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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 of Moses (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 wrote the book of Galatians. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he came to trust in Jesus Christ, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire, telling people about Jesus and establishing churches.

It is uncertain when Paul wrote this letter and where he was when he wrote it. Some Bible scholars think Paul was in the city of Ephesus and wrote this letter after the second time he traveled to tell people about Jesus and establish churches. 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 Christians only need to believe in Jesus Christ, and they do not need to practice the law of Moses. In the book of Galatians Paul explains that people are saved as result of believing in Jesus and not as a result of obeying the law of Moses, and he proves this by using various Old Testament passages to illustrate this truth. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/goodnews\]\]](#), [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/save\]\]](#), [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/faith\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/lawofmoses\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/works\]\]](#))

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 (p.271)**)

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 who taught that it was necessary to follow the law of Moses in addition to believing in Jesus 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 and empowered by the Holy Spirit. 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: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/righteous\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/holy\]\]](#))

What did Paul mean by the expressions “in Christ” and “in Christ Jesus”?

Paul uses the spatial metaphor “in Christ” or the related phrase “in Christ Jesus” very frequently in this letter. These expressions occur with metaphorical meaning in 1:22; 2:4,17; 3:14, 26, 28; and 5:6. Paul meant to express the idea of a very close union between Christ and the people who believe in him. This metaphor emphasizes that believers are as closely united to Christ as if they were inside him. Paul believes that this is true for all believers. Sometimes he uses “in Christ” simply to identify that what he is speaking about is true for those who believe in Jesus. Other times, he emphasizes union with Christ as the means or the basis for some statement or exhortation. Sometimes when Paul uses the phrase “in Christ,” he intends a different meaning. See, for example, [2:16](#), where Paul says “we also believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ” and see [2:17](#) where Paul spoke of Christ being the object of faith when he said “seeking to be justified in Christ.” See the notes on specific verses for help in understanding the contextual meaning of “in Christ” and related phrases. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

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 (p.338)**)

Galatians 1

Galatians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul started this letter differently than his other letters. He adds that he was an apostle “not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, the one having raised him from the dead.” 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. (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/save\]\]](#), [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/eternity\]\]](#), [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/goodnews\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/condemn\]\]](#) and **curse, cursed, cursing (p. 350)**)

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 that he was formerly a zealous Jew, but he still needed God to save him through believing in Jesus. As a Jew, and as the apostle to Gentile people, Paul was uniquely qualified to address this issue. (See: **law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God (p.353)**)

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 (p.209)**)

Galatians 1:1

Paul

Here, Paul is introducing himself as the author of this letter. Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. Use that here. Alternate translation: "This letter is from me, Paul"

Paul

Paul is speaking of himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person. Alternate translation: "This letter is from me, Paul" or "I, Paul" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.262)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.262)**)

not from men nor through man

If your readers would misunderstand this double negative, you could translate this phrase using only one negative word. Alternate translation: "not from men or through man" (See: **Double Negatives (p.250)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.250)**)

not from men

Here, the word **from** indicates source. The phrase **not from men** means that humans are not the source of Paul's apostleship and that he was not commissioned or appointed to be an apostle by human beings. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "not sent out by people" or "not because I was appointed and sent by a group of people" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

men & man

Although the terms **men** and **man** are masculine, Paul uses them here in a generic sense to refer to humans in general. Alternate translation: "humans ... humans" or "people ... a person" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father

Both times that the word **through** is used in this verse it indicates agency or means and refers to the agency or means by which Paul's was commissioned as an apostle. Choose the best word in your language to indicate the meaning of the word **through** here. Alternate translation: "through the agency of man, but through the agency of Jesus Christ and God the Father"

but

The word **but** introduces a contrast. Here, the word **but** introduces a contrast between different potential agents or means of Paul's commission. The contrast is between Paul's apostleship being **not through man** but rather **through Jesus Christ and God the Father**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: "but rather" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

God the Father, the one having raised him from the dead

The phrase **the one having raised him from the dead** gives further information about **God the Father**. It is not making a distinction between **God the Father** and **the one having raised him from the dead** as if they are two separate entities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the relationship between these phrases more clear. Alternate translation: “God the Father, who is the same one who made Jesus Christ live again after he died” or “God the Father, who caused Jesus Christ to live again after he had died” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.247)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.247)**)

God the Father

Here, the phrase **the Father** could be (1) a general title for God which identifies him as the first person in the Christian Trinity. If you choose this option, then you should not define whose **Father** God is in your translation but, rather, you should use a general expression like the ULT does. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**) (2) referring to God’s relationship to those who believe in Christ. Alternate translation: “God our Father” (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**)

from the dead

Paul is using the adjective **dead** as a noun in order to indicate a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: “from among the people who have died” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**)

from the dead

Here, the phrase **the dead** could be a figurative way of referring to a place, in which case it would be referring to “the place of the dead” or “the realm of the dead.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “from the place of the dead” or “from the realm of the dead” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

Galatians 1:2

brothers

Here, although the term **brothers** is masculine, Paul is using it in a generic sense to refer to fellow Christians, both men and women. Paul views all those who believe in Jesus as members of one spiritual family with God as their heavenly Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate explicitly what it means. Alternate translation: “brothers and sisters” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

of Galatia

Here, the word **Galatia** could refer to: (1) the Roman political province called **Galatia**. Alternate translation: “in the province of Galatia” or (2) the geographical region known as **Galatia**. Alternate translation: “in the region of Galatia” If it would help your readers, you could state explicitly what the word **Galatia** refers to here. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

of Galatia

Paul uses the possessive form here to describe churches that are in Roman political province called **Galatia** or in the geographical region known as **Galatia**. If this use of the possessive form is not clear in your language, you could clarify the meaning using a form that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “in the province of Galatia” or “in the region of Galatia” (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

Galatians 1:3

Grace to you and peace

This is a common blessing that Paul often uses in the beginning of his letters. 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 (p.216)**) (See: **Blessings (p.216)**)

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **Grace** and **peace**, 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 (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

to you

Here, the word **you** is plural and refers to the Galatians. Unless noted otherwise, all instances of “you” and “your” in this letter refer to the Galatians and are plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.264)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.264)**)

God the Father

See how you chose to translate the phrase **God the Father** in [1:1](#).

our

Here, the word **our** refers to Paul, the believers in Galatia, and all believers in Jesus, and so is inclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. In this book, unless otherwise stated, the word “our” refers to Paul, the believers in Galatia, and all believers, and is inclusive. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

Galatians 1:4

the one having given himself for our sins so that he might deliver us from the present evil age

The phrase **the one having given himself for our sins so that he might deliver us from the present evil age** gives us further information about “our Lord Jesus Christ” mentioned at the end of 1:3. It is not making a distinction. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the relationship between these phrases clearer. Alternate translation: “who is the one having given himself for our sins so that he might deliver us from the present evil age” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.247)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.247)**)

for our sins

Here, **sins** figuratively refers to the punishment for sin. The phrase **for our sins** refers to Christ giving his life as a substitution for the punishment that our sins deserve. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “to take the punishment we deserve because of our sins” or “to take the punishment for our sins” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

our & our

Both uses of **our** in this verse are inclusive. See the note on **our** in 1:3. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

our sins

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **sins**, you could express the same idea with an adjective such as “sinful,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for which Christ gave himself for our sins. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: “in order that” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

from the present evil age

Here, the phrase **the present evil age** refers not only to a time period but also to the sinful attitudes and actions that characterize **the present evil age**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “from this present time that is dominated by sinfulness” or “from the evil powers at work in the world today” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

of our God and Father

The phrase **and Father** gives further information about **our God**. It is not making a distinction between **God** and **Father** as if they are two separate entities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the relationship between these words more clear. Alternate translation: “of our God, who is our Father” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.247)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.247)**)

Galatians 1:5

the glory

The phrase **be the glory** is an expression of praise. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form such as "praise," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Amen

Amen is a Hebrew word. Paul spelled it out using Greek letters so his readers would know how it sounded. He assumes that they know that it means "so be it" or "yes indeed." In your translation, you can spell it the way it sounds in your language. If it would be helpful in your language, you could also explain its meaning. Alternate translation: "Amen, which means, 'So be it!'" (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.243)**) (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.243)**)

Galatians 1:6

I am amazed

Alternate translation: "I am surprised" or "I am shocked"

you are turning away so quickly

Here, the phrase **turning away** means departing or straying and refers to turning one's heart or mind away from believing and following something. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "you are straying so quickly" or "you are departing so quickly" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

you are turning away

The phrase **you are turning away** is in the present tense and is portraying the action of **turning away** as being in process, but not yet completed. Make sure that you express this phrase in your language in a way that shows that the Galatians **turning away** is currently happening, but not complete. (Paul is writing this letter in order to encourage the Galatians not to turn away to **a different gospel**). (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

so quickly

Here, the phrase **so quickly** means that the Galatians were turning away from faith in the true gospel shortly after they accepted it. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "from the true gospel so soon after accepting it" or "so rapidly from the true gospel" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

from the one having called you

Here, the phrase **the one** refers to God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "and from God, who is the one who has called you" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

having called

Here, the phrase **called** refers to being chosen by God. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "having chosen" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

in the grace of Christ

Here, the word **in** could: (1) indicate means and be referring to the means by which God called the Galatian believers. Alternate translation: "by the grace of Christ" or "through the grace of Christ" (2) indicate sphere or realm and be referring to the Galatians being called into the sphere or realm of grace. Alternate translation: "into the sphere of the grace of Christ" or "to live in the realm of Christ's grace" (3) indicate manner and be referring to the manner in which God called the Galatians. Alternate translation: "graciously because of Christ" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the grace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **grace**, you could express the same idea with an adjective such as "kindness," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language.
(See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 1:7

another

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "another gospel" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

except there are certain ones causing you trouble and wanting to pervert the gospel of Christ

If, in your language, the use of the word **except** makes it appear as though Paul is making a statement and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: "but certain people are causing you trouble and want to pervert the gospel of Christ" (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.226)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.226)**)

certain ones

Alternate translation: "certain people"

causing you trouble

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **trouble**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form such as "troubling," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "troubling you" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

to pervert

Alternate translation: "to twist the truth of" or "to change"

the gospel of Christ

Paul could be using the possessive form here to: (1) describe the gospel that is about Christ, in which case the possessive form is being used to describe the content of the gospel. Alternate translation: "the gospel about Christ" (2) designate Christ as the one who proclaimed the gospel message to which he is referring, in which case Paul is referring to the gospel message that Christ preached. Alternate translation: "the gospel that Christ proclaimed" or "the gospel that Christ preached" (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

Galatians 1:8

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

The word **if** introduces a hypothetical situation. Paul uses a hypothetical situation to warn the Galatians against any teaching that is contrary to the original gospel message which he taught them. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a hypothetical situation. Alternate translation: "if it were to happen that we or an angel from heaven might proclaim to you a gospel other than the one we proclaimed to you, let whoever would do that be cursed" or "suppose it were to happen that we or an angel from heaven might proclaim to you a gospel other than the one we proclaimed to you. Let whoever would do that be cursed" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**)

we & we proclaimed

When Paul says **we** here, he is not including the Galatians, so **we** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**)

we

Alternate translation: "I or my co-laborers in the gospel"

might proclaim to you a gospel

Alternate translation: "might proclaim to you a gospel message" or "might proclaim to you a message of good news"

other than the one we proclaimed

Here, the phrase **the one** refers to the gospel message that Paul and his co-laborers had proclaimed to the Galatians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "different from the gospel we proclaimed" or "different from the message we proclaimed" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

let him be cursed

If your language has a common way of asking God to curse someone or of calling down a curse on someone, and it would be appropriate to use in this context, consider using it here.

let him be cursed

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of someone being **cursed**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form such as "curse." Alternate translation: "let God curse him" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

let him be cursed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that “God” is the one who will do it. Alternate translation: “let God curse him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

let him be cursed

Although the term **him** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “let God curse that person” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

Galatians 1:9

we have said before

When Paul says **we**, he is not including the Galatians, so **we** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.260)) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'** (p.260))

If anyone proclaims to you a gospel

The word **If** introduces a hypothetical situation. Paul is using a hypothetical situation to warn the Galatians against any teaching that is contrary to the original gospel message that they were taught. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a hypothetical situation. Alternate translation: "If it were to happen that someone would proclaim to you a gospel" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions** (p.233)) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions** (p.233))

other than the one

See how you translated the phrase **other than the one** in 1:8. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.209)) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.209))

let him be cursed

See how you translated the phrase **let him be cursed** in 1:8. (See: **Active or Passive** (p.206)) (See: **Active or Passive** (p.206))

let him be cursed

Although the term **him** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. See how you translated the phrase **let him be cursed** in 1:8. Alternate translation: "let that person be cursed" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women** (p.343)) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women** (p.343))

Galatians 1:10

For

Here, the word **For** is being used to introduce Paul's argument against an implied assertion that he altered the content of his gospel message in order to make it more acceptable to people. If it would help your readers, you could express the implied assertion explicitly. Alternative translation: "Despite their charges," (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

