## Galatians 4:16

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>16</sup> So then, speaking truth to you, have I become your enemy?

## Galatians 4:17

### for you...but...to separate (ULT)

Alternate translation: "to shut you out from us" or "to make you stop being loyal to us"

### you would be zealous for them (ULT)

Alternate translation: "you would be devoted to them" or "you would be attached to them"

#### ULT

**17** They are zealous for you, not rightly, but they desire to separate you, so that you would be zealous for them.

## Galatians 4:18

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**18** Now {it is} always good to be zealous for good, and not only when I am present with you.



## Galatians 4:19

### My little children (ULT)

This is a metaphor and points to the fact that it was through Paul that the Galatians had become Christians. Alternate translation: “You who are disciples because of me” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**19** My little children, with whom I am in labor again until Christ would be formed in you—

### with whom...I am in labor...until Christ would be formed in you (ULT)

Paul uses childbirth as a metaphor for his concern about the Galatians. Alternate translation: “I am in pain as though I were a woman giving birth to you, and I will continue to be in pain until Christ truly controls you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Galatians 4:20

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>20</sup> but I am desiring to be present with you now and to change my tone, because I am perplexed about you.

## Galatians 4:21

### Tell me (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I want to ask a question" or "I want to tell you something"

#### ULT

**21** Tell me, you who desire to be under law, do you not listen to the law?

### do you not listen to the law (ULT)

Paul is introducing what he will say next. Alternate translation: "you need to learn what the law really says." or "let me tell you what the law really says." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

## Galatians 4:22

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>22</sup> For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave girl and one by the free woman.

## Galatians 4:23

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>23</sup> And the one was born from the slave girl according to flesh, but the other, from the free woman, through promise.

## Galatians 4:24

### being spoken as an allegory (ULT)

An **allegory** is a historical event that represents something else. In Paul's allegory, the two women referred to in [Galatians 4:22](#) represent two different covenants.

### Mount Sinai (ULT)

**Mount Sinai** is a synecdoche for the law that Moses gave to the Israelites there. Alternate translation: "Mount Sinai, where Moses gave the law to Israel" (See: [Synecdoche](#))

### giving birth to slavery (ULT)

Paul speaks of the law as if it were a person who could give birth. Alternate translation: "The people under this covenant are like slaves who have to obey the law" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**24** These are being spoken as an allegory, for they are two covenants. One {is} from Mount Sinai, giving birth to slavery; this is Hagar.

## Galatians 4:25

### corresponding to (ULT)

Alternate translation: "represents" or "is similar"

### she is in slavery...with her children (ULT)

Hagar is a slave and her children are slaves with her. Alternate translation: "Jerusalem, like Hagar, is a slave, and her children are slaves with her" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>25</sup> Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponding to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.

## Galatians 4:26

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

**ULT**

<sup>26</sup> But the Jerusalem above is free,  
which is our mother.



## Galatians 4:27

### Rejoice (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Be happy"

#### ULT

<sup>27</sup> For it is written, "Rejoice, you barren one who does not give birth; break forth and shout, you who are not suffering the pains of childbirth; because the children of the desolate one {are} more than those of the one having a husband."

## Galatians 4:28

### brothers (ULT)

See how you translated this word in [Galatians 1:2](#).

### children of promise (ULT)

Here, **children of promise** could refer to: (1) Abraham's children (2) God's children.

#### ULT

<sup>28</sup> Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

## Galatians 4:29

### according to flesh (ULT)

This refers to how Abraham became Ishmael's father by taking Hagar as a wife. Alternate translation: "by means of human action" or "the natural way" (See: [Metaphor](#))

### according to...Spirit (ULT)

Here, **according to Spirit** means Isaac was born in a supernatural way, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "because of the Spirit" or "because of the work of the Spirit"

#### ULT

**29** But just as then, the one who was born according to flesh was persecuting the one according to Spirit, so {it} also {is} now.

## Galatians 4:30

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>30</sup> But what does the scripture say?

“Throw out the slave girl and her son.

For the son of the slave girl will certainly not inherit with the son of the free woman.”

## Galatians 4:31

### brothers (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Galatians 1:2](#).

#### ULT

<sup>31</sup> Therefore, brothers, we are not children of a slave girl, but of the free woman.

## Galatians 5

### Galatians 5 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Paul continues writing about the law of Moses as something that traps or enslaves a person. (See: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [law of God](#))

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Fruit of the Spirit

The phrase “the fruit of the Spirit” is not plural, even though it begins a list of several things. Translators should keep the singular form if possible. (See: [fruit](#), [fruitful](#), [unfruitful](#))

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Illustrations

Paul uses several metaphors in this chapter to illustrate his points and help explain complicated issues. (See: [Metaphor](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### “You are cut off from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you no longer experience grace.”

Some scholars think Paul teaches that being circumcised causes a person to lose their salvation. Other scholars think Paul means that obeying the law to try to get right with God will keep a person from being saved by grace. (See: [grace](#), [gracious](#))

## Galatians 5:1

### Connecting Statement:

Paul applies the allegory of the two women to remind believers that they are free from having to obey the law.

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> For freedom Christ set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not again be subjected to a yoke of slavery.

### For freedom Christ set us free (ULT)

**For freedom Christ set us free** implies that Christ sets believers free from the law and that they are not obligated to obey it. Alternate translation: “Christ has set us free from the old covenant so that we might be free” or “Christ has set us free from the law so that we might live as free people” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### Stand firm (ULT)

**Stand firm** figuratively refers to staying strongly resolute for a certain task. Alternate translation: “Be determined to stay free” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### Stand firm (ULT)

**Stand firm** implies that the Galatian believers are continue to be determined to live a life free from the law. Alternate translation: “Do not give in to the arguments of people who teach something else” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

### do not again be subjected to a yoke of slavery (ULT)

Here, **do not again be subjected to a yoke of slavery** figuratively refers to being obligated to obey the law. Alternate translation: “do not live like one who is controlled like being under a yoke of slavery to the law” or “do not go back again to being a slave of the law” (See: [Metaphor](#))

## Galatians 5:2

### if you would be circumcised (ULT)

Alternate translation: "if you let someone circumcise you" or "if you receive circumcision"

### Christ will benefit you nothing (ULT)

Paul means that if a person is circumcised in order to receive salvation, then all that Christ has done for them is for nothing. No one can be justified by faith in Christ and at the same time by their own efforts.

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if you would be circumcised, Christ will benefit you nothing.



## Galatians 5:3

### Now I testify (ULT)

Alternate translation: "I declare" or "I serve as a witness" or "I tell you" or "I warn you"

#### ULT

<sup>3</sup> Now I testify again to every man being circumcised that he is obligated to do the whole law.

## Galatians 5:4

### You were cut off from Christ (ULT)

Here **cut off** is a metaphor for separation from Christ. Alternate translation: “You have ended your relationship with Christ” or “You are no longer united with Christ” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>4</sup> You were cut off from Christ, whoever is being justified by law; you fell from grace.