For am I now trying to persuade men, or God? Or am I seeking to please men

By using these two rhetorical questions, Paul is not asking the Galatians for information, but is using the question form for emphasis and to engage his readers' thinking. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "For I do not seek to persuade men, but instead I only seek the approval of God! I am not seeking to please men!" or "For I do not seek the approval of men, but instead I only seek the approval of God! I am not seeking to please men!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

am I now trying to persuade men, or God? Or am I seeking to please men? If I were still pleasing men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women, and refers to "people" in general. Alternate translation: "do I now persuade people, or God? Or do I seek to please people? If I were still pleasing people" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

If I were still pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ

The word **If** introduces a hypothetical condition. Paul is using a hypothetical situation to teach the Galatians. Use the natural form in your language for introducing a hypothetical situation, or if it would help your readers, you could state Paul's meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "I am not still pleasing men, because I am a servant of Christ" or "If I were still pleasing people, then I would not be serving Christ" (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**)

Galatians 1:11

For

Here, the word **For** is used to introduce a supporting statement that further supports and gives reason for Paul's prior statement. Use a form that would be natural in your language for introducing a statement that supports a prior statement. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

brothers

Although the term **brothers** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women and refers to those who believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

having been proclaimed by me

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "that I proclaimed" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

is not according to man

Although the term **man** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women, and refers to "humans." Alternate translation: "did not come from a human" or "is not a human message" or "is not a message that people made up" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

Galatians 1:12

For

Here, the word **For** could be being used to introduce: (1) the grounds or basis for Paul's assertion in 1:11, in which case what follows the word **For** is being used as support for what Paul said in 1:11. Use a form that would be natural for introducing a statement which gives supporting evidence. Alternate translation: "In support of my claim that the gospel I proclaimed is not according to man, I want you to know that" (2) a statement which explains and builds on Paul's assertion in 1:11. Use a form that would be natural for introducing a statement which further clarifies and explains a prior statement. Alternate translation: "To explain further, I want you to know" or "That is" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

neither I did receive it from man, nor was I taught it

The phrase **I did not receive it from man** and the phrase **nor was I taught it** mean basically the same thing. If saying the same thing twice might confuse your readers, you could combine the two phrases into one. Alternate translation: "I did not receive the gospel that I proclaim from any person" (See: **Parallelism (p.303)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.303)**)

man

Although the term **man** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women and refers to humans. See how you translated the word **man** in 1:11 where it is used with a similar meaning. Alternate translation: "people" or "humans" or "a human source" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

was I taught it

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form, or in another way that is natural in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

it & was I taught it

Here, both occurrences of the word **it** refer back to the gospel which Paul proclaimed, which he mentioned in 1:11. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "the gospel that I proclaimed ... did I learn the gospel by the teaching of man" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

was I taught it

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "was I taught it by any person" or "was I taught it by man" or "was I taught it by a human being" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

but

What follows the word **but** is in contrast to the phrases **receive it from man** and **taught it**. In contrast to Paul receiving the message he proclaimed from a human source or being **taught it**, Paul received the gospel message from a divine source. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: "but,

rather,” or “but, instead,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

by

Alternate translation: “through a”

revelation of Jesus Christ

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **revelation**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as “revealing,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language.

Alternate translation: “God revealing Jesus Christ” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

by revelation of Jesus Christ

Paul could be using the possessive form here to mean: (1) that God revealed Jesus Christ to Paul. See the phrase “to reveal his Son in me” in [1:16](#). Alternate translation: “God revealed Jesus Christ to me” or “God made me know the gospel when he showed Jesus Christ to me” (2) that it was Jesus Christ who made the revelation to Paul. Alternate translation: “by what Jesus Christ revealed to me” (3) that Jesus revealed himself to Paul and taught him the message that he preached. Alternate translation: “Jesus Christ revealed himself to me and taught me the gospel about himself” or “Jesus Christ revealed himself to me and taught me the gospel concerning himself”(See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

but by revelation of Jesus Christ

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “but I received it by a revelation of Jesus Christ” or “but I was taught it by revelation of Jesus Christ” (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

Galatians 1:13

my former manner of life

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **manner** and **life**, you could express the same idea with a verbal phrase such as “how I formerly lived,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “how I formerly lived” or “how I formerly conducted myself” or “how I formerly behaved” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

in Judaism

Here, the phrase **in Judaism** refers to following the Jewish religious guidelines. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “following the Jewish religion” or “following the Jewish religious guidelines” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

beyond measure

The phrase **beyond measure** is an idiom meaning “excessively.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “excessively” or “to an extreme degree” or “intensely” (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Galatians 1:14

in Judaism

See how you translated the phrase **in Judaism** in 1:13 where it is used with a similar meaning. Alternate translation: “in the Jewish religion” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

race

Alternate translation: “nation”

my race

The word **race** is a singular noun that refers to a group of people. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “my ethnic group, the Jews” or “my people, the Jews” or “the Jewish people” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

of my fathers

Here, the word **fathers** means “ancestors.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of my ancestors” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 1:15

But

What follows the word **But** here is in contrast to what was expected. What would be expected is that Paul would continue thinking and acting according to the way he formerly did, as he described in 1:14. Instead, God **called** Paul, and as the next verse says, God revealed Jesus to him so that he might teach the Gentiles about Jesus. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “But then” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

the one

Here, the phrase **the one** refers to God. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: “God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

when the one having set me apart from the womb of my mother and having called {me} through his grace was pleased

The statement **having set me apart from the womb of my mother and having called {me} through his grace** gives us further information about the **the one** (God). It is not making a distinction. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the relationship between these phrases clearer. Alternate translation: “when God, who is the one who set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me through his grace, was pleased” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.247)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.247)**)

from the womb of my mother

The phrase **from the womb of my mother** is a Hebrew idiom which means either “from the day of my birth” or “from before birth.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “from the day I was born” or “from before I was birthed” (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

having called {me}

Here, the word **called** means chosen and summoned. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “having chosen and summoned me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

his grace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **grace**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “how gracious he is” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 1:16

to reveal his Son in me

The phrase **reveal his Son in me** could mean: (1) that God revealed his Son to Paul, revealing to Paul who Jesus was so that Paul had an inward knowledge of who Jesus really was. Alternate translation: “to reveal to me his Son” or “to reveal to me who his Son really is” (2) that God revealed his Son to others through Paul. Alternate translation: “to reveal his Son to others through me” or “to reveal his Son to others by me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. After the phrase **so that** Paul states the purpose for which God revealed his Son to Paul, namely so that he **might preach him among the Gentiles**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: “in order that” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

I might preach him

Alternate translation: “I might proclaim the good news about God’s Son”

flesh and blood

Paul refers figuratively to human beings by naming a few of the things that a human being is made of, specifically **flesh and blood**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or use plain language. Alternate translation: “any person” or “anyone” (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**)

Galatians 1:17

did I go up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for people to speak of going **up** to Jerusalem and going down from it. Your language may say “come” rather than **go** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: “did I come up to Jerusalem” (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**)

Instead

What follows the word **Instead** is in contrast to what was expected. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

I went to

Your language may say “came” rather than **went** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: “I came to” (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**)

Galatians 1:18

Then

The word **Then** indicates that the events Paul will now relate came after the events just described. Use a natural form in your language for indicating this. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.237)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.237)**)

I went up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for people to speak of going **up** to Jerusalem and going down from it. Your language may say “came” rather than **went** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: “I came up to Jerusalem” (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**)

Galatians 1:19

I did not see any of the other apostles except James

If it would appear in your language that Paul was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: "the only other apostle I saw was James" (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.226)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.226)**)

Galatians 1:20

behold

The word **behold** is an exclamation word which is used to draw attention to the words that follow. Use an exclamation that would be natural, in your language, to use in this context. Alternate translation: “observe” (See: **Exclamations (p.258)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.258)**)

I am not lying

Here, Paul uses a phrase that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: “I am telling you the truth” (See: **Litotes (p.288)**) (See: **Litotes (p.288)**)

before God

Here, the phrase **before God** is an oath. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an oath from your language that would be appropriate in this context, or you could make it clear in your translation that Paul is making an oath. Alternate translation: “I solemnly testify before God” or “in God’s presence I testify” or “I swear with God as my witness” or “I swear before God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 1:21

Then I went to

The word **Then** indicates that the events Paul will now relate came after the events Paul has described in [1:18-19](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could show this relationship by using a fuller phrase or by expressing the meaning in some other way that is natural to your readers. Alternate translation: “After I left Jerusalem I went to” or “After that I went to” or “Afterward I went to” (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.237)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.237)**)

Galatians 1:22

I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea {that are} in Christ

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “none of the people in the churches of Judea that are in Christ had ever met me” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

I was unknown by face to the churches of Judea {that are} in Christ

Paul uses the main feature of his appearance, his **face**, to refer to seeing his entire person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**)

in Christ

Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in Christ** to describe the union believers have with Christ. Here, this phrase is specifically describing and modifying **the churches of Judea**. If it would help your readers, you could use a fuller phrase to describe what the phrase “in Christ” means here. See the discussion of this phrase in Part 3: Important Translation Issues in the Introduction to Galatians section. Alternate translation: “in union with Christ” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 1:23

But

Here, the word **But** is introducing a contrast between what the Judean believers did know about Paul (they were **hearing** that he was **now proclaiming the faith**) and what they did not know about Paul (how he looked, 1:22). Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “Rather,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

they were only hearing

Alternate translation: “all that the believers in the region of Judea knew about me was that people were saying” or “all that the people belonging to the churches in the region of Judea knew about me was that people were saying”

The one

Here, the phrase **The one** refers to Paul. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the message about Jesus” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

the faith

Here, **the faith** refers to the good news about Jesus, which includes the need to have faith in Jesus to be saved. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the good news about Jesus” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

he & was destroying

Here, the word **destroying** refers to trying to stop the spread of the Christian message. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 1:24

in me

Here, the phrase **in me** means "because of me" and is giving the reason why the Judean believers were praising God, namely because of Paul's conversion and work of proclaiming the gospel. If it would help your readers, you could express that explicitly. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because of what God was doing with me" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 235)**)

Galatians 2

Galatians 2 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

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

Special Concepts in this Chapter

Freedom and slavery

Throughout this letter, Paul contrasts freedom and slavery. Paul describes trying to follow the law of Moses as a type of slavery. The Christian is free in Christ from being under the authority of the law of Moses and from the condemnation that the law of Moses brings. The Christian, through union with Christ in his death and resurrection, had by believing in Christ, is set free from the penalty and power of sin. The Christian is empowered by the Spirit to live a life of spiritual freedom and obedience to God. (See: **law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God (p.353)**)

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 to obtain righteousness, that person does not understand the grace which God has shown to them through the work of Christ. This is a fundamental error. 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: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/grace\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-hypo\]\]](#))

“the law”

The phrase “the law” contains a singular noun that refers to a group of laws that God gave Israel by dictating them to Moses. This phrase occurs in chapters 2-5, and quite frequently in chapters 2 and 3. Every time this phrase occurs in Galatians, it refers to the group of laws that God dictated to Moses at Mount Sinai. You should translate this phrase the same way each time it occurs. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

Galatians 2:1

Then

The word **Then** indicates that the events Paul will now relate came after the events just described. See how you translated the word **Then** in [1:18](#) where it is used with the same meaning. (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.237)**) (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.237)**)

I went up & to Jerusalem

See how you translated the similar phrase “I went up to Jerusalem” in [1:18](#). (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**)

I went up

Your language may say “came” rather than **went** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: “I came up” (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**)

Galatians 2:2

Now

Here, the word **Now** introduces background information. Use a natural way in your language for introducing background information. (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.221)**) (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.221)**)

I went up

See how you translated the phrase **I went up** in [2:1](#). (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**)

according to a revelation

Alternate translation: “because God told me to” or “because God revealed to me that I should” or “in response to a revelation”

according to a revelation

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **revelation**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as “revealed,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

set before them

Here, the phrase **set before** means to communicate something to someone for the purpose of receiving their opinion regarding it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “communicated to them” or “related to them” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

them

Most Bible scholars think that **them** here refers to meetings with two different groups of people with whom Paul met while in Jerusalem, one meeting with a large number of Christians from Jerusalem and a smaller meeting with just the apostles. The phrase **but privately to the ones seeming to be important** is only describing the latter meeting, as it is only this meeting which is relevant to what Paul is trying to communicate here. When translating the word **them**, make sure that you use a word or phrase that allows for both meetings to be included. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**)

but privately to the ones

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “but privately I set it before the ones” (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

to the ones seeming to be important

Alternate translation: “to the men who seemed to be influential” or “to those who were recognized as leaders of the believers in Jerusalem” or “to those who were leaders of the church in Jerusalem”

lest I might run—or had run—in vain

Alternate translation: “to ensure I was doing profitable work”

lest I might run—or had run—in vain

By saying **lest I might run—or had run—in vain** Paul is not expressing doubt regarding the validity or accuracy of the message about Jesus that he preached. Rather, he is referring to the possibility that if the apostles of Jesus were to publicly disagree with his message, then it would or could cause people to no longer believe it, in which case his work of teaching people the message about Jesus would or could have no lasting results. Translate this phrase in a way that avoids making it appear as if Paul is questioning the content or validity of the message he proclaims. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate more explicitly what this phrase means. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

I might run—or had run

Here, Paul uses the word **run** to mean work. Paul specifically means working for the advancement of the gospel. Paul uses the word **run** to bring to the Galatians’ minds the image of a runner who is running a race in order to win a prize. If this image is familiar to people in your culture, consider using this metaphor. If this image is not familiar to your readers, consider stating this idea in plain language. Alternate translation: “I might work for the advancement of the gospel—or had worked” or “I might work for the spread of the good news—or had worked for it” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

in vain

Alternate translation: “for no purpose” or “without positive results” or “for nothing”

Galatians 2:3

But

Here, the word **But** is introducing an idea that is in contrast to an idea that was presented in [2:2](#). Paul is probably presenting the fact that **not even Titus ... was forced to be circumcised** as being in contrast to the idea in [2:2](#) that he might have “run in vain” (labored in vain). Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “On the contrary,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)** (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**))

not even Titus, the one with me, being a Greek

The phrase **the one with me** and the phrase **being a Greek** both give further information about **Titus**. Neither of these phrases is making a distinction between **Titus** and some other person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the relationship between these phrases clearer. Alternate translation: “not even Titus, my non-Jewish ministry partner” (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.247)**) (See: **Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding (p.247)**)

not even Titus, the one with me, being a Greek, was forced to be circumcised

The phrase **was forced to be circumcised** is passive. If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the leaders of the church in Jerusalem did not even require my Greek ministry partner, Titus, to be circumcised” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 2:4

But it was because of

The word **But** could: (1) be connected to 2:3 and be giving the reason why some people were demanding that Titus be circumcised. Alternate translation: “But this issue occurred because of” (2) be connected to 2:1-2 and be giving the reason why Paul “went up again to Jerusalem” and privately “set before” (communicated to) the church leaders in Jerusalem the gospel that he proclaimed among the Gentiles. Alternate translation: “But I talked to them privately because of” or “But we went to Jerusalem because of” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

secretly brought in false brothers, who came in secretly to spy on

Using the phrase **false brothers**, Paul speaks of these people as if they were spies with bad motives. He means that they pretended to be fellow believers, but their intent was to observe what Paul and the other believers were doing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “people who pretended to be Christians, who came into our midst in order to watch us closely” or “people who said they were Christians but were not, who came into our group to view closely” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

secretly brought in

In the original language in which Paul wrote this letter, the word which the ULT translates as **brought in**, could mean: (1) that these **false brothers** were invited in by someone. Alternate translation: “secretly invited” or (2) that they came into the midst of the believers by their own initiative. Alternate translation: “deceptive coming of” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

false brothers

Here, the word **brothers** does not refer to biological brothers but to believers in Jesus. The phrase **false brothers** refers to those who only pretended to be fellow believers in Jesus. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

to spy on our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **freedom**, you could express the same idea with with a verb such as **freed** or an adjective such as “free.” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

we have

When Paul says **we**, he is speaking of himself, his traveling companions, and the Galatian believers, so **we** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

in Christ Jesus

Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in Christ** to describe the union that believers have with Christ. See the discussion of this phrase in Part 3: Important Translation Issues in the Introduction to Galatians section. If it would help your

readers you could use a fuller phrase to describe Paul's meaning. Alternate translation: "in union with Christ Jesus" or "through our union with Christ Jesus" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for which the **false brothers** spied on their freedom, which was for the purpose of wanting to **enslave** them. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: "in order that" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

so that they will enslave us

Paul is speaking about how these people wanted to force the Galatian believers to follow the Jewish rituals that the law commanded. He is speaking about following the law as if it were slavery. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "to force us to obey the law" or "in order to make us slaves to the law" **Metaphor (p.290)** (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 2:5

we did & yield

When Paul says **we**, he is not including the Galatian believers, so **we** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**)

we did not even yield in submission to them

Here, to **not ... yield in submission** means to not agree with and comply with the demands of the people who said that Titus needed to be circumcised. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "we did not give in to their demands" or "we did not comply with what they wanted us to do" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

we did & yield in submission

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **submission**, you could express the same idea with a verbal phrase, or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

an hour

Here, the phrase **an hour** refers to a short period of time. If you have an equivalent expression in your culture, you could use that, or if it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate Paul's meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "a short period of time" or "a short amount of time" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for which Paul and his ministry partners **did not even yield in submission** to those who taught that circumcision was necessary. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: "in order that" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

the truth of the gospel

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea with an adjective such as "true" or "correct," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

the truth of the gospel

Here, the possessive form is used to describe the **truth** that belongs to and is contained within **the gospel** message. It is also being used to contrast the genuine and correct gospel with false gospels such as the one Paul is refuting in this letter. If this is not clear in your language, you could clarify the relationship for your readers. (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

Galatians 2:6

But

Here, Paul uses the word **But** to introduce something that is in contrast to what the false brothers in 2:4 wanted to do. The false brothers wanted to enslave the believers by adding the requirement of circumcision to the gospel message. Beginning in this verse and continuing in 2:6-10, Paul explains that, in contrast to the actions of the false brothers, the leaders of the church in Jerusalem did not require that Paul add anything to the content of his gospel message. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “Rather” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)** (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**))

the ones seeming to be something

The phrase **the ones seeming to be something** implies the word “important” and is very similar in meaning to the phrase **the ones seeming important** at the end of this verse. If it would help your readers, you could express the implied word explicitly. Alternate translation: “the ones seeming to be something important” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)** (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**))

what sort they were formerly matters nothing to me; God does not accept the face of man

The statement **what sort they were formerly matters nothing to me; God does not accept the face of man** is a parenthetical statement. Use a natural form in your language for introducing and/or expressing a parenthetical statement.

what sort

The phrase **what sort** implies the words “of people.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “what sort of people” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)** (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**))

what sort they were formerly matters nothing to me

The phrase **what sort they were formerly matters nothing to me** does not mean that Paul did not regard these people’s character as important but, rather, it means that he did not let their status or position influence his decision making. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)** (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**))

God does not accept the face of man

Here, the term **face** means “external status and position.” The phrase **God does not accept the face of man** is an idiom which means that God does not base his judgements and decisions on appearances or external factors. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “God does not judge with partiality” or “God does not look at external factors when making decisions” or “God does not show partiality” (See: **Idiom (p.278)** (See: **Idiom (p.278)**))

of man

Although the term **man** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a general sense to mean all people in general, including women. Alternate translation: “of a person” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

the ones seeming important

See how you translated the similar phrase, “the ones seeming to be important” in [2:2](#).

added nothing to me

Here, **me** represents what Paul was teaching. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “added nothing to what I teach” or “did not add anything to my message” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

Galatians 2:7

But on the contrary

Paul uses the phrase **But on the contrary** to introduce a further contrast to the idea that the leaders in Jerusalem might have added anything to the content of his message. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “Rather” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

having seen

Here, the phrase **having seen** means “having understood.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

I had been entrusted with

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God had entrusted me with” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

to the uncircumcision, just as Peter to the circumcision

Paul is describing non-Jewish people by association with something they would not have had done to them, circumcision, and he is describing Jewish people by association with something they would have had done to them, circumcision. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use plain language. (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

Galatians 2:8

for the one having worked in Peter for apostleship to the circumcision also worked in me to the Gentiles

This entire verse is a parenthetical statement. In this verse Paul gives the reason why the leaders of the church in Jerusalem determined that Paul was authorized and commissioned by God to bring the gospel to non-Jews. Use a natural form in your language for introducing and/or expressing a parenthetical statement. (See: **Information Structure (p.283)**) (See: **Information Structure (p.283)**)

the one

Here, **the one** refers to God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

to the circumcision

See how you translated the phrase **the circumcision** in [2:7](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

also worked in me to the Gentiles

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "also worked in me for my apostleship to the Gentiles" or "also worked in me for apostleship to the Gentiles" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

Galatians 2:9

having understood the grace having been given to me

The abstract noun *grace* refers to God graciously giving Paul the task of proclaiming the gospel to non-Jews. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of grace, you could express the same idea with an adverb such as "graciously" or "kindly," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "having understood the task that God had graciously given to me" (See: [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-abstractnouns]]) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

having been given

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "that God gave" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

the ones seeming to be pillars

Here, **pillars** refers to James, Cephas, and John, who were leaders of the believers in Jerusalem. In that culture important leaders of a group were sometimes referred to as **pillars** because of the support that they provided to the group. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, so that we to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision

Here, **gave the right hand** is an action that indicates agreement. Shaking hands indicated that they agreed with each other and were pledging to work together as ministry partners toward the same goal. Essentially, they agreed to be in fellowship, and shaking each other's right hand indicated this. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. Alternate translation: "affirming that we to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision" (See: **Symbolic Action (p.334)**) (See: **Symbolic Action (p.334)**)

of fellowship

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **fellowship**, you could express the same idea in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for which **James and Cephas and John ... gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas** and Paul. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: "in order that" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

we to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. The words he is leaving out are probably "go" or "proclaim the good news." If it would help your readers, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "we would go to the Gentiles, and they would go the

circumcision” or “we would proclaim the good news to the Gentiles, and they would proclaim the good news to the circumcision” (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

we

When Paul says **we** here, he is not including the Galatians, so **we** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

the circumcision

See how you translated the phrase **the circumcision** in [2:7](#). (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

Galatians 2:10

only that we should continue to remember the poor

Here, the word **only** introduces an exception clause that qualifies Paul's statement at the end of 2:6 where Paul said that the leaders in Jerusalem added nothing to his message (meaning they did not require him to do or teach anything else). Use an appropriate form in your language so that it does not appear that Paul is making a statement here that contradicts his statement at the end of 2:6. (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.226)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.226)**)

we should continue to remember

When Paul says **we** here, he is not including the Galatians, so **we** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**)

we should continue to remember the poor

Here, **remember the poor** refers to remembering the material needs of the poor. If it would help your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "we should continue to remember to take care of the needs of the poor" or "we should continue to remember to help the poor with their needs" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

poor

Paul is using the adjective **poor** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: "people who are poor" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**)

Galatians 2:11

But

Here, the word **But** introduces a contrast. The actions that Paul will describe in [2:11-13](#) are in contrast to the decision that was made in [2:1-10](#). Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “because Cephas stood condemned, I opposed him to his face when he came to Antioch” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

came

Your language may say “went” rather than **came** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: “went” (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**)

I opposed him to his face

The phrase **opposed him to his face** is an idiom which means to confront someone. It could refer specifically to: (1) confronting someone directly, face to face. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “I confronted him directly” or “I confronted him face to face” (2) confronting someone in public. (See the phrase “I said to Cephas in front of all of them” in [2:14](#)). Alternate translation: “I confronted him in public” (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

he stood condemned

Here, the phrase **he stood condemned** means that “he was deserving of blame” or “he was wrong.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “he was deserving of blame” or “he was wrong” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 2:12

For

Here, the word **For** introduces Paul's reason for why he opposed Cephas to his face (see 2:11) and for why Paul claimed in 2:11 that Cephas stood condemned. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a reason. If it would be more natural in your language to state the reason for an action before giving the result, see the note for 2:11 on creating a verse bridge. Alternate translation: "The reason is that" or "The reason that Peter stood condemned is that" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

came & they came

Your language may say "went" rather than **came** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: "went ... they went" (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**) (See: **Go and Come (p.269)**)

But

Paul uses the word **But** here to introduce a contrast between how Peter acted **before certain ones came from James** and how he acted after **they came**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

was separating himself

Alternate translation: "was staying away from the Gentile believers"

being afraid of the ones from the circumcision

If it would help your readers the reason Peter was **afraid** can be stated explicitly. See 6:12 where Paul says that those trying to compel the Galatian believers were doing so because they did not want to be persecuted. Alternate translation: "being afraid that the unbelieving Jews might persecute him" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the ones from the circumcision

See how you translated the phrase **the circumcision** in 2:7. Here, the term **the circumcision** probably refers specifically to Jews who were not believers in Jesus, since it is unlikely that Peter would have feared Jewish Christians or the men whom James sent. (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

Galatians 2:13

the rest of the Jews

Here, the phrase **the rest of the Jews** refers only to the other Jewish believers who were in Antioch. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

so that

Here, the phrase **so that** introduces the result of the hypocritical actions of Cephas (see 2:12) and **the rest of the Jews** who **joined with him**. The result was that **Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy**. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a result. Alternate translation: "with the result that" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

was led astray by their hypocrisy

Here, the phrase **led astray** means to influence or convince someone to think and act in a wrong way. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "was influenced by their hypocritical behavior" or "was influenced by their hypocritical behavior so that he also acted hypocritically" or "was influenced by their hypocritical behavior so that he also joined them in acting hypocritically" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "they even led Barnabas astray by their hypocrisy" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

by their hypocrisy

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **hypocrisy**, you could express the same idea with an adjective such as "hypocritical," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "by their hypocritical behavior" or "by their hypocritical actions" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 2:14