### whoever is being justified by law (ULT)

The phrase **being justified by the law** describes the attempt or pursuit to be justified by the law. Alternate translation: “all of you who think you can be justified by doing the deeds required by the law” or “you who want to be justified by the law”

### you fell from grace (ULT)

Alternate translation: “you have turned your back on the grace of God” or “God will not be gracious to you” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

## Galatians 5:5

### we (ULT)

Here, **we** refers to Paul and those who do not trust in the law, but in the Messiah. And exclusive form of **we** fits the context better in this case. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'](#))

### ULT

<sup>5</sup> For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.

### through the Spirit (ULT)

Alternate translation: "by the power of the Spirit" or "by the help of the Spirit"

### we...by faith...eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness (ULT)

This could mean: (1) "we are waiting by faith for the hope of righteousness" (2) "we are waiting for the hope of righteousness that comes by faith"

## Galatians 5:6

### neither circumcision...nor uncircumcision (ULT)

The words **circumcision** and **uncircumcision** refer to being a Jew or a non-Jew. Alternate translation: “neither being a Jew nor not being a Jew” (See: [Metonymy](#))

### is capable of anything (ULT)

Alternate translation: “makes no difference” or “is meaningless”

#### ULT

<sup>6</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is capable of anything, but {only} faith working through love.

## Galatians 5:7

### You were running (ULT)

Paul uses the metaphor of **running** to describe the spiritual progress the Galatian believers were making. Alternate translation: “You were making excellent progress” or “you were doing so well” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> You were running well. Who hindered you, not to be persuaded by truth?

## Galatians 5:8

### persuasion (ULT)

Here, **persuasion** refers to the idea of getting a person to change what they believe and act differently. Alternate translation: “This teaching which persuaded you to stop trusting in the Messiah” or “This way of thinking”

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> This persuasion {is} not from the one calling you!

## Galatians 5:9

### A little leaven (ULT)

**A little leaven** describes the teaching of circumcision, which threaten to ruin the entire lives of the Galatian believers.

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

## Galatians 5:10

### you will think nothing otherwise (ULT)

Alternate translation: "you will not believe anything different from what I am telling you" or "you will not think differently than what I believe"

### you...troubling (ULT)

Alternate translation: "is causing you to be uncertain about the truth" or "stirs up trouble among you"

### whoever he may be (ULT)

This could mean: (1) Paul does not know the names of the people who are telling the Galatians that they need to obey the law of Moses (2) Paul does not want the Galatians to care about whether they are important or influential.

#### ULT

**10** I am confident in you in the Lord that you will think nothing otherwise. But the one troubling you will bear the judgment, whoever he may be.



## Galatians 5:11

### **But brothers, if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I still being persecuted (ULT)**

Paul uses a rhetorical question to emphasize that people persecuting him demonstrate that he does not tell believers to be circumcized. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

#### **ULT**

<sup>11</sup> But brothers, if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed.

### **I...if...still proclaim circumcision (ULT)**

Paul is describing a situation that does not exist to emphasize the fact that people would not be persecuting him if he was not preaching that believers must be circumcized. (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

### **why am I still being persecuted (ULT)**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “why are they still persecuting me” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### **brothers (ULT)**

See how you translated this in [Galatians 1:2](#), [3:15](#), and [4:12](#).

### **the stumbling block of the cross has been removed (ULT)**

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “the teaching about the cross has no stumbling block” or “there is nothing in the teaching of the cross that would cause people to stumble” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

### **the stumbling block of the cross has been removed (ULT)**

Stumbling represents sinning, and a stumbling block represents something that causes people to sin. Alternate translation: “the teaching about the cross that causes people to reject the truth has been removed” or “there is nothing in the teaching about Jesus dying on the cross that would lead people to reject the teaching” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### **the stumbling block of the cross has been removed (ULT)**

In this case the **stumbling block** causes people to reject the truth of the teaching that in order to be made right with God, people only need to believe that Jesus died on the cross for us. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

## Galatians 5:12

### will...castrate themselves (ULT)

This could be: (1) literal, to cut off their male organs so as to become eunuchs (2) metaphorical, completely withdraw from the Christian community. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**12** I wish those disturbing you will even castrate themselves!

## Galatians 5:13

### For (ULT)

Paul is giving the reason for his words in [Galatians 5:12](#).

### you...have been called to freedom (ULT)

It is implied that Christ has set believers free from the old covenant.

Here freedom from the old covenant is a metaphor for not being obligated to obey it. Alternate translation: "You were called to freedom from the old covenant" or "Christ has chosen you to not be obligated to the old covenant" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>13</sup> For you have been called to freedom, brothers, only not the freedom for an opportunity for the flesh; rather, through love serve one another.

### brothers (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Galatians 1:2](#).

### an opportunity for the flesh (ULT)

The word **flesh** refers to the part of human nature that does not submit to God. This word sums up the impelling motive of the natural man, and is the moral bias of the man who is not ruled by the Holy Spirit. The relationship between **opportunity** and **the flesh** can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "an opportunity for you to behave according to your sinful nature" or "an opportunity to follow the evil desires of your hearts" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

## Galatians 5:14

### the...all...law has been fulfilled in one command (ULT)

This could mean: (1) "you can state the whole law in just one commandment" (2) "by obeying one commandment, you obey all the commandments"

#### ULT

<sup>14</sup> For all the law has been fulfilled in one command, in this, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

### Love your neighbor as yourself (ULT)

The words **your** and **yourself** are singular. (See: [Forms of 'You' — Singular](#) )

## Galatians 5:15

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>15</sup> But if you are biting and devouring one another, watch out that you might not be consumed by one another.

## Galatians 5:16

### walk by the Spirit (ULT)

Here, **walk** is a metaphor for living. Alternate translation: “conduct your life in the power of the Holy Spirit” or “live your life in dependence on the Spirit” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**16** Now I say, walk by the Spirit and you would certainly not fulfill the desires of the flesh.

### you would certainly not fulfill the desires of the flesh (ULT)

The phrase **you would certainly not fulfill the desires of the flesh** is an idiom that means “to do what someone desires.” Alternate translation: “You will not do what your sinful nature desires” (See: [Idiom](#))

### the desires of the flesh (ULT)

The sinful nature is spoken of as if it were a person and wanted to sin. Alternate translation: “what you want to do because of your sinful nature” or “the things you want to do because you are sinful” (See: [Personification](#)). See how you translated this **flesh** in [Galatians 5:13].

## Galatians 5:17

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**17** For the flesh desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. For these oppose each other, so that you are not doing these things that you would desire.

## Galatians 5:18

### you are not under the law (ULT)

Alternate translation: "you are not obligated to obey the law of Moses"

#### ULT

**18** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.



## Galatians 5:19

### the works of the flesh (ULT)

The word **flesh** is used as if it were a person. See how you translated **flesh** in [Galatians 5:13](#) and [5:16](#). (See: [Personification](#))

### the works of the flesh (ULT)

The abstract noun **works** can be translated with the verb “does.” Alternate translation: “what the sinful nature does” or “the deeds if we follow the sinful desires of our hearts” or “what people do because of their sinful nature” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

#### ULT

**19** Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity,

## Galatians 5:20

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalry, dissension, divisions,

## Galatians 5:21

### will...inherit (ULT)

The word **inherit** is used as a metaphor to refer to how believers will receive what God has promised believers like someone who inherits property and wealth from a family member. (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

**21** envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, about which I warn you, just as I warned you before, that those practicing such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

## Galatians 5:22

### But the fruit of the Spirit (ULT)

Here, **fruit** is a metaphor for “result” or “outcome.” Alternate translation: “But what the Spirit produces” or “But the Spirit makes” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

## Galatians 5:23

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>23</sup> gentleness, {and} self-control; against such things there is no law.