But

Here, Paul uses the word **But** to introduce a contrast between his actions and the wrong actions of Cephas, Barnabas, and the other Jewish believers that he described in [2:12-13](#). Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

they were not walking correctly

Here, the word **walking** is a figure of speech which refers to how people act or conduct their lives. In Jewish culture a person's behavior was spoken of as if that person was walking along a path. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning using plain language. Alternate translation: "they were not acting correctly" or "they were not conducting their lives correctly" (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

the truth of the gospel

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in some other way that is natural in your language. See how you translated the phrase **the truth of the gospel** in [2:5](#). (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews

This is the beginning of a direct quotation in which Paul quotes what he **said to Cephas**. Some Bible scholars think this quote ends at the end of this verse, while other Bible scholars think that this quotation continues until the end of [2:21](#). Some Bible scholars think that part of Paul's words in [2:15-21](#) could be him summarizing what he said to Peter and the Jews who were present. The ULT uses quotation marks from this point through the end of [2:21](#). Use a natural way in your language for indicating that Paul's words from here to the end of [2:21](#) are a quotation. If you decide that Paul is quoting himself only through the end of this verse, then use a natural way in your language for indicating that Paul's words from here to the end of this verse are the complete, direct quotation. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.245)**) (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.245)**)

If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to emphatically rebuke Cephas and to help Cephas understand the hypocrisy of his actions. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation, and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You are a Jew, and live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, and so it is very hypocritical for you to force the Gentiles to live like Jews!" or "You are a Jew, and live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, and so it is very wrong for you to force the Gentiles to live like Jews!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

If you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew

Paul is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might misunderstand and think that

what Paul is saying is not certain, then you can translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since you, being a Jew, live like a Gentile and not a like Jew" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p. 228)**) (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.228)**)

you, & can you force

Both occurrences of the word **you** in this verse refer to Peter and are singular. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p. 265)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.265)**)

Galatians 2:15

We

When Paul says **We**, it could be: (1) inclusive if Paul is still addressing Peter. If you decide that this verse is a continuation of the quotation that began in [2:14](#), then **We** is inclusive because Paul is still addressing Peter and would be including Peter and the Jewish Christians in Antioch. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (2) exclusive if you decide that Paul's quotation of his words to Peter ended at the end [2:14](#). (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**)

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

Alternate translation: "We had Jewish parents and are not Gentiles"

sinners from the Gentiles

The word **sinners** was used by Jews as a synonym for non-Jews because non-Jews did not have or adhere to the law of Moses. Paul is not saying that only non-Jewish people are **sinners**. The rest of this letter will make clear that both Jews and non-Jews are sinners and need God's forgiveness. If it would help your readers, you could indicate explicitly that the term **sinners** is what Jews called non-Jews. Alternatively, you could state the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "non-Jews who do not have or follow the law of Moses" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 2:16

but

What follows the word **but** here is in contrast to what would be naturally be expected by a Jewish person in view of [2:15](#). Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “nevertheless” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

man

Although the term **man** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “person” or “human being” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

no man is justified & we might be justified & will be justified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God justifies no man ... God might justify us ... will God justify” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

works of the law & works of the law. & works of the law

Paul is using the possessive form to describe the types of **works** to which he is referring. He is specifically referring to works of the Mosaic law. If this is not clear in your language, you could clarify the relationship for your readers. Alternate translation: “doing the works that are commanded in the law of Moses ... doing the things commanded in the law of Moses ... doing the things commanded in the law of Moses” (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

works of the law & works of the law. & works of the law

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **works**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form or in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “obeying the law ... doing what the law says ... obeying the law” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

of the law & of the law. & of the law

Here, **the law** is a singular noun that refers to a group of laws that God gave Israel by dictating them to Moses. If your language does not use singular nouns in that way, you could use a different expression. See how you translated the phrase **the law** in [Romans 2:12](#). Alternate translation: “of God’s laws ... of God’s laws ... of God’s laws” or “of the laws God gave Moses ... of the laws God gave Moses ... of the laws God gave Moses” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

except

If it would appear in your language that Paul was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “but rather, only” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.226)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.226)**)

faith & faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a such as believing or trusts, or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

we & we might be justified

When Paul says **we** it could be: (1) inclusive if Paul is still addressing Peter. If you decide that this verse is a continuation of the quotation that began in 2:14, then **we** is inclusive both times that it occurs in this verse, because Paul is still addressing Peter and would be including Peter and the Jewish Christians in Antioch. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (2) exclusive if you decide that Paul's quotation of his words to Peter ended at the end 2:14. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is introducing the purpose for which he and the other Jewish believers **believed in Christ Jesus**, which is **so that they might be justified by faith in Christ**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: "in order that" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

For by works of the law not any flesh will be justified

Here, the word **For** re-introduces and re-states the reason why Cephas and the other Jewish believers **believed in Christ Jesus**. They **believed in Jesus Christ** because **by works of the law no flesh will be justified**. The phrase **by works of the law no flesh will be justified** repeats in slightly different words the earlier phrase in the verse which says **no man is justified by works of the law**. If it would not be natural in your language to re-introduce the reason after the result, you could re-introduce and re-state the result. Alternate translation: "We believed in Christ Jesus because no flesh will be justified by works of the law" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

any flesh

The word **flesh** refers to human beings. Paul uses a part of the human body to refer to the entire human. The phrase **any flesh** means any person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "any person" (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**)

no man & any flesh

Both the words **man** and **flesh** refer to people in general and include all people, both Jewish people and Gentile people, and refer to people of all ages and ethnicities. The phrases **no man** and **any flesh** exclude all people, both Jewish people and Gentile people. Paul is saying the same thing in two different ways to emphasize that no person, Jew or Gentile, can be justified by obeying the law. Since Paul explains this truth in this passage, you do not need to explain its meaning further here, but make sure to use words or phrases when translating the words "man" and "flesh" which indicate that these words refer to all people of all ages and ethnicities. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**)

Galatians 2:17

But

Here Paul uses the word **But** to introduce new information into his ongoing explanation of why justification is through faith in Christ and not through obeying the law of Moses. Here, Paul is anticipating and answering a possible objection to justification by faith. The word **But** introduces this. Use a natural form in your language for doing this. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

if

Paul is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might misunderstand and think that what Paul is saying is not certain, then you can translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "since" (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.228)**) (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.228)**)

seeking to be justified in Christ

The phrase **justified in Christ** means "made righteous in God's sight because of being united with Christ by believing in what he has done." This phrase means the same thing as the phrase justified by faith in Christ in 2:16. See how you translated the phrase "justified by faith in Christ" there and, if it would help your readers, consider stating more fully here what the phrase **to be justified in Christ** means. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

to be justified in Christ

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that God will do it. Alternate translation: "for God to justify us through our faith in Christ" or "for God to justify us because of our faith in Christ" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

we & were & found

Here, **we** could be: (1) inclusive if Paul is still addressing Peter. If you decide that this verse is a continuation of the quotation that began in 2:14 then **we** is inclusive because Paul is still addressing Peter and would be including Peter and the Jewish Christians in Antioch. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (2) exclusive if you decide that Paul's quotation of his words to Peter ended at the end 2:14. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**)

ourselves

Paul uses the word **ourselves** for emphasis. Use a way that is natural in your language to indicate this emphasis. (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.321)**) (See: **Reflexive Pronouns (p.321)**)

we ourselves were also found {to be} sinners

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

to be} sinners, {& of sin

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **sin** or being a sinner, you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

is} Christ then a minister of sin

The phrase **is Christ then a minister of sin** is a rhetorical question. Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to emphasize the truth of what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

May it never be

The expression **May it never be** gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question **is Christ a minister of sin**? Use a natural way in your language for strongly and emphatically negating an idea. Alternate translation: "Of course, that is not true" or "No, never" or "No way" (See: **Exclamations (p.258)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.258)**)

Galatians 2:18

I again rebuild those things which I destroyed, I prove myself to be a transgressor

Paul speaks of no longer thinking it is necessary to obey all the laws of Moses as if he were destroying the law of Moses. When he speaks of rebuilding **those things**, he is referring to going back again to acting like and teaching that it is necessary to keep the laws of Moses. Paul is saying in this verse that he would be sinning if he **again** tried to go back to living as if it were necessary to obey the laws of Moses after becoming convinced that it was not necessary to obey them in order to please God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly, or you could use a simile. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

a transgressor

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **a transgressor**, you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “behaving sinfully” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 2:19

For

Here, the word **For** is introducing the reason that Paul said "May it never be" in 2:17 and is also introducing information which gives support for what he said in 2:18. Use a natural form for introducing a reason for something had been said. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

through the law

Alternate translation: "by means of the law"

through the law, & to the law

See how you translated the phrase **the law** in 2:16. Alternate translation: "through God's laws ... to those laws" or "through the laws God gave Moses ... to those laws" (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

died to the law

Here, the phrase, **died to the law** could: (1) be a metaphor in which **died to the law** refers to Paul's new relationship to the law of Moses which he experienced when he realized that trying to obey the law of Moses was not a valid way of earning God's approval; and as a result he chose to die to the law, by which he means he was released from the power and control of the law of Moses and no longer subjected himself to it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: "died to being under the control of the law and am no longer subject to it" or "stopped being subject to the authority of the law of Moses" (2) be a metaphor in which the phrase **died to the law** means "considered as dead to the requirements of the law of Moses through union with Christ." The phrase **died to the law** would then refer to believers' vicarious death with Christ through their believing in him and their consequent union with him which they have as a result of their faith in him. (See Rom 7:4 and Gal 4:4-5) Alternate translation: "died to the requirements of the law through my union with Christ" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

the law, & to the law

See how you translated the phrase **the law** in 2:16. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is introducing the purpose or reason for which he **died to the law**. The purpose was **so that** he **might live to God**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: "in order that" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

I might live to God

The phrase **live to God** means "live for God." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "I might live for God" or "I might live to honor God" or "I might live to please God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

I have been crucified with Christ

The phrase **I have been crucified with Christ** is a metaphor. Paul is not saying that he literally died with Christ. Paul is using this metaphor to express the reality that, as a result of his faith in Christ and the subsequent union with Christ that his faith has brought about, God now views Paul as if he had died with Christ on the cross. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

I have been crucified with Christ

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that the law was the reason Christ had to be put to death. Roman soldiers put Jesus to death, but in context Paul is explaining that it was God's righteous requirements given in the law that made it necessary for Christ to die so that people could be forgiven. (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 2:20

I no longer live, but Christ lives in me

Here, the phrase **I no longer live, but Christ lives in me** is a metaphor which means that Paul no longer lives for himself and his own self-motivated purposes and desires, but rather, he now lets Christ's will direct his actions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a simile or you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

that which I now live

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "that life which I now live" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

that which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith

Here, when Paul refers to the life he lives in his earthly body, he is using his life to refer to the actions that he does while living in his body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or use plain language. Alternate translation: "the actions that I now do while living in my body, I do by faith" (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**)

that which I now live in the flesh

Here, Paul uses the word **flesh**, which is one part of his body, to refer to his entire body. The phrase **that which I now live in the flesh** means that life which I now live in the body and refers to Paul's present life on earth in his physical body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "that life which I now live in the body" or "that life which I now live in my body" (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**)

I live by faith that {is in} the Son of God

Here, the word **by** is expressing means and is introducing the means by which Paul now lives, specifically **by faith in the Son of God**. So when Paul says **I live by faith that is in the Son of God** he means that he now lives his life by means of having faith in God's Son. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. See how you translated the similar phrase "through faith in Jesus Christ" in [2:16](#). Alternate translation: "I live by having faith in God's Son" or "I live by exercising faith in God's Son" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form such as "trusting," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

that {is in}

Here, Paul uses the word **that** to introduce the specific object of his **faith**, which is **the Son of God** and not the law of Moses. Use a natural form to express this use of the word **that**. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

the one having loved me

The phrase **the one** refers to **the Son of God**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “who is the one having loved me” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

having given himself

The phrase **having given himself** means that Jesus voluntarily made himself available as a sacrifice. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “having voluntarily given himself as a sacrifice” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 2:21

I do not set aside

Here, Paul expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative phrase, **do not**, together with a phrase, **set aside** that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: “I strongly affirm” or “I do uphold” (See: **Litotes (p.288)**) (See: **Litotes (p.288)**)

I do not set aside

Alternate translation: “I do not ignore” or “I do not dismiss”

the grace of God

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **grace**, you could express the same idea with an adverb or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. See how you translated the similar expression “the grace of Christ” in 1:6. Alternate translation: “what God graciously did” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

righteousness {is}

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **righteousness**, you could express the same idea with an adjective such as “righteous,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

for if righteousness {is} through the law, then Christ died for nothing

Paul is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is not true. Paul stated two times in 2:16 that no person is made righteous before God by obeying the law of Moses. Also, Paul knows that Christ died for a definite purpose. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certainly false, and if your readers might misunderstand this and think that what Paul is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as a negative statement. If your language does state things as a hypothetical possibility that the speaker is trying to prove false, then use the natural form in your language for expressing a hypothetical situation. Alternate translation: “since we know that righteousness is through faith in Christ and not through the law of Moses, or else Christ would have died for nothing” or “for we know that God considers us righteous because we believe in Christ and not because we keep the law of Moses, or else Christ would have died for nothing” (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.275)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.275)**)

for if righteousness {is} through the law, then Christ died for nothing

Paul is using a hypothetical situation to teach the Galatian believers. Use a natural way in your language for expressing conditional “if ... then” constructions. (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**)

if righteousness {is} through the law

Here, the word **through** expresses the means by which something happens. The phrase **if righteousness is through the law** means “if righteousness could be obtained through keeping the law.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “if righteousness could be obtained by

keeping the law" or "if a person could be justified by keeping the law" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

through the law

The phrase **through the law** is equivalent in meaning to the phrase "by works of the law" in [2:16](#). See how you translated the phrase "by works of the law" in [2:16](#) where it occurs twice. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

the law

See how you translated the phrase **the law** in [2:16](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

then Christ died for nothing

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 wrong thinking. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

“Those of faith are children of Abraham”

Bible 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 all of 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: [\[\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/spirit\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc://ta/man/translate/figs-metaphor\]\]](#))

“the law”

The phrase “the law” is a singular noun that refers to a group of laws that God gave Israel by dictating them to Moses. This phrase occurs in chapters 2-5, and quite frequently in chapters two and three. Every time this phrase occurs in Galatians it refers to the group of laws that God dictated to Moses at Mount Sinai. You should translate this phrase the same way each time it occurs. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

Galatians 3:1

O

O is an exclamation word. Use an exclamation that would be natural to use in this context. Alternate translation: "Oh" (See: **Exclamations (p.258)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.258)**)

foolish Galatians

Alternate translation: "you Galatians are without understanding" or "you Galatians who are without understanding"

Who bewitched you

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to rebuke the Galatian believers. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

Who bewitched you

Paul is using irony to express the fact that the Galatian believers are acting as though someone has put a spell on them. He does not really believe that someone has put a spell on them. In fact, Paul is upset with the Galatians believers for willingly choosing to believe false teachers and letting themselves be deceived. If it would be helpful in your language, consider expressing the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "How can you behave as if someone has put a spell on you" (See: **Irony (p.285)**) (See: **Irony (p.285)**)

before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed {as} crucified

The phrase **publicly portrayed** is a metaphor in which Paul is either referring to the practice at that time of someone publicly drawing a picture for people to see or the practice of someone posting a public announcement for people to read. If the first option is what Paul intends then he is referring to his preaching the good news about Jesus as if it were a clear picture that the Galatians had seen with their eyes and if he intends the second option then is referring to his preaching the good news about Jesus as if it were a public announcement which he had posted and which the Galatians had read. Both options have the same general meaning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "you yourselves heard the clear teaching about Jesus being crucified" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

was publicly portrayed {as} crucified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 3:2

Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing of faith

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to rebuke the Galatian believers. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You received the Spirit not by doing what the law says, but by believing what you heard." (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

by works of the law

See how you translated the phrase **by works of the law** in 2:16, where it occurs three times. (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

of the law

See how you translated the phrase **the law** in 2:16. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

by hearing of faith

Paul is using the possessive form here to describe the response that the Galatians had when they heard the preaching of the gospel. The Galatians had respond to the preaching of the gospel with **faith**. If this is not clear in your language, you could clarify the relationship for your readers. Alternate translation: "by believing what you heard" or "by hearing with faith" or "by trusting in the Messiah when you heard the message about him" (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

of faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as "believing" or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "and believing" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 3:3

Are you so foolish

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to emphatically express his surprise. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "You are very foolish!" or "Don't be so foolish!" or "Surely you cannot be so foolish!" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

Having begun by Spirit, are you now finishing by flesh

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to guide the Galatian believers thinking about what they are doing. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

Having begun

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "Having begun the Christian life" or "Having begun your new relationship with God" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

by flesh

Paul is describing the actions people do while in their body by association with their body, which he calls **flesh**. Here, **flesh** refers to a reliance on one's own effort in doing outward deeds and doing these actions with a self-sufficient and self-reliant trust in them instead of trusting in God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use plain language. Alternate translation: "by your own effort" (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

Galatians 3:4

Have you experienced so many things for nothing

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form in order to try to make the Galatian believers think about the implications of believing and following the false teachers. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

Have you experienced so many things for nothing—if indeed it was really for nothing

The original word that Paul used, which is translated as **experienced** by the ULT, could refer to: (1) experiencing bad things such as suffering. If this is what Paul means here, then he is referring to the suffering that the Galatians believers experienced when they were persecuted. Alternate translation: “Keep in mind that if what God has done for you was because of your obeying the laws that God gave to Moses and not because of trusting in Christ, did you not suffer so many things needlessly? I certainly hope that you did not suffer like that needlessly” (2) the spiritual privileges and blessings that the Galatian believers had experienced such as receiving God’s Spirit and God “working miracles” among them, both of which are mentioned in the next verse. If your language does not allow you to use a neutral term but rather requires a more specific term, you could specify that the things the Galatians experienced were good things. Alternate translation: “Keep in mind that if the good things God has done for you were because you obeyed the laws that God gave to Moses and not because you trusted in Christ, then the good things God has done for you have been wasted. I certainly hope that the good things you have experienced have not been wasted” (3) both good things and bad things and be referring to both the persecution that the Galatians had experienced and the spiritual blessings that they had experienced. Because it is not known for sure the type of things to which Paul is referring, if possible you should try to use a neutral term or expression. You could then translate this rhetorical question as the ULT does or with a similar neutral phrase such as “Did all the things that happened to you not cause you to think about them?” (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**)

Have you experienced

Alternate translation: “Did you experience”

for nothing—if indeed it was really for nothing

Alternate translation: “uselessly—if indeed it was really useless” or “in vain—if indeed it was really in vain” or “for no purpose—if indeed it was really for no purpose”

if indeed it was really for nothing

The phrase **if indeed it was really for nothing** shows contingency regarding his rhetorical question, **Have you experienced so many things for nothing**, and shows that Paul retains hope for the Galatians. Paul hopes they will not make the **many things** that they have **experienced** be **for nothing** by obeying the false teaching that they must obey the laws of Moses such as the dietary laws and laws about circumcision. Paul is making a hypothetical statement to help his readers recognize the serious implications of following the teachings of these false teachers. Use the natural form in your language for expressing a hypothetical situation. Alternate translation: “if indeed it was really for nothing that you experienced so many things, but I hope with you that this is not the case” (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.275)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.275)**)

if indeed it was really for nothing

The phrase **if indeed it was really for nothing** is a rhetorical question. Paul is using the question form here to help the Galatians think about what he is saying and demonstrate his continued hope that they will decide against the teachings of the false teachers. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

Galatians 3:5

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

This entire verse is a rhetorical question. Paul is using the question form here to teach the Galatians a truth by engaging their reasoning. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “God who gives you his Spirit and does miracles among you does not do these things because you obey the law of Moses. Surely you must know that God gives you these blessings because you believed the good news about the Messiah when you heard it” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

the one

Here, the phrase **the one** refers to God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “God, who is the one” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

of the law

See how you translated the phrase **the law** in 2:16. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

by hearing of faith

See how you translated the phrase **by hearing of faith** in 3:02 where it is used with the same meaning. (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

is it} by works of the law, or by hearing of faith

Paul asks another rhetorical question to remind the Galatians of how they received the Spirit. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

is it} by works of the law

See how you translated the phrase **by works of the law** in 2:16 where it occurs three times. (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

by hearing of faith

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 (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 3:6

Just as

Here, the phrase **Just as** indicates that what follows is connected to what preceded it, specifically [3:1-5](#). The phrase **Just as** is also introducing new information. The new information that this phrase is introducing is the biblical example of Abraham. Use a form that would be appropriate in this context. Alternate translation: “Even as” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness

Here, Paul quotes Genesis 15:16. It may be helpful to your readers to indicate this with opening and closing quotation marks or with whatever other punctuation or convention your language uses to indicate the beginning and end of a quotation. (See: **Quote Markings (p.318)**) (See: **Quote Markings (p.318)**)

it was credited

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God credited it” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

it was credited

Here, the word **it** refers to Abraham’s belief in God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “God credited his belief” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

righteousness

See how you translated the word **righteousness** in [2:21](#). (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 3:7

the ones by faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as “trust,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “those who believe” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

the ones by faith

Your language may require you to state the object of **faith**. Here, the phrase **by faith** is probably a shortened way of saying “who by faith in Christ are trusting God to consider them righteous” or “who are trusting God to consider them righteous because they believe in Christ.” Here, the phrase **by faith** is equivalent or similar in meaning to the phrase “by faith in Christ” in [2:16](#), where it occurs in the phrase “we also believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate the meaning explicitly here. Alternate translation: “the ones who by faith in Christ are trusting God to consider them righteous” or “the ones who are trusting God to consider them righteous because they believe in Christ” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

sons of Abraham

People who have faith in God, as Abraham did, are here spoken of as if they were Abraham’s **sons**. Paul does not mean that people who have faith in God are Abraham’s biological descendants but, rather, he is saying that they share a spiritual similarity to him because they believe in God. Therefore Paul calls them **sons of Abraham**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

sons

Although the term **sons** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “children” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

Galatians 3:8

the Scripture, having foreseen that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham

Here, **the Scripture** is spoken of as though it were a person who could foresee **that God would justify the Gentiles by faith** and **preach the gospel**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

by faith

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate the object of **faith** explicitly. Alternate translation: “by their faith in God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

by faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as “believing.” Alternate translation: “by believing in Jesus” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham

The sentence **In you all the nations will be blessed** is a quotation from Genesis 12:3. Use a natural way of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: “preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham where it is written” or “preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham when Moses wrote” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**)

all the nations

Here, the term **nations** refers to the people who make up these **nations**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: “people from all the nations” or “people from every nation” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

In you all the nations will be blessed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “In you God will bless all the nations” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 3:9

So then

Alternate translation: "Therefore" or "Consequently"

the ones by faith

See how you translated the phrase **the ones by faith** in [3:7](#) where it is used with the same meaning. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

the ones by faith are blessed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will bless the ones by faith" or "God will bless the ones who believe" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 3:10

For as many as are of works of the law

Alternate translation: "All people who follow the law" or "All those who seek to be justified through obeying the law"

as many as are of works of the law

Here, the phrase **as many as are of works of the law** is probably a shortened way of saying "as many as are relying on works of the law as the basis for God considering them to be righteous." Here, the phrase **as many as are of works of the law** is describing people who rely on the **works of the law** and is in contrast to the phrase "the ones by faith" in 3:7. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: "as many as rely on the works of the law as the basis for being righteous before God" or "as many as are relying on works of the law as the basis for God considering them to be righteous" or "as many as are trusting that God will consider them righteous because they try to obey the law of Moses" or "as many as are seeking for God to consider them righteous on the basis of following what the Mosaic Law commands" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

of works of the law

With the phrase **of works**, Paul is using the possessive form to describe the means by which a person seeks to please God, and by using the phrase **of the law**, Paul is using the possessive form to define the type of **works** to which he is referring to. If this is not clear in your language, you could clarify the relationship for your readers. Alternate translation: "trying to earn God's approval by doing the works prescribed in the law" (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

of the law

See how you translated the phrase **the law** in 2:16. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

it is written, "& written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

are under a curse

Here, **under a curse** represents being cursed by God and refers to being condemned by God and therefore being doomed to eternal punishment. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "are cursed by God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

are under a curse

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **curse**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as "curse," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God will curse" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

it is written

Here, Paul uses the phrase **it is written** to indicate that what follows is a quotation from the Old Testament. Paul assumes that his readers will understand this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Paul is referring to Scripture. Alternate translation: “it is written in the Scriptures” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

of the Law

See how you translated the phrase **the Law** in [2:16](#). Alternate translation: “of God’s Laws” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

Galatians 3:11

no one is justified before God by the law

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God justifies no one by the law” or “God justifies no one as a result of them seeking to obey the law of Moses” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

is} clear

Alternate translation: “is evident”

that

The word **because** is introducing the quotation **The righteous will live by faith** from the Old Testament passage [Habakkuk 2:4](#). Use a natural way of introducing direct quotations from an important or sacred text. Alternate translation: “because it is written in Scripture,” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

the law

See how you translated the phrase **the law** in [2:16](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

The righteous will live by faith

The sentence **The righteous will live by faith** is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4. Use a natural way of indicating that something is a quotation. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**)

The righteous will live by faith

Paul is citing the prophet Habakkuk, who is using the adjective **righteous** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: “People who are righteous will live by their faith” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**)