## Galatians 5:24

### have crucified the flesh with the passions and the desires (ULT)

Paul speaks of Christians who refuse to live according to their sinful nature as if it were a person and they have killed it on a cross.

Alternate translation: "refuse to live according the sinful nature with its passions and desires, as if they killed it on a cross." See how you translated **flesh** in [Galatians 5:13](#), [5:16](#), and [5:19](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>24</sup> But those of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and the desires.

## Galatians 5:25

### If we live by the Spirit (ULT)

Alternate translation: "Since God's Spirit has caused us to be alive"

### let us also walk by the Spirit (ULT)

Here, **walk** is a metaphor for how a person lives. Alternate translation: "then we should allow the Holy Spirit to guide how we live" or "let us follow the Holy Spirit in every part of our lives" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

## Galatians 5:26

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>26</sup> Let us not become boastful,  
provoking one another, envying one  
another.



## Galatians 6

### Galatians 6 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter concludes Paul's letter. His final words address some issues that do not seem to be connected to the rest of his letter.

### Brothers

Paul writes the words in this chapter to Christians. He calls them "brothers." This refers to Paul's Christian brothers and not his Jewish brothers.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### New Creation

People who are born again are a new creation in Christ. Christians have been given new life in Christ. They have a new nature in them after they come to faith in Christ. To Paul, this is more significant than a person's ancestry. (See: [born again](#), [born of God](#), [new birth](#) and [faith](#))

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is contrasted with "spirit." In this chapter, flesh is also used to refer to the physical body. (See: [flesh](#) and [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#) and [spirit](#), [wind](#), [breath](#))

## Galatians 6:1

### Connecting Statement:

Paul teaches believers how they should treat other believers and how God rewards someone who is faithful.

### Brothers (ULT)

See how you translated **brothers** in [Galatians 1:2](#), [3:15](#), [4:12](#), and [5:11](#).

### if...a man (ULT)

Alternate translation: “if anyone among you” or “if one of you”

### even if a man might be caught in any trespass (ULT)

This could mean: (1) a fellow believers catches the person committing a sin. Alternate translation: “if someone is discovered in an act of sin” (2) a sin overcomes a person so that they sin. Alternate translation: “if someone among you sins” or “if someone is led astray to sin”

### you, the spiritual (ULT)

Alternate translation: “those of you who are guided by the Spirit” or “you who submit to the Spirit”

### let...restore such a one (ULT)

Alternate translation: “exhort the person who sinned to return to a correct relationship with God” or “you should humbly help bring that person to the right path”

### in a spirit of gentleness (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) the person’s attitude and disposition. Alternate translation: “with an attitude of gentleness” or “in a kind way” (2) the Holy Spirit who is characterized by gentleness is directing the one offering correction. Alternate translation: “through the Holy Spirit of gentleness” or “by following the Holy Spirit who is gentle”

### considering yourself (ULT)

These words treat the Galatians as though they are all one person to emphasize that he is talking to each of them. Alternate translation: “Be concerned about yourselves” or “I say to each one of you, ‘Be careful for yourself’” (See: [Forms of ‘You’ — Singular](#))

### lest you also might be tempted (ULT)

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “so that you are tempted and also sin” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

#### ULT

<sup>1</sup> Brothers, even if a man might be caught in any trespass, let you, the spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself, lest you also might be tempted.

## Galatians 6:2

### you will fulfill the law of Christ (ULT)

Here, **the law of Christ** does not refer to a set of rules, but most likely to the Messiah's command to love one another in [John 13:34](#). It involves submission to the person of Jesus and not to a code or list of commandments. This is similar to Paul's statement that the law can be summarized by loving one another in [Galatians 5:14](#).

#### ULT

<sup>2</sup> Carry one the burdens of another, and thus you will fulfill the law of Christ.

## Galatians 6:3

### For if (ULT)

**For** could be connected to: (1) “carry one another’s burdens” ([Galatians 6:2](#)) (2) “lest you also might be tempted” ([Galatians 6:1](#)) (3) “Let us not become conceited” ([Galatians 5:26](#)).

### ULT

<sup>3</sup> For if anyone thinks himself to be something, being nothing, he deceives himself.

### to be something (ULT)

Alternate translation: “he is better than others”

### being nothing (ULT)

Alternate translation: “he is not better than others”

## Galatians 6:4

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>4</sup> But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason to boast in himself alone and not in someone else.

## Galatians 6:5

### will carry his own burden (ULT)

The could mean: (1) each person has their own responsibilities and tasks. Alternate translation: "each person must do the work that God has given him" or "each person is responsible for only his work" (2) each person is responsible for their own weaknesses and sins.

Alternate translation: "each person is responsible for their own weaknesses"

#### ULT

<sup>5</sup> For each one will carry his own burden.

## Galatians 6:6

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

<sup>6</sup> But let the one being taught the word share in all good things with the one teaching.

## Galatians 6:7

### for whatever a man may sow, that he will also reap (ULT)

Here, **sow** represents doing things that end in some kind of result, and **reap** represents experiencing the results of what one has done.

Alternate translation: "for just as a farmer gathers in the fruit of whatever kind of seeds he plants, so everyone experiences the results of whatever he does" (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatever a man may sow, that he will also reap.

### for whatever a man may sow (ULT)

Alternate translation: "whatever a person plants" or "whatever someone plants" (See: [When Masculine Words Include Women](#))



## Galatians 6:8

### the one sowing to his own flesh (ULT)

Here, **sowing** is a metaphor for doing deeds that will have consequences later. In this case, **sowing to his own flesh** refers to a person doing sinful actions because of his sinful nature. Alternate translation: “the person who continually does deeds following the evil desires of their heart” or “the person who does the things he wants to do because of his sinful nature” or “the person who does what pleases his sinful self” (See: [Metaphor](#))

#### ULT

<sup>8</sup> For the one sowing to his own flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction. But the one sowing to the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

### will reap destruction (ULT)

Here, **destruction** refers to God punishing the person as if the person were harvesting a crop. Alternate translation: “will receive punishment for what he did” or “he will harvest death” or “he will harvest punishment that is forever” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### But the one sowing to the Spirit (ULT)

Here, **sowing** is a metaphor for doing deeds that will have consequences later. In this case, **sowing to the Spirit** refers to a person who does good actions because he is obeying and following God’s Spirit. Alternate translation: “the person who does the things God’s Spirit loves” or “the person who lives to please the Spirit” (See: [Metaphor](#))

### from...will reap...the Spirit...eternal life (ULT)

Here, **eternal life** refers to God rewarding the person as if the person were harvesting a crop. Alternate translation: “will receive eternal life as a reward from God’s Spirit” or “he will harvest eternal life from the Holy Spirit”

## Galatians 6:9

### for in due time (ULT)

Alternate translation: "for at the proper time" or "when the right time arrives"

#### ULT

<sup>9</sup> But we should not become discouraged in doing good, for in due time, not becoming weary, we will reap.