The righteous will live by faith

The phrase **by faith** could be connected to: (1) the phrase **will live** and be describing the ongoing means by which a righteous person has spiritual life, namely by their faith. Alternate translation: “The righteous person has life through their faith” or “The righteous person lives as a result of their faith” (2) the phrase **the righteous** and be describing the means by which God considers a sinful person to be **righteous**, namely by their having faith in him. Alternate translation: “The person who is made right with God as a result of their faith will live” or “Every person will live spiritually whose record of sins God erases because that person trusts God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

by faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as “believe,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “by believing” or “because they believe” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

by faith

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly that the object of **faith** here is God. Alternate translation: “by believing in God” or “because they believe in God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 3:12

Now

The word **Now** indicates that Paul is introducing new information into his argument and it also indicates that Paul is introducing information that will be in contrast with his statement in [3:11](#), that the law is not able to justify a person. Use a natural form in your language for indicating these things. Alternate translation: “And” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

the law

See how you translated the phrase **the law** in [2:16](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

by faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as “believing,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

the law is not by faith

Here, the phrase **the law is not by faith** means that the law of Moses is not based on faith. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the law of Moses is not founded on faith” or “the law of Moses is not dependent upon faith” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

but

What follows the word **but** here is indicating a contrast between **law** and **faith**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

but

The phrase **The one doing these things will live in them** is a quotation from Leviticus 18:5. Use a natural way of introducing direct quotations from an important or sacred text. Alternate translation: “but as it is written in Scripture” (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**)

these things

The phrase **these things** refers to God’s statutes and laws, which are mentioned in the first part of Leviticus 18:5. Here Paul is citing the second half of Leviticus 18:5. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly in your translation to what “these things” refers. Alternate translation: “these laws and statutes of mine” or “my law and statutes” (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

will live in them

Here, the word **in** means “by” and refers to the means by which a person **will live**, namely by doing **them**. The word **them** refers to “all the things written in the Book of the Law,” mentioned in [3:10](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate these things explicitly. Alternate translation: “will live because they do them” or “will live

by obeying them" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 3:13

redeemed

Paul uses the metaphor of a person buying back lost property or buying the freedom of a slave to illustrate the meaning of God sending Jesus to pay for people's sins by dying on the cross. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

us & us

When Paul says **us** here, he is including the Galatian believers, so both occurrences of **us** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**)

from the curse of the law, & a curse

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **curse**, you could express the same idea with a verb phrase. Alternate translation: "from being cursed by the law ... cursed" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

of the law

See how you translated the phrase **the law** in 2:16. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

a curse

By using the phrase, **a curse**, Paul is describing a person who is cursed by God by association with the **curse** itself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: "one who was cursed by God" or "one whom God cursed" (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

on behalf of

Alternate translation: "for"

for it is written

The phrase **for it is written** is introducing a quotation from Deuteronomy 21:23. See how you translated the phrase **for it is written** in 3:10 where it is also introducing a quotation from Scripture. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Cursed {is} everyone hanging on a tree

The sentence **Cursed is everyone hanging on a tree** is a quotation from Deuteronomy 21:23. Use a natural way of indicating that something is a quotation. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**)

a tree

In the language in which Paul wrote this letter, the word **tree** can refer to a post made out of wood. Here, Paul is using the word **tree** to refer to the wooden cross that Jesus was crucified on. If it would help your readers, use a term which could refer to something made of wood, and not just to a live tree. Alternate translation: “a pole” or “a wooden pole” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 3:14

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for Christ's death (which he discussed in the previous verse). Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: "in order that" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

blessing

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **blessing**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as "bless," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

the blessing of Abraham

Paul is using the possessive form to describe the blessing which Abraham received or which was promised to him. If this is not clear in your language, you could clarify the relationship for your readers. Alternate translation: "the blessing which Abraham received" or "the blessing which God promised to Abraham" (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

in Christ Jesus

Here, the word **in** could be used to indicate: (1) by what means **the blessing of Abraham** would **come to the Gentiles**, namely by means of **Christ Jesus**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "by means of Christ Jesus" or "through Christ Jesus" or "by Christ Jesus" (2) the sphere in which **the blessing of Abraham** would **come to the Gentiles**, namely **so that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles** who are in the sphere of **Christ Jesus**. Alternate translation: "who are in union with Christ Jesus" (3) the reason **the blessing of Abraham** would **come to the Gentiles**, namely because of **Christ Jesus**. Alternate translation: "because of what Christ Jesus has done" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

so that

Here, the phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for **the blessing of Abraham** coming **to the Gentiles**, namely so that **the promise of the Spirit** could be received **through faith**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: "in order that" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

through

Alternate translation: "by"

through faith

Here, the object of **faith** is Christ. If it would help your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. The phrase **through faith** also occurs in 2:16, where it has Jesus Christ as the object of the phrase "through faith." Alternate translation: "through faith in Christ" or "through faith in the Messiah" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as “believing”, or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “believing” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

we might receive

When Paul says **we** he is speaking of himself and the Galatian believers so **we** would be inclusive here. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

the promise of the Spirit

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **promise**, you could express the same idea with a verb form such as “promised,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

promise of the Spirit

Paul is using the possessive form to explain what the **promise** is regarding. Paul is using the possessive form to indicate that the **promise** he is referring to here is the promise regarding the coming Holy Spirit. If this is not clear in your language, you could clarify the relationship for your readers. Alternate translation: “promise regarding the Spirit” (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

Galatians 3:15

according to man

Here, Paul uses the phrase **according to man** to mean that he is speaking in accord with the manner of human practice. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “according to human practice” or “with a human analogy from human legal practice” or “using an analogy from standard daily life” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

according to man

Although the term **man** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women and refers to humans in general. If your readers would misunderstand this you can indicate this explicitly. Alternate translation: “according to human practice” or “using an analogy from standard human practice” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

Nevertheless

Alternate translation: “Even so”

established by man

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “which people have established” or “which men have established” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

no one sets aside or adds to a covenant established by man

Paul is speaking of people in general, not of one particular person. If your readers would misunderstand this, use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “no one sets aside or adds to a covenant which people have established” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.267)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.267)**)

by man

Although the term **man** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women and refers to people in general. If your readers would misunderstand this you can indicate this explicitly. Alternate translation: “by people” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

Galatians 3:16

Now

Here, the word **Now** could indicate: (1) that Paul is introducing additional information into his ongoing argument. Alternate translation: “Furthermore” (2) a transition. Alternate translation: “But note that” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

to his seed. & to seeds,” & to your seed

Here, the term **seed** means offspring. It is a word picture. Just as plants produce seeds that grow into many more plants, so people can have many offspring. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

to his seed. & to seeds,” & to your seed

In order to correctly communicate Paul’s meaning here it is important to translate both occurrences of the word **seed** with a singular form and to translate the single occurrence of the word **seeds** with a plural form that indicates more than one.

He does not say

Here, the word **He** could: (1) refer to God speaking to Abraham. By using the phrase **and to your seed** Paul is referring to multiple passages in the book of Genesis where God made promises to Abraham and his **seed**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly that **He** refers to the God. Alternate translation: “God does not say” (2) be translated as “It” and be referring to the various passages in Genesis which record that God spoke promises to Abraham. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly that **It** refers to Scripture. Alternate translation: “Scripture does not say” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

as to many, but as to one

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “as speaking about many, but as speaking about one” or “as referring to many, but as referring to one” (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

your

The word **your** is singular and refers to Abraham. (See: **Forms of You (p.264)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.264)**)

Galatians 3:17

Now

Alternate translation: "And"

The law

See how you translated the phrase "the law" in [2:16](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

430 years

Alternate translation: "four hundred and thirty years" (See: **Numbers (p.300)**) (See: **Numbers (p.300)**)

previously established by God

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "which God established previously" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

to nullify

Here, the word **to** introduces what the result would have been if **the law** had **set aside the covenant previously established by God**. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a result. Alternate translation: "so as to nullify" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

Galatians 3:18

if the inheritance {is} from & it is} no longer from

Alternate translation: "if the inheritance is from ... then it is no longer from"

the inheritance

Paul speaks of God's blessings to those who believe in him as if they were an **inheritance**. If your readers would not understand what **inheritance** means in this context, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the blessing" or "God's blessing" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

is} from the law, {it is} no longer from

Alternate translation: "is by the law, it is no longer by" or "is based on the law, it is no longer based on" or "comes from the law, it no longer comes from"

the law

See how you translated the phrase **the law** in 2:16. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

But

What follows the word **But** here is in contrast to the idea that **the inheritance is from the law**. Instead, Paul points out that **the inheritance** is based on God's promise. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: "Rather" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

has graciously given {it

Here, the word **it** refers to **the inheritance** mentioned earlier in this verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "has graciously given the inheritance" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

through

Here, the word **through** is indicating means and is introducing the means through which God gave **the inheritance ... to Abraham**, namely **through a promise**. Use a natural form in your language for indicating the means by which something happens.

Galatians 3:19

Why, then, the law

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to anticipate a question that the Galatian believers might have regarding the purpose of the law and to introduce his answer to this anticipated question. If it would help your readers, you could translate his words as a statement. Alternate translation: "I will tell you what the purpose of the law is" or "Let me tell you why God added the law to the covenant" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

the law

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If your readers might misunderstand this, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "was the law given" or "did God give the law" or "was the law added" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

It was added

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God added it" or "God added the law" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

It was added because of transgressions

The phrase **because of transgressions** could refer to: (1) the purpose for which the law **was added** to the covenant with Abraham, namely to show what transgression is. Alternate translation: "It was added to show what transgression is" (2) what caused God to decide that **the law** should be **added** to the covenant with Abraham, which was that people were committing transgressions. The phrase **because of transgressions** would then be stating the cause for **the law** being **added**, namely because people were sinning. Alternate translation: "It was added because people were committing transgressions" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

transgressions

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **transgressions**, you could express the same idea with an adjective such as "sinful", or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "people's sinful behavior" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

having been put into effect through angels

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that God did it. Alternate translation: "and God used angels to put it into effect" or "and God gave the law through angels" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

having been put into effect through angels

Translate the phrase **through angels** in a way that indicates that God, not angels, was the source of the law. The Bible records in Deuteronomy 33:2, Hebrews 2:2, and Acts 7:38, and 53 that God used angels to give Moses his law.

This is what Jewish people believed regarding how God delivered his law to Moses. Alternate translation: “and God used angels to put it into effect” or “God gave the law through angels” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

until the seed would come

When Paul says that **the law** was administered by **the hand of a mediator until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made**, Paul is implicitly telling the Galatian believers that the law was temporary and was only needed until Christ, whom he calls **the seed**, came. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “until the seed, who is Christ, would come” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

by the hand of a mediator

The phrase **by the hand of** is an idiom which means “through.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: “through a mediator” (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

of a mediator

Moses is the **mediator** to whom Paul is referring. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “of Moses, who acted as a mediator” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the promise had been made

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God had made the promise” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 3:20

Now a mediator is not for one

In this verse Paul is proving to the Galatian believers that God's promise to Abraham is superior to the law that he gave Moses. What Paul means by saying **a mediator is not for one** is that a mediator is not needed when one person is speaking with another person directly. Paul is implicitly expressing to the Galatian believers that the promise to Abraham is superior to the law because it was not given through a mediator but, rather, God gave the promise directly to Abraham. If it would help your readers and if you are using footnotes, you could indicate that information in a footnote. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**)

for one

The phrase **for one** leaves the object implied. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly what **one** is referring to. Alternate translation: "for one party alone" or "needed when there is only one party involved" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

but

What follows the word **but** here is in contrast to the opening statement in this verse that **a mediator is not for one**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

but

Here, the word **but** is introducing the phrase **God is one**, which is an allusion to a phrase in Deuteronomy 6:4. The Galatians believers would have known that Paul was referencing this scripture. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly that the word **but** is introducing a reference from Scripture. Alternate translation: "but as Moses wrote in Scripture," (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

God is one

Here Paul uses a well-known phrase about God to demonstrate that God's promises directly to Abraham were superior to the law that he gave through Moses. You can include some of this information in the text or a footnote if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: "Abraham received the promises from God alone" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 3:21

is} the law against the promises

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to anticipate a question that the Galatian believers might have. He introduces his answer to the question which begins with the phrase **For if a law was given being able to make alive**. If it would help your readers, you could translate his words as a statement. Alternate translation: “you might think that the law is against the promises” or “you might think that the law is opposed to the promises” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

against the promises

Alternate translation: “opposed to the promises” or “in conflict with the promises”

the promises

The phrase **the promises** refers to the promises that God made to Abraham. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the promises that God made to Abraham” or “God’s promises to Abraham” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