## Galatians 6:10

### So then (ULT)

Alternate translation: "As a result of this" or "Because of this"

### those of the household of the faith (ULT)

Alternate translation: "those who are members of God's family through faith in Christ"

#### ULT

**10** So then, as we have time, we should do good to all, but especially to those of the household of the faith.

## Galatians 6:11

### Connecting Statement:

As Paul closes this letter, he gives one more reminder that the law does not save and that they should remember the cross of Christ.

### with my own hand (ULT)

This could mean: (1) Paul had someone write most of this letter as Paul told him what to write, but Paul himself wrote this last part of the letter (2) Paul wrote the whole letter himself.

#### ULT

**11** See what large letters I wrote to you with my own hand.

## Galatians 6:12

### to make a good impression in the flesh (ULT)

Alternate translation: "others will think well of them" or "others will think that they are good people"

### in the flesh (ULT)

Here, **in the flesh** refers to their desire to circumcise the Galatian believers. Alternate translation: "outwardly" or "by the way their bodies appear"

### for the cross (ULT)

Here, **for the cross** represents what Christ did for us when he died on the cross. Alternate translation: "the work Jesus did on the cross" (See: [Metonymy](#))

#### ULT

**12** As many as desire to make a good impression in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised, only so that they might not be persecuted for the cross of Christ Jesus.

## Galatians 6:13

*(There are no notes for this verse.)*

### ULT

**13** For not even those who have been circumcised keep the law themselves, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh.

## Galatians 6:14

### and I to the world (ULT)

The words **has been crucified** are understood from the previous phrase. This means that the natural world has stopped having any claims or influence on Paul. Alternate translation: “and I have been crucified to the world” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

#### ULT

**14** But may it never be to me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

## Galatians 6:15

### a new creation (ULT)

Here, **a new creation** refers to the whole process of conversion when someone trusts in the Messiah and the Holy Spirit gives that person new life.

#### ULT

<sup>15</sup> For neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.



## Galatians 6:16

### the Israel of God (ULT)

This could refer to: (1) believers in general are the Israel of God (2) Jewish believers are the Israel of God (3) the Jews in general are the Israel of God

#### ULT

**16** And as many as will walk in this standard, peace and mercy upon them and upon the Israel of God.

## Galatians 6:17

### me trouble (ULT)

This means Paul does not want the Galatian believers to doubt his authority or continue to cause him trouble by following teachers who demand them to become circumcised.

#### ULT

**17** From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I carry in my body the marks of Jesus.

### From now on...for I carry in my body the marks...of Jesus (ULT)

Here, **the marks** were scars from people who beat and whipped Paul because they did not like him teaching about Jesus. Alternate translation: “for the scars on my body show that I serve Jesus”

## Galatians 6:18

### brothers (ULT)

See how you translated this in [Galatians 1:2](#).

#### ULT

**18** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
{be} with your spirit, brothers. Amen.



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Academy**

**Version 25**

# 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: [Galatians 1:3](#); [2:9](#); [3:7](#); [5:19](#))

## 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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-sentences\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs\]\]](#)

## 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: [Galatians 2:3](#); [3:19](#); [3:23](#); [3:24](#); [4:3](#); [5:11](#); [6:1](#))

## 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: [Galatians 1 General Notes](#); [2:4](#); [2:10](#); [2:12](#); [3:4](#); [3:5](#); [5:1](#); [5:4](#); [5:11](#); [5:13](#))

# Blessings

## Description

Blessings are short sayings that people use to ask God to do something good for another person. In the Bible, the person saying the blessing speaks or writes directly to the person who will receive the blessing. The person who says the blessing does not directly speak to God, but it is understood that God is the one who will do the good thing mentioned. It is also understood that God hears the blessing, whether he is mentioned by name or not.

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-intro\]\]](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/writing-poetry\]\]](#)

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying blessings. There are many blessings in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say blessings in your language, so that people recognize them as blessings and understand what one person wants God to do for another.

## Examples From the Bible

In the Bible, people often said a blessing when they met someone or when they were leaving someone or sending someone off.

In the book of Ruth, when Boaz meets his workers in the fields, he greets them with a blessing:

Then behold, Boaz coming from Bethlehem! And he said to the reapers, “Yahweh be with you.” And they said to him, “May Yahweh bless you.” (Ruth 2:4 ULT)

Similarly, when Rebekah leaves her family, they say farewell with a blessing:

They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, “Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them.” (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

In a similar way, the writers of letters in the New Testament often wrote a blessing at the beginning of their letters as well as at the end. Here are examples from the beginning and end of Paul’s second letter to Timothy:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. (2 Tim 1:2 ULT)  
The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

## Translation Strategies

Find out how people say blessings in your language. Collect a list of common blessings, noting the form of the verb, the use of certain words, and the words that are not used in a blessing but would normally be in a sentence. Also find out what differences there might be between blessings that people use when they are speaking to each other and when they are writing to each other.

If translating a blessing literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

Add a verb if that is natural in your language.

Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.

Translate the blessing in a form that is natural and clear in your language.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add a verb if that is natural in your language.

■ The Lord with your spirit. The grace with you. (2 Tim 4:22, literal from the Greek)

In the Greek of this verse, there is no verb 'be.' However, in blessings in English, it is natural to use a verb. The idea that the 'grace' from God will be or remain with the person is implied in Greek.

The Lord **be** with your spirit. Grace **be** with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

(2) Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.

If people expect a blessing to refer to God in your language, you might have to provide 'God' as the subject or as the source of the blessing. In Greek and Hebrew, usually God is not explicitly mentioned in the blessing, but it is implied that God is the one acting to show his kindness to the person being addressed.

■ The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

The Lord be with your spirit. **May God give** grace to you.

■ They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

They blessed Rebekah, and said to her, "Our sister, may **God grant that** you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may **God empower** your descendants **to** possess the gate of those who hate them."

(3) Translate the blessing in a form that is natural and clear in your language.

Here are some ideas for ways that people might say a blessing in their language.

■ The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you. (2 Tim 4:22 ULT)

May the Lord be with your spirit. May God cause his grace to be with you.

May you have God's presence with you. May you experience grace from God.

■ "Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them." (Genesis 24:60 ULT)

"Our sister, we pray to God that you may be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and appeal to him that your descendants may possess the gate of those who hate them."

"Our sister, by God's power you will be the mother of thousands of ten thousands, and your descendants will possess the gate of those who hate them."

(Go back to: [Galatians 1:3](#))

# Copy or Borrow Words

## Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can “borrow” the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to “borrow” words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See Translate Unknowns.)

This page answers the question: *What does it mean to borrow words from another language and how can I do it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

## Examples From the Bible

Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

## Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

- (1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
- (2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
- (3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

.A man's name in Hebrew letters — זְפַנְיָה  
 "Zephaniah" — The same name in Roman letters

(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

Zephaniah — This is a man's name.  
 "Zephaniah" — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.

(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Zephaniah — If your language does not have the "z," you could use "s." If your writing system does not use "ph" you could use "f." Depending on how you pronounce the "i" you could spell it with "i" or "ai" or "ay."  
 "Sefania"  
 "Sefanaia"  
 "Sefanaya"

(Go back to: [Galatians 4 General Notes](#))



## 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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-verbs\]\]](#)

(Go back to: [Galatians 1:19; 2:2](#))

# Ellipsis

## Description

An ellipsis<sup>1</sup> 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.

[<sup>1</sup>] 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: [Galatians 6:14](#))

# 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: [Galatians 2:16](#); [3:14](#); [3:21](#); [4:3](#); [5:5](#))

# First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

## Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-explicitinfo]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns]]

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

## Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,  
“... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”



## Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

But David said to Saul, “**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father’s sheep.”

- (2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, “... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?”

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Forms of You](#)

(Go back to: [Galatians 1:1](#))

## 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.

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

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[Forms of ‘You’ — Singular](#)

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-youdual]]

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

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- Forms of “You” — Formal or Informal

(Go back to: [Galatians 1:1](#); [2:14](#); [3:8](#); [3:16](#); [4:7](#))

# Forms of 'You' — Singular

## Description

Some languages have a singular form of “you” for when the word “you” refers to just one person, and a **plural** form for when the word “you” refers to more than one person. Translators who speak one of these languages will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for “you” in their language. Other languages, such as English, have only one form, which people use regardless of how many people it refers to.

This page answers the question: *How do I know if the word 'you' is singular?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-partsofspeech\]\]](#)

[Forms of You](#)

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. These languages all have both a singular form of “you” and a plural form of “you.” When we read the Bible in those languages, the pronouns and verb forms show us whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one. When we read the Bible in a language that does not have different forms of you, we need to look at the context to see how many people the speaker was speaking to.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators who speak a language that has distinct singular and plural forms of “you” will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for “you” in their language.
- Many languages also have different forms of the verb depending on whether the subject is singular or plural. So even if there is no pronoun meaning “you,” translators of these languages will need to know if the speaker was referring to one person or more than one.

Often the context will make it clear whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one. If you look at the other pronouns in the sentence, they will help you know the number of people the speaker was speaking to. Sometimes Greek and Hebrew speakers used the singular form of “you” even though they were speaking to a group of people. (See Forms of 'You' — Singular to a Crowd.)

## Examples From the Bible

But he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.” But when he heard this, Jesus said to him, “One thing is still lacking to **you**. All things, as much as **you** have, sell all and distribute to the poor, and **you** will have treasure in heaven—and come, follow me.” (Luke 18:21-22 ULT)

The ruler was speaking about just himself when he said “I.” This shows us that when Jesus said “you” he was referring only to the ruler. So languages that have singular and plural forms of “you” need the singular form here.

The angel said to him, “Dress **yourself** and put on **your** sandals.” So he did that. He said to him, “Put on **your** outer garment and follow me.” (Acts 12:8 ULT)

The context makes it clear that the angel was speaking to one person and that only one person did what the the angel commanded. So languages that have singular and plural forms of “you” would need the singular form here for “yourself” and “your.” Also, if verbs have different forms for singular and plural subjects, then the verbs “dress” and “put on” need the form that indicates a singular subject.

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. For this purpose I left **you** in Crete, that **you** might set in order things not yet complete and ordain elders in every city as I directed **you**. But **you**, say what fits with sound teaching. (Titus 1:4a, 5; 2:1 ULT)

Paul wrote this letter to one person, Titus. Most of the time the word “you” in this letter refers only to Titus.

## Strategies for finding out how many people “you” refers to

- (1) Look at the notes to see if they tell whether “you” refers to one person or more than one person.
- (2) Look at the UST to see if it says anything that would show you whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one person.
- (3) If you have a Bible that is written in a language that distinguishes “you” singular from “you” plural, see which form of “you” that Bible has in that sentence.
- (4) Look at the context to see how many people the speaker was talking to and who responded.

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-youduol]]

(Go back to: [Galatians 5:14; 6:1](#))

# 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:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

## 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** <sup>1</sup>

The footnote would look like:

<sup>[1]</sup> Most versions say “Saul” here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called “Paul.”

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:

<sup>[1]</sup> 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**<sup>1</sup> 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:

[Copy or Borrow Words](#)

(Go back to: [Introduction to Galatians](#))



## 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](https://ufw.io/figs_hypo).

(Go back to: [Galatians 2 General Notes](#); [2:21](#); [3:18](#); [5:11](#))

## 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: [Galatians 1:16](#); [5:16](#))

# Irony

## Description

Irony is a figure of speech in which the sense that the speaker intends to communicate is actually the opposite of the literal meaning of the words. Sometimes a person does this by using someone else's words, but in a way that communicates that he does not agree with them. People do this to emphasize how different something is from what it should be, or how someone else's belief about something is wrong or foolish. It is often humorous.

This page answers the question: *What is irony and how can I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-intro\]\]](#)

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "People who are well do not have need of a physician, but those who have sickness. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."  
(Luke 5:31-32 ULT)

When Jesus spoke of "righteous people," he was not referring to people who were truly righteous, but to people who wrongly believed that they were righteous. By using irony, Jesus communicated that they were wrong to think that they were better than others and did not need to repent.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

If someone does not realize that a speaker is using irony, he will think that the speaker actually believes what he is saying. He will understand the passage to mean the opposite of what it was intended to mean.

## Examples From the Bible

**How well you reject the commandment of God** so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9b ULT)

Here Jesus praises the Pharisees for doing something that is obviously wrong. Through irony, he communicates the opposite of praise: He communicates that the Pharisees, who take great pride in keeping the commandments, are so far from God that they do not even recognize that their traditions are breaking God's commandments. The use of irony makes the Pharisee's sin more obvious and startling.

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

People worshiped idols as if their idols had knowledge or power, and Yahweh was angry at them for doing that. So he used irony and challenged their idols to tell what would happen in the future. He knew that the idols could not do this, but by speaking as if they could, he mocked the idols, making their inability more obvious, and rebuked the people for worshiping them.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?  
Can you find the way back to their houses for them?  
**Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then; "the number of your days is so large!"** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Job thought that he was wise. Yahweh used irony to show Job that he was not so wise. The two phrases in bold above are irony. They emphasize the opposite of what they say, because they are so obviously false. They

emphasize that Job could not possibly answer God's questions about the creation of light because Job was not born until many, many years later.

Already you are satisfied! Already you have become rich! **You began to reign** apart from us, and I wish you really did reign, so that we also might reign with you. (1 Corinthians 4:8 ULT)

The Corinthians considered themselves to be very wise, self-sufficient, and not in need of any instruction from the Apostle Paul. Paul used irony, speaking as if he agreed with them, to show how proudly they were acting and how far from being wise they really were.

## Translation Strategies

If the irony would be understood correctly in your language, translate it as it is stated. If not, here are some other strategies.

- (1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.
- (2) The irony is **not** found in the literal words of the speaker, but instead the true meaning is found in the opposite of the literal meaning of the speaker's words.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.

**How well you reject the commandment of God** so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

**You think that you are doing well when you reject God's commandment** so you may keep your tradition!  
**You act like it is good to reject God's commandment** so you may keep your tradition!

I did not come to call **the righteous**, but sinners to repentance. (Luke 5:32 ULT)

I did not come to call **people who think that they are righteous** to repentance, but to call sinners to repentance.