May it never be

May it never be is an emphatic way of negating a statement. The statement that the phrase **May it never be** is negating is the proposed question **is the law against the promises**. Use a natural word or expression for strongly negating an idea. Alternate translation: “Certainly not” (See: **Exclamations (p.258)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.258)**)

if a law was given being able to make alive, {then} truly

Paul is using a hypothetical situation to teach the Galatian believers. Alternate translation: “if it was possible that a law was given that was able to make people alive, then truly” (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**)

a law was given

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that God did it. Alternate translation: “God gave a law” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

to make alive

Here, it is implied that Paul is referring to making people alive. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “to make people alive” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

to make alive

The phrase **to make alive** could refer to: (1) both eternal life in the future and to making people spiritually alive in the present. Paul is probably referring to both here since in this letter Paul discusses the important role of the Holy Spirit and the fact that the Holy Spirit is given through faith and not the law. (2) eternal life in the future after a

person dies. If it is possible in your language, it would be best to retain a general phrase, as modeled by the ULT, since Paul does not explain the phrase **to make alive**. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**)

righteousness would have come by the law

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

Galatians 3:22

But

Here Paul uses the word **But** to indicate a strong contrast between the hypothetical and false possibility that the law could make a person righteous and to introduce his explanation of what the law actually does. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “But rather,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

the Scripture imprisoned all things under sin

Paul speaks of **the Scripture** as if it were an authority figure who **imprisoned** people. He speaks of **sin** as if it were a jail from which people cannot break free. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

the Scripture

Here, the word **Scripture** could: (1) refer to all Old Testament Scripture. The ULT indicates when the word **Scripture** refers to the entire Bible or the entire Old Testament by capitalizing the word **Scripture**. (2) refer to a particular passage of scripture such as Deuteronomy 27:26 or some other specific Old Testament passage. Alternate translation: “the scripture” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

the Scripture

Paul is describing God doing something by association with his Word, **the Scripture**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use plain language. Alternate translation: “God” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

all things

Here, the phrase **all things*** could refer to: (1) **all people**. If your language requires you to indicate explicitly what all things refers to, you could indicate that it refers to people. Alternate translation: “all humans” (2) **the entire creation and the things which make up this present fallen world**. See Romans 8:18-22. If you decide that this is what Paul means, you should use a general phrase such as all things*. (See: [\[\[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-explicit\]\]](#)) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

under sin

Here, the phrase **under sin** refers to being under the power of sin. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “under the power of sin” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Following the phrase **so that**, Paul states the purpose for which **the Scripture imprisoned all things under sin**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: “in order that” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to the ones believing

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that God did it. Alternate translation: "God might give the promise by faith in Jesus Christ to the ones believing" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to the ones believing

Alternate translation: "God's promise to Abraham which is received through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe"

the promise

The phrase **the promise** refers to the promise given to Abraham. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "the promise given to Abraham" or "the promise that God gave to Abraham" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as "trust," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 3:23

the faith & the faith about to be revealed

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as “trust” or “believe,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

before the faith came

The phrase **before the faith came** means before faith in Jesus Christ came. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “before faith in Jesus Christ came” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

we were held captive

When Paul says **we**, he is including the Galatian believers, so **we** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

we were held captive under the law, imprisoned

Here, Paul is continuing the metaphor of **the law** that he began in the previous verse. The power that **the law** had over humans is spoken of as if the law were a prison guard holding people captive. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. **Metaphor (p.290)** (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

under

Here, the word **under** means “under the authority of” or “under the jurisdiction of.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “under the authority of” or “under the jurisdiction of” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

we were held captive under the law, imprisoned

Here, Paul is continuing his personification of **the law** that he began in the previous verse. Paul speaks of **the law** as though it were a jailer who **held** people **captive** and kept them **imprisoned until** the time when the coming **faith** in Jesus Christ would **be revealed**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

we were held captive under the law

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the law held us captive under its power” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

imprisoned

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, the first half of the verse states that **the law**

did it. Alternate translation: “and the law imprisoned us” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

until the faith about to be revealed

Here, the word **until** could: (1) refer to time and introduce the time at which people being **imprisoned** under the law would end, namely **until** the time when God would reveal Jesus Christ as an object of faith. Alternate translation: “until God would reveal the message about trusting in Christ that he was about to reveal” (2) be translated as “to” and be indicating the purpose for people being **imprisoned** under the law, namely so that people would be ready for the coming faith in Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: “in order to lead us to believe in the good news that God was about to reveal” or “in order that we might be ready to believe the good news concerning Christ, the news that God would later reveal” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

the faith & the faith

The phrase **the faith** means “the faith in Jesus Christ.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the faith in Jesus Christ ... the faith in Jesus Christ came, which was” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

until the faith about to be revealed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “until the faith came that God was about to reveal” or “until the faith that God would soon reveal came” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 3:24

So

Here, the phrase **So** is introducing a result. Use a natural form for introducing a result. Alternate translation: “Thus,” or “Therefore,” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

the law became our guardian

Paul speaks of **the law** as if it were a **guardian**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning by using a simile. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

our

When Paul says **our**, he is including the Galatian believers, so **our** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

guardian

In Paul’s culture a **guardian** was a slave whose task was to discipline and take care of a child who was not yet an adult. If your readers would not be familiar with this term, you could either explain the meaning of this word in your translation, or you could use the term from your culture that comes the closest to expressing the meaning of this word and then write a footnote explaining this word. Alternate translation: “custodian” or “guide” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.340)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.340)**)

guardian

Here, Paul speaks of **the law** as though it were a **guardian** whose job or role was to watch over people’s actions **until Christ** came. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “guide” (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

until

See how you translated the word **until** in 3:23. (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for which **the law became our guardian until Christ** which was for the intended purpose that **we might later be justified by faith** in Christ. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: “with the purpose that” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

we might be justified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God might justify us” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

we might be justified

When Paul says **we**, he is including the Galatian believers, so **we** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**)

by

Here, the word **by** is indicating the basis or source of God's act of justifying sinners. The word **by** is indicating that **faith** is the basis on which **we might be justified**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "on the basis of" or "by means of" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as "trust," or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

faith

Here, the context implies (as does also Paul's use of the similar phrase "by faith in Christ" in [2:16](#)), that the object of **faith** is **Christ**. If it would be helpful to your readers to state the object of faith here, you could indicate it explicitly. Alternate translation: "faith in Christ" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 3:25

But

Here, the word **But** is introducing a contrast. What follows the word **But** is in contrast to the way things were in the period of time before Christ came. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “But now” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb phrase such as “trusting in Christ,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

faith

Here, the context implies that the object of **faith** is Christ. If it would be helpful to your readers to state the object of faith here, you could indicate it explicitly. Alternate translation: “faith in Christ” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

we are

When Paul says **we**, he is including the Galatian believers, so **we** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

under a guardian

Here, Paul continues the metaphor he began in 3:24 by continuing to speak of the law as if it were a **guardian**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. See how you translated the word **guardian** in 3:24. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

under a guardian

Here, Paul is speaking of the law as if it were a person who was a **guardian**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

under

Here, the word **under** means “under the supervision of.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “under the supervision of” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 3:26

sons

Although the term **sons** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women who have **faith in Christ Jesus**. Alternate translation: “sons and daughters” or “children” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

sons

Paul speaks of the Galatian believers as if God were their biological or physical father. He means that these people have a father-son relationship with God because they trust in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the spiritual children” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea with a verb such as “trust,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

in Christ Jesus

The phrase **in Christ Jesus** could mean: (1) that the spiritual position of the Galatian believers was in Christ Jesus. Alternate translation: “you are in union with Christ Jesus” (2) that **Christ Jesus** was the object of Galatian believers faith. Alternate translation: “which is in Christ Jesus” or “towards Christ Jesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 3:27

For

Here, the word **For** indicates that what follows is giving the reason why Paul said “you are all sons of God” in 3:26. Use a natural form in your language for introducing information which proves and/or explains a prior statement. Alternate translation: “Because” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

as many as

The phrase **as many as** means “as many of you as.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “as many of you as” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

as many as have been baptized

The phrase **as many as have** means “all of you who have.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “all of you who have been baptized” or “each of you who have been baptized” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

have been baptized

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that some person did it. Alternate translation: “someone has baptized” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

have been baptized into Christ

Paul speaks of being **baptized into Christ** as if **Christ** were a physical location into which someone could be baptized. Here, **into Christ** refers to being spiritually united with Christ and coming into close spiritual union with him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning of this phrase plainly. Alternative translation: “have been baptized into close spiritual union with Christ” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

have been baptized into Christ put on Christ

By speaking of baptism, Paul could be describing all of the things which belong to a believer's initial conversion experience. Paul would then be associating all of them with one part of their conversion experience, water baptism, in which case baptism is an abbreviated way of referring to conversion and the things that are part of it such as belief in Christ, baptism, and receiving Holy Spirit. If you decide that this is what Paul means here, and if it would help your readers, you could indicate this explicitly, or you could explain this in a footnote if you are using them. Alternate translation: “God has saved have put on Christ” or “have believed in Christ have put on Christ” or “have experienced God's salvation have put on Christ” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

put on Christ

Paul speaks of **Christ** as if he were clothing that those who believe in him have **put on**. Here, when Paul says that all believers have **put on Christ**, he means that all believers have identified with him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning of this phrase plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 3:28

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

Here, the word **for** introduces the reason for why, if someone is a believer in Christ, it is as if there is no longer **Jew nor Greek** or **slave** or **free** or **male** or **female**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase, which follows the word **for**, gives the reason for the result that the first part of this verse describes. Alternate translation: “Because you are all one in Christ Jesus, there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

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

Paul says that people who believe in Christ are no longer divided by racial, social, or gender distinctions but, rather, now have **one** common identity **in Christ**. Human distinctions now cease to be significant because believers are united in a new spiritual identity, which is being **in Christ**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “For you who are united by your faith in Christ Jesus, it is now as if there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female” or “For you who are united by belief in Christ Jesus, it is now as if there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Greek

Here, the term **Greek** refers to non-Jewish people. It does not refer only to people from the country of Greece or to people who speak the Greek language. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “Gentiles” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

free

Here, the term **free** refers to people who are not slaves and thus are free from bondage to a master. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “free person” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

for

Here, the word **for** introduces a reason. Use a natural form for introducing the reason for something that was said previously. Alternate translation: “because” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

for you are all one in Christ Jesus

Alternate translation: “because all of you are together joined to Messiah Jesus”

one

Here, Paul uses the word **one** to indicate that all believers share an equal position because of the new identity they have by being **in Christ**. (Paul explains his statement from the previous verse that all believers have put on Christ, meaning that they have a new and common identity derived from and centered on Christ). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly what **one** means here. Alternate translation: “alike” or “of equal standing” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks of believers being **in Christ Jesus** as if **Christ Jesus** were a physical location in which someone could be. Here, **in Christ** refers to being spiritually united with Christ in close spiritual union with him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning of this phrase plainly. Alternative translation: “in close spiritual union with Christ” or “because of your close spiritual union with Christ” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 3:29

Now

Here Paul is using the word **Now** to introduce new information. Use a natural form for introducing new information. Alternate translation: “And” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

if & then

Paul is using an **if ... then** statement to express a hypothetical condition and what the result is for those people who meet the requirement of the condition. Paul is telling the Galatians that **if** they belong to Christ, **then** they are Abraham's spiritual descendants. Use a natural form in your language for expressing a hypothetical condition. (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**)

you {are} & you are

Here, both occurrences of the word **you** are plural and refer to the Galatian believers. Your language may require you to mark these forms as plural. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.265)**) (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.265)**)

you {are} of Christ

Alternate translation: “you are Christ’s” or “you belong to Christ”

seed

Here, the term **seed** means offspring. It is a word picture. Just as plants produce seeds that can grow into many more plants, so people can have many offspring. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. See how you translated the word **seed** in 3:16 where it is used with a similar meaning. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “offspring” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

heirs

Paul speaks of believers, who are the spiritual descendants **of Abraham**, as if they were **heirs** who were to inherit property and wealth from a family member. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

heirs according to promise

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly what the **heirs** will inherit. Alternate translation: “heirs of what God promised to Abraham and his descendants” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

according to

Alternate translation: “by way of”

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: [\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/inherit\]](#), [\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/promise\]](#), [\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/spirit\]](#) and [\[rc://tw/dict/bible/kt/faith\]](#) and **adoption, adopt, adopted (p.348)**)

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 (p.243)**)

the law

The phrase "the law" is a singular noun that refers to a group of laws that God gave Israel by dictating them to Moses. This phrase occurs in chapters 2-5. Every time this phrase occurs in Galatians, it refers to the group of laws that God dictated to Moses at Mount Sinai. You should translate this phrase the same way each time it occurs. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

Galatians 4:1

being master of all

Alternate translation: “though being master of all things” or “even though he is master of all things”

Galatians 4:2

But

Here, the word **But** is introducing a contrast and indicating that what follows is in contrast to what came before it. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “Rather,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

he is

Here, the word **he** refers to the heir mentioned in the previous verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “the heir is” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

under

Here, the word **under** means “under the authority of.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “under the authority of” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

guardians and stewards

The terms **guardians** and **stewards** refer to two different roles, but these terms do not necessarily refer to two different groups of people since one person could have responsibility for filling both roles. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “someone who is his guardian and steward” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

guardians

A guardian was a person who had the role of being responsible for a child. This person’s job was to supervise and care for the child of whom they were in charge to make sure that the child was instructed in what they should do. Use a natural phrase or term in your language for describing this role. If you do not have this role in your culture you could describe it for your readers. Alternate translation: “people who are in charge of a child” or “people who are responsible for a minor” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.340)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.340)**)

stewards

Here, the word **stewards** refers to people who are entrusted with the role of managing property until the heir is old enough to inherit it. Use a natural phrase or term in your language for describing this role. If you do not have this role in your culture, you could describe it for your readers. Alternate translation: “people who manage a child’s possessions” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.340)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.340)**)

date appointed by his father

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “date which his father appointed” or “time which his father appointed” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 4:3