- (2) Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony.

**How well you reject the commandment of God** so that you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9a ULT)

**You are doing a terrible thing when you reject the commandment of God** so you may keep your tradition!

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. **"Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled."** (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULT)

'Present your case,' says Yahweh; 'present your best arguments for your idols,' says the King of Jacob. Your idols **cannot bring us their own arguments or come forward to declare to us what will happen** so we may know these things well. We cannot hear them because **they cannot speak** to tell us their earlier predictive declarations, so we cannot reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?

Can you find the way back to their houses for them?

**Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then;  
the number of your days is so large!** (Job 38:20-21 ULT)

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? **You act like you know how light and darkness were created, as if you were there; as if you are as old as creation, but you are not!**

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Litotes](#)

(Go back to: [Galatians 3:1](#); [3:2](#))



# Litotes

## Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by using two negative words or a negative word with a word that means the opposite of the meaning he intends. A few examples of negative words are “no,” “not,” “none,” and “never.” The opposite of “good” is “bad.” Someone could say that something is “not bad” to mean that it is extremely good.

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

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

Some languages do not use litotes. People who speak those languages might not understand that a statement using litotes actually strengthens the positive meaning. Instead, they might think that it weakens or even cancels the positive meaning.

## Examples From the Bible

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was **very** useful.

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a **lot** of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very agitated.)

But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are **not the least** among the leaders of Judah,  
for from you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel. (Matthew 2:6 ULT)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a **very important city**.

## Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

“For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good**.”

Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

“Now when it became day, there was **great excitement** among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter.”

or:

“Now when it became day, the soldiers were **very concerned** because of what had happened to Peter.”

(Go back to: [Galatians 1:20](#); [2:21](#))

# 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: [Galatians 1:6](#); [2:4](#); [2:9](#); [2:18](#); [Notes](#); [3:1](#); [3:7](#); [3:10](#); [3:18](#); [3:23](#); [3:27](#); [3:29](#); [4:3](#); [4:5](#); [4:7](#); [4:9](#); [4:19](#); [4:24](#); [4:25](#); [4:29](#); [Notes](#); [5:1](#); [5:4](#); [5:7](#); [5:11](#); [5:12](#); [5:13](#); [5:16](#); [5:21](#); [5:22](#); [5:24](#); [5:25](#); [6:7](#); [6:8](#))



# 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: [Galatians 1:4](#); [2:6](#); [2:11](#); [3:3](#); [3:10](#); [3:13](#); [3:22](#); [4:6](#); [5:6](#); [6:12](#))

## 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: [Galatians 3:11](#))

# Numbers

## Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

## Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

## Examples From the Bible

When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands**. (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Write numbers using numerals.
- (2) Write numbers using your language’s words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
- (3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

## Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

## Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died.  
(Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-ordinal]]

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-fraction]]

(Go back to: [Galatians 3:17](#))

# 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: [Galatians 3:8](#); [3:24](#); [5:16](#); [5:19](#))

## 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: [Galatians 1:10](#); [2:14](#); [2:17](#); [Notes](#); [3:1](#); [3:2](#); [3:3](#); [3:4](#); [3:5](#); [3:19](#); [4:9](#); [4:21](#); [5:11](#))

# Symbolic Action

## Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean “yes” or turn their heads from side to side to mean “no.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

[[rc://en/ta/man/translate/translate-unknown]]

## Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In other cultures it means “yes.”

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

## Examples From the Bible

And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

## Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

- (1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.
- (2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Jairus showed Jesus great respect.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.

Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.

Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

(Go back to: [Galatians 2:9](#))

# 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: [Galatians 2:16; 4:24](#))



## 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> [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.

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> 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 Galatians](#))

# 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: [Galatians 1:16](#); [2:20](#); [4:4](#); [4:6](#))

## 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:

[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-pronouns\]\]](#)  
[\[\[rc://en/ta/man/translate/figs-genericnoun\]\]](#)

### 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: [Galatians 1:2](#); [6:7](#))



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Words**

**Version 28**

## adoption, adopt, adopted

### Definition:

The terms “adopt” and “adoption” refer to the process of someone legally becoming the child of people who are not his biological parents.

- The Bible uses “adoption” and “adopt” in a figurative way to describe how God causes people to be part of his family, making them his spiritual sons and daughters.
- As adopted children, God makes believers to be co-heirs with Jesus Christ, giving them all of the privileges of sons and daughters of God.

### Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated with a term that the language of translation uses to describe this special parent-child relationship. Make sure it is understood that this has a figurative or spiritual meaning.
- The phrase “experience adoption as sons” could be translated as “be adopted by God as his children” or “become God’s (spiritual) children.”
- To “wait for the adoption of sons” could be translated as “look forward to becoming God’s children” or “wait expectantly for God to receive as children.”
- The phrase “adopt them” could be translated as “receive them as his own children” or “make them his own (spiritual) children.”

(See also: heir, [inherit](#), [spirit](#))

### Bible References:

- Ephesians 1:5
- Galatians 4:3-5
- Romans 8:14-15
- Romans 8:23
- Romans 9:4

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: G52060

(Go back to: [Galatians 4 General Notes](#))



## 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: G03130, G05090, G10800, G38240

(Go back to: [Galatians 6 General Notes](#))

## 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, G01760, G08430, G26070, G26130, G26310, G26320, G26330, G29170, G29190, G29200, G52720, G60480

(Go back to: [Galatians 1 General Notes](#))

## curse, cursed, cursing

### Definition:

The term “curse” means to cause negative things to happen to the person or thing that is being cursed.

- A curse can be a statement that harm will happen to someone or something.
- To curse someone can also be an expression of desire that bad things will happen to them.
- It can also refer to the punishment or other negative things that someone causes to happen to someone.

### Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “cause bad things to happen to” or “declare that something bad will happen to” or “swear to cause evil things to happen to.”
- In the context of God sending curses on his disobedient people, it could be translated as “punish by allowing bad things to happen.”
- The term “cursed” when used to describe people could be translated as “(this person) will experience much trouble.”
- The phrase “cursed be” could be translated as “May (this person) experience great difficulties.”
- The phrase, “Cursed is the ground” could be translated as “The soil will not be very fertile.”
- However, if the target language has the phrase “cursed be” and it has the same meaning, then it is good to keep the same phrase.

(See also: bless)

### Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 14:24-26
- 2 Peter 2:12-14
- Galatians 3:10
- Galatians 3:14
- Genesis 3:14
- Genesis 3:17
- James 3:10
- Numbers 22:6
- Psalms 109:28

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:9** God said to the snake, “You are **cursed!**”
- **2:11** “Now the ground is **cursed**, and you will need to work hard to grow food.”
- **4:4** “I will bless those who bless you and **curse** those who **curse** you.”
- **39:7** Then Peter vowed, saying, “May God **curse** me if I know this man!”
- **50:16** Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into this world, God **cursed** it and decided to destroy it.

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0422, H0423, H0779, H1288, H2763, H2764, H3994, H5344, H6895, H7043, H7045, H7621, H8381, G03310, G03320, G06850, G19440, G25510, G26520, G26530, G26710, G26720, G60350

(**Go back to:** [Galatians 1 General Notes](#))

## 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, G01260, G01650, G01660, G13360

(Go back to: [Galatians 1 General Notes](#))

## 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: H0529, H0530, G16800, G36400, G41020, G60660

(Go back to: [Introduction to Galatians](#); [Galatians 4 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

# 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: H0829, H1320, H1321, H2878, H3894, H4207, H7607, H7683, G29070, G45590, G45600, G45610

(Go back to: [Galatians 3 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))



## fruit, fruitful, unfruitful

### Definition:

The term “fruit” literally refers to the part of a plant that can be eaten. Something that is “fruitful” has a lot of fruit. These terms are also used figuratively in the Bible.

- The Bible often uses “fruit” to refer to a person’s actions. Just as fruit on a tree shows what kind of tree it is, in the same way a person’s words and actions reveal what his character is like.
- A person can produce good or bad spiritual fruit, but the term “fruitful” always has the positive meaning of producing much good fruit.
- The term “fruitful” is also used figuratively to mean “prosperous.” This often refers to having many children and descendants, as well as having plenty of food and other wealth.
- In general, the expression “fruit of” refers to anything that comes from or that is produced by something else. For example, the “fruit of wisdom” refers to the good things that come from being wise.
- The expression “fruit of the land” refers generally to everything that the land produces for people to eat. This includes not only fruits such as grapes or dates, but also vegetables, nuts, and grains.
- The figurative expression “fruit of the Spirit” refers to godly qualities that the Holy Spirit produces in the lives of people who obey him.
- The expression “fruit of the womb” refers to “what the womb produces”—that is children.

### Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term using the general word for “fruit” that is commonly used in the project language to refer to the edible fruit of a fruit tree. In many languages it may be more natural to use the plural “fruits” whenever it refers to more than one fruit.
- Depending on the context, the term “fruitful” could be translated as “producing much spiritual fruit” or “having many children” or “prosperous.”
- The expression “fruit of the land” could also be translated as “food that the land produces” or “food crops that are growing in that region.”
- When God created animals and people, he commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply,” which refers to having many offspring. This could also be translated as “have many offspring” or “have many children and descendants” or “have many children so that you will have many descendants.”
- The expression “fruit of the womb” could be translated as “what the womb produces” or “children a woman gives birth to” or just “children.” When Elizabeth says to Mary “blessed is the fruit of your womb,” she means “blessed is the child you will give birth to.” The project language may also have a different expression for this.
- Another expression “fruit of the vine,” could be translated as “vine fruit” or “grapes.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “will be more fruitful” could also be translated as “will produce more fruit” or “will have more children” or “will be prosperous.”
- The apostle Paul’s expression “fruitful labor” could be translated as “work that brings very good results” or “efforts that result in many people believing in Jesus.”
- The “fruit of the Spirit” could also be translated as “works that the Holy Spirit produces” or “words and actions that show that the Holy Spirit is working in someone.”

(See also: descendant, grain, grape, Holy Spirit, vine, womb)

### Bible References:

- Galatians 5:23
- Genesis 1:11
- Luke 8:15
- Matthew 3:8

- Matthew 7:17

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0004, H1061, H1063, H1069, H2233, H2981, H3581, H3759, H3899, H3978, H4022, H5108, H6509, H6529, H7019, H8393, H8570, G10810, G25900, G25920, G25930, G37030, G50520, G53520

(Go back to: [Galatians 5 General Notes](#))

## good news, gospel

### Definition:

The term “gospel” literally means “good news” and refers to a message or announcement that tells people something that benefits them and makes them glad.

- In the Bible, this term usually refers to the message about God’s salvation for people through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.
- In most English Bibles, “good news” is usually translated as “gospel” and is also used in phrases such as, the “gospel of Jesus Christ,” the “gospel of God” and the “gospel of the kingdom.”

### Translation Suggestions:

- Different ways to translate this term could include, “good message” or “good announcement” or “God’s message of salvation” or “the good things God teaches about Jesus.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate the phrase, “good news of” could include, “good news/ message about” or “good message from” or “the good things God tells us about” or “what God says about how he saves people.”

(See also: kingdom, sacrifice, [save](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:5
- Acts 8:25
- Colossians 1:23
- Galatians 1:6
- Luke 8:1-3
- Mark 1:14
- Philippians 2:22
- Romans 1:3

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **23:6** The angel said, “Do not be afraid, because I have some **good news** for you. The Messiah, the Master, has been born in Bethlehem!”
- **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. This is the year of the Lord’s favor.”
- **45:10** Philip also used other Scriptures to tell him the **good news of Jesus**.
- **46:10** Then they sent them off to preach the **good news about Jesus** in many other places.
- **47:1** One day, Paul and his friend Silas went to the town of Philippi to proclaim the **good news about Jesus**.
- **47:13** The **good news about Jesus** kept spreading, and the Church kept growing.
- **50:1** For almost 2,000 years, more and more people around the world have been hearing the **good news about Jesus** the Messiah.
- **50:2** When Jesus was living on earth he said, “My disciples will preach the **good news** about the kingdom of God to people everywhere in the world, and then the end will come.”
- **50:3** Before he returned to heaven, Jesus told Christians to proclaim the **good news** to people who have never heard it.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: G20970, G20980, G42830

(Go back to: [Introduction to Galatians](#); [Galatians 1 General Notes](#))

## grace, gracious

### Definition:

The word “grace” refers to help or blessing that is given to someone who has not earned it. The term “gracious” describes someone who shows grace to others.

- God’s grace toward sinful human beings is a gift that is freely given.
- The concept of grace also refers to being kind and forgiving to someone who has done wrong or hurtful things.
- The expression to “find grace” is an expression that means to receive help and mercy from God. Often it includes the meaning that God is pleased with someone and helps him.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways that “grace” could be translated include “divine kindness” or “God’s favor” or “God’s kindness and forgiveness for sinners” or “merciful kindness.”
- The term “gracious” could be translated as “full of grace” or “kind” or “merciful” or “mercifully kind.”
- The expression “he found grace in the eyes of God” could be translated as “he received mercy from God” or “God mercifully helped him” or “God showed his favor to him” or “God was pleased with him and helped him.”

### Bible References:

- Acts 4:33
- Acts 6:8
- Acts 14:4
- Colossians 4:6
- Colossians 4:18
- Genesis 43:28-29
- James 4:7
- John 1:16
- Philippians 4:21-23
- Revelation 22:20-21

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2580, H2587, H2589, H2603, H8467, G21430, G54850, G55430

(Go back to: [Galatians 2 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## holy, holiness, unholy, sacred

### Definition:

The terms “holy” and “holiness” refer to the character of God that is totally set apart and separated from everything that is sinful and imperfect.

- Only God is absolutely holy. He makes people and things holy.
- A person who is holy belongs to God and has been set apart for the purpose of serving God and bringing him glory.
- An object that God has declared to be holy is one that he has set apart for his glory and use, such as an altar that is for the purpose of offering sacrifices to him.
- People cannot approach him unless he allows them to, because he is holy and they are merely human beings, sinful and imperfect.
- In the Old Testament, God set apart the priests as holy for special service to him. They had to be ceremonially cleansed from sin in order to approach God.
- God also set apart as holy certain places and things that belonged to him or in which he revealed himself, such as his temple.

Literally, the term “unholy” means “not holy.” It describes someone or something that does not honor God.

- This word is used to describe someone who dishonors God by rebelling against him.
- A thing that is called “unholy” could be described as being common, profane or unclean. It does not belong to God.

The term “sacred” describes something that relates to worshiping God or to the pagan worship of false gods.

- In the Old Testament, the term “sacred” was often used to describe the stone pillars and other objects used in the worship of false gods. This could also be translated as “religious.”
- “Sacred songs” and “sacred music” refer to music that was sung or played for God’s glory. This could be translated as “music for worshiping Yahweh” or “songs that praise God.”
- The phrase “sacred duties” referred to the “religious duties” or “rituals” that a priest performed to lead people in worshiping God. It could also refer to the rituals performed by a pagan priest to worship a false god.

### Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “holy” might include “set apart for God” or “belonging to God” or “completely pure” or “perfectly sinless” or “separated from sin.”
- To “make holy” is often translated as “sanctify” in English. It could also be translated as “set apart (someone) for God’s glory.”
- Ways to translate “unholy” could include “not holy” or “not belonging to God” or “not honoring to God” or “not godly.”
- In some contexts, “unholy” could be translated as “unclean.”

(See also: Holy Spirit, consecrate, sanctify, set apart)

### Bible References:

- Genesis 28:22
- 2 Kings 3:2
- Lamentations 4:1
- Ezekiel 20:18-20
- Matthew 7:6

- Mark 8:38
- Acts 7:33
- Acts 11:8
- Romans 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 12:3-5
- Colossians 1:22
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:15

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:16** He (God) blessed the seventh day and made it **holy**, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **9:12** "You are standing on **holy** ground."
- **13:1** "If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a **holy** nation."
- **13:5** "Always be sure to keep the Sabbath day **holy**."
- **22:5** "So the baby will be **holy**, the Son of God."
- **50:2** As we wait for Jesus to return, God wants us to live in a way that is **holy** and that honors him.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H2455, H2623, H4676, H4720, H6918, H6922, H6942, H6944, H6948, G00370, G00380, G00400, G00400, G00410, G00420, G04620, G18590, G21500, G24120, G24130, G28390, G37410, G37420

(Go back to: [Introduction to Galatians](#))

## inherit, inheritance, heir

### Definition:

The term “inherit” refers to receiving something valuable from a parent after a parent dies. The term can also refer to receiving something valuable from some other person because of a special relationship with that person. An “inheritance” is the things that are received, and an “heir” is a person who receives an inheritance.

- A physical inheritance that is received may be money, land, or other kinds of property.
- God promised Abraham and his descendants that they would inherit the land of Canaan, that it would belong to them forever.

### Translation Suggestions:

- As always, consider first whether there are already terms in the target language for the concept of an heir or an inheritance, and use those terms.
- Depending on the context, other ways that the term “inherit” could be translated might include “receive” or “possess” or “come into possession of.”
- Ways to translate “inheritance” could include “promised gift” or “secure possession.”
- The term “heir” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “privileged child who receives the father’s possessions.”
- The term “heritage” could be translated as “inherited blessings.”

(See also: heir, Canaan, Promised Land, possess)

### Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- 1 Peter 1:4
- 2 Samuel 21:3
- Acts 7:4-5
- Deuteronomy 20:16
- Galatians 5:21
- Genesis 15:7
- Hebrews 9:15
- Jeremiah 2:7
- Luke 15:11
- Matthew 19:29
- Psalm 79:1

### Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:6** When Abram arrived in Canaan God said, “Look all around you. I will give to you and your descendants all the land that you can see as an **inheritance**.”
- **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?”
- **35:3** “There was a man who had two sons. The younger son told his father, ‘Father, I want my **inheritance** now!’ So the father divided his property between the two sons.”

### Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2490, H2506, H3423, H3425, H4181, H5157, H5159, G28160, G28170, G28190, G28200



(**Go back to:** [Galatians 4 General Notes](#))

## law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God

### Definition:

Most simply, the term “law” refers to a rule or instruction that should be followed. In the Bible, the term “law” is often used generally to refer to anything and everything God wants his people to obey and do. The specific term “law of Moses” refers to the commandments and instructions that God gave Moses for the Israelites to obey.

- Depending on the context, the “law” can refer to:
  - the Ten Commandments that God wrote on stone tablets for the Israelites
  - all the laws given to Moses
  - the first five books of the Old Testament
  - the entire Old Testament (also referred to as “scriptures” in the New Testament).
  - all of God’s instructions and will
- The phrase “the Law and the Prophets” is used in the New Testament to refer to the Hebrew scriptures (or “Old Testament”)

### Translation Suggestions:

- These terms could be translated using the plural, “laws,” since they refer to many instructions.
- The term “law of Moses” could be translated as “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Depending on the context, “the law of Moses” could also be translated as “the law that God told to Moses” or “God’s laws that Moses wrote down” or “the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites.”
- Ways to translate “the law” or “law of God” or “God’s laws” could include “laws from God” or “God’s commands” or “laws that God gave” or “everything that God commands” or “all of God’s instructions.”
- The phrase “law of Yahweh” could also be translated as “Yahweh’s laws” or “laws that Yahweh said to obey” or “laws from Yahweh” or “things Yahweh commanded.”

(See also: instruct, Moses, Ten Commandments, lawful, Yahweh)

### Bible References:

- Acts 15:6
- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 28:42-43
- Ezra 7:25-26
- Galatians 2:15
- Luke 24:44
- Matthew 5:18
- Nehemiah 10:29
- Romans 3:20

### 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.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed **God’s law** could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God.
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the covenant that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai. The people promised to remain faithful to God and follow **his laws**.
- **16:1** After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites or obey **God’s laws**.

- **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.
- **27:1** Jesus answered, "What is written in **God's law**?"
- **28:1** Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me 'good?' There is only one who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have eternal life, obey **God's laws**."

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1881, H1882, H2706, H2710, H3068, H4687, H4872, H4941, H8451, G23160, G35510, G35650

(Go back to: [Introduction to Galatians](#); [Galatians 1 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

# 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: H0559, H0562, H1696, H8569, G18430, G18600, G18610, G18620, G36700, G42790

(Go back to: [Galatians 4 General Notes](#))

## 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: H0205, 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, G00930, G00940, G04580, G13410, G13420, G13430, G13440, G13450, G13460, G21180, G37160, G37170

(Go back to: [Introduction to Galatians](#))

## 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: H0983, H2421, H2502, H3444, H3467, H3468, H4190, H4422, H4931, H5338, H6308, H6403, H7682, H7951, H7965, H8104, H8199, H8668, G08030, G08040, G08060, G12950, G15080, G49820, G49910, G49920, G51980

(Go back to: [Introduction to Galatians](#); [Galatians 1 General Notes](#))



## 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 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: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

(Go back to: [Galatians 3 General Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## 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: H0178, H1172, H5397, H7307, H7308, G41510, G41520, G41530, G53260, G54270

(Go back to: [Galatians 3 General Notes](#); [Notes](#); [Notes](#))

## 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, G20410

(Go back to: [Introduction to Galatians](#))

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