So

Here, the word **So** indicates that what follows is comparable to, and similar in some way to what has just been described in 4:1-2. Use a natural form in your language for introducing something that corresponds to something that was introduced previously. Alternate translation: “In a similar way” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p. 239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

we were

The word **we** here refers to all Christians, including Paul's readers, so **we** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p. 260)**)

when we were children

Paul speaks of people who have not yet trusted in Jesus as if they were **children**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly, or you could translate this phrase as a simile. Alternate translation: “when we did not yet believe in Jesus” or “when we were like children spiritually” (See: **Metaphor (p. 290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

we were being enslaved under the elemental principles of the world

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who was doing the action, Paul says that the elemental principles of the world were doing it. See the note on personification regarding **the elemental principles of this world**. Alternate translation: “the elemental principles of the world were enslaving us” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

enslaved

Paul speaks of being under the control of **the elemental principles of the world** as if it were slavery. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

under

Here, the word **under** means “under the power of” or “under the authority of.” See how you translated the word **under** in 4:2 where Paul uses it with a similar meaning. Alternate translation: “under the power of” or “under the authority of” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

enslaved under the elemental principles of the world

Here, Paul speaks of **the elemental principles of the world** as though they were a person who could enslave other people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. Paul speaks of **the elemental principles of the world** as though they have the power to enslave a person, but it is actually humans who do not yet believe in the Messiah, who willing submit to these **elemental principles** and allow themselves to be enslaved. See 5:1. (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

the elemental principles of the world

Here, **the elemental principles of the world** could refer to: (1) the religious and/or moral teachings that people, whether they be a Jew or non-Jew, seek to obey in order to please God and think of themselves as praiseworthy and good. Alternate translation: “the elemental rules of this world” or “the rudimentary principles of this world” (2) the things prescribed by the Mosaic law. Alternate translation: “the things prescribed by the law of Moses” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 4:4

But

The word **But** is introducing a contrast between the time prior to **when the fullness of time came**, which Paul described before this verse, and the time after **the fullness of time came**, which Paul describes in this verse. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: "Instead," (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

the fullness of time

The phrase **the fullness of time** means "the right time" or "the time that God appointed." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "the right time" or "the designated time" or "the appointed time" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

having been born from a woman

The phrase **born from a woman** is an idiom which means that someone is human. Because Jesus existed as God before he was born on earth, the emphasis here is that Jesus became human, in addition to being fully God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "having taken on human nature" or "having been born as a human being" (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

having been born under the law

The phrase **having been born under the law** means that Jesus, as a Jew, was under the jurisdiction of the law of Moses and therefore it was necessary that he obey it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "having been born under the jurisdiction and requirements of the law of Moses" or "having been born subject to the law of Moses" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

under the law

Here, the word **under** means "under the authority of" or "under the jurisdiction of." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. See how you translated the phrase **under the law** in 3:23 where Paul uses the word **under** with the same meaning. Alternate translation: "under the authority of the law" or "under the jurisdiction of the law" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 4:5

in order that

The phrase **in order that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for which God sent forth his Son. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: “so that” or “with the purpose that” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

he might redeem

With the word **redeem**, Paul uses the metaphor of a person buying back lost property or buying the freedom of a slave as a picture of God sending Jesus to pay the price for people's sins by dying on the cross. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for which God redeemed **the ones under the law**, which was **so that** God could adopt them as his spiritual sons and daughters. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: “in order that” or “with the purpose that” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

under

See how you translated the word **under** in [3:23](#) where it is used with the same meaning. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

we might receive the adoption as sons

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that “God” did it. Alternate translation: “God might adopt us as his sons” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

we might receive

The word **we** could refer to: (1) all Christians, both Jews and non-Jews, in which case **we** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (2) Jewish Christians only, in which case **we** would be exclusive. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

we might receive the adoption as sons

Paul speaks of God giving people a close personal relationship with himself and giving them special rights and privileges as if it were **adoption**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

adoption as sons

Paul speaks of those who believe in Jesus as if God were their biological, physical father. He means that these people have a father-son relationship with God because they trust in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. See how you translated the word **sons** in [3:26](#) where it is used with the same meaning. Alternate translation: “the spiritual children of God” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

adoption as sons

Although the term **sons** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “adoption as children” or “adoption as God’s children” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

Galatians 4:6

And

Here, Paul is using the word **And** to introduce new information into his ongoing argument. Use a natural form for introducing new information. Alternate translation: “Now” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

because

The word **because** is introducing the reason that **God sent the Spirit of his Son into** the hearts of believers, namely, because believers are God’s **sons**. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a reason. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

sons

Although the term **sons** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “sons and daughters” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

sons

Paul speaks of the Galatian believers as though God were their biological, physical father. He means that these people have a father-son relationship with God because they trust in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. See how you translated the word **sons** in 4:5, where it is used with the same meaning. Alternate translation: “the spiritual children of God” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

into our hearts

Here, the word **hearts** refers to the innermost part of a person. Paul is describing the innermost part of a person by association with their physical heart. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent term from your culture that is used to describe the center of a person’s inner being or you could use plain language. Alternate translation: “to live within each of us” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

crying out

The phrase **crying out** means calling out loudly. This phrase does not mean to cry or weep from sorrow. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “calling out loudly” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Abba, Father

The word **Abba** is an Aramaic word meaning **Father** and which the Jews used to address their fathers. Paul writes it as it sounds in Aramaic (he transliterates it) and then translates its meaning into Greek for his readers. Since the Aramaic word **Abba** is followed by the Greek word **Father**, it is best to transliterate **Abba** and then give its meaning in your language, as Paul does. (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.243)**) (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.243)**)

Galatians 4:7

So then

The phrase **So then** introduces the result of what Paul explained in 4:6. Use a natural form for introducing a result. Alternate translation: “As a result” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

you are

Here, **you** is singular. Paul is probably addressing the Galatian believers by using a singular pronoun in order to emphasize that what he is saying applies to each of them individually. (See: **Forms of You (p.264)**) (See: **Forms of You (p.264)**)

a slave

Paul speaks of the Galatian believers being in bondage to the law of Moses as if they were in slavery. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “in bondage to the law of Moses” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

but

The word **but** is introducing a contrast. Paul is contrasting being **a son** with being **a slave**. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but, rather,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

a son, & a son

Although the term **son** is masculine, Paul is using the word here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “a child ... a child” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

and if a son, also

Paul is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain, and if your readers might misunderstand and think that what Paul is saying is not certain, then you can translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: “since each of you is a son, you are also” (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.228)**) (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.228)**)

an heir

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly that Paul is referring to inheriting the promises that God made to Abraham and his descendants. Alternate translation: “an heir of the promises made to Abraham” or “an heir of the promises God made to Abraham” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

through God

Here, the word **through** is indicating agency. It is indicating that God is the agent by which the Galatians are to inherit the blessings promised to Abraham and his descendants. Use a natural form for indicating the agency or means by which an action takes place. Alternate translation: “by means of God’s working” or “through God’s working” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

Galatians 4:8

But

The word **But** is introducing a contrast. Paul is contrasting the life of the Galatian believers before they believed in Christ with their life after they believed in Christ and as a result became God's sons (which he explained in [4:1-7](#)). Use a natural form in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

having known God

Here, the phrase **having known God** means knowing God in a close personal relationship. It means more than simply having heard about God or knowing some things about God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "having been in a close relationship with God" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

you were enslaved to the ones by nature not being gods

Paul speaks of the Galatians' former way of life in which they practiced false religions and worshiped false gods as if it were slavery. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

the ones by nature not being gods

The phrase, **the ones by nature not being gods** refers to the beings which the Galatians served when they were pagans and which were considered by them to be gods though they were not really gods. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "false gods which were not really gods at all" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 4:9

But

Here, the word **But** is introducing a contrast. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “So” See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)** (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

having come to know & having come to be known

Make sure that you translate the words **know** and **known** with the same type of expression as you used to translate the word “known” in 4:8. The phrase “not having known God” in 4:8 and the phrases **know God** and **known by God** in this verse are all referring to having intimate personal knowledge that comes from a close relationship. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

having come to be known by God

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God having come to know you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

how are you turning again to the weak and worthless elemental principles

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to rebuke the Galatian believers. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

are you turning again

Here, **turning again** means “to return.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “are you returning” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the weak and worthless elemental principles

See how you decided to translate the phrase **elemental principles** in Galatians 4:3. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

to which once more you want to be enslaved again

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to rebuke the Galatian believers. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

to which once more you want to be enslaved again

Here, **to be enslaved** is a metaphor for being obligated to obey certain rules and regulations. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. See how you translated the word **enslaved** in [4:8](#) where it is also used with a metaphorical use. Alternate translation: “to which once more you want to act like a slave who must obey his master” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 4:10

You observe

Here, the word **observe** refers to observing something for religious purposes in order to gain God's favor and approval. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "For religious purposes you observe" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

You observe

The word **You** is plural here and refers to the Galatian believers. Your language may require you to mark such forms. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.265)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.265)**)

days and months and seasons and years

Paul is describing the different Jewish celebrations and religious observances required in the law of Moses by associating them with the times when they took place. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use plain language. Alternate translation: "the Jewish Sabbath days and other days prescribed in the law of Moses. You also observe the monthly Jewish celebrations and annual Jewish festivals as well the Jewish sacred years" (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

Galatians 4:11

I am afraid

Here, the phrase **I am afraid** means "I am concerned about." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

for you & you

Both occurrences of the word **you** in this verse are plural and refer to the Galatian believers. Your language may require you to mark such forms. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.265)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.265)**)

I have labored

Here, the word **labored** refers to Paul's work of teaching the Galatians the truths of the Christian faith. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "I have labored in teaching and preaching" or "I have taught the truths of the Christian faith" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

for nothing

Alternate translation: "without results" or "to no avail"

Galatians 4:12

οἶδατε & ὑμῖν

In this verse both occurrences of the word **you** are plural and refer to the Galatian believers. Your language may require you to mark such forms. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.265)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.265)**)

brothers

See how you translated the word **brothers** in 1:2 where it is used with the same meaning. Alternate translation: “brothers and sisters” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

become as I am, because I also {became} as you {are}

Paul is asking the Galatian believers to become like himself and not act as if the law of Moses has authority over their lives. He says that formerly, when they did not obey the law of Moses, he had become like them and not obeyed all the rules prescribed it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “act like I act by not living your life as if you need to obey the law of Moses, because when I was with you did not obey all the rules and ceremonial laws prescribed in the law of Moses” or “become as I am by not acting as if you have to obey the law of Moses, because formerly I became as you were before you were deceived into thinking that you needed to obey the law of Moses” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

become as I am, because I also {became} as you {are}

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “because I became as you, you also should become as I am” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

I also {became} as you {are}

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. Here, the implied words are **became** and **are**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

You did me no harm

Here Paul expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: “You treated me well” (See: **Litotes (p.288)**) (See: **Litotes (p.288)**)

Galatians 4:13

Now

Paul is using the word **Now** to introduce background information. Use a natural way in your language for introducing background information. Alternate translation: “And” (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.221)**) (See: **Connect — Background Information (p.221)**)

because of a weakness of the flesh I proclaimed the gospel to you

Here, Paul states that it was a physical illness that previously caused him to proclaim the gospel to Galatians. This could mean that: (1) Paul was already in Galatia when illness caused him to remain there to recover, which gave him time and opportunity to proclaim the gospel to the Galatians. (2) because of a physical illness, Paul went to Galatia to recover from his sickness. While there, he proclaimed the gospel to the Galatians. Because Paul does not explicitly state what provided the opportunity for him to preach the gospel, you should not further explain what Paul says here about his sickness but, rather, you should use a general expression. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**)

because of

Here, Paul is using the phrase **because** to introduce the reason that he **proclaimed the gospel** to the Galatians **previously**, which was **because** he had to stay in Galatia due to illness. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a reason-result clause. Here, the reason is **a weakness of the flesh** and the result is that Paul **proclaimed the gospel** to the Galatians. Alternate translation: “on account of” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

a weakness of the flesh

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **weakness**, you could express the same idea with an adjective such as “weak,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

of the flesh

Here, Paul uses the word **flesh**, which is one part of his body, to refer to his entire body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or use plain language. See how you translated the phrase **the flesh** in [2:20](#) where it is used with the same meaning. Alternate translation: “of the body” or “of my body” (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**)

Galatians 4:14

your trial in my flesh

The phrase **your trial in my flesh** means that Paul had some physical problem or malady that either itself caused difficulty (a **trial**) for the Galatians or caused difficulty (a **trial**) for them because they had to care for or help him as a result of his physical problem. Because Paul does not reveal specifically how his physical malady created a **trial** for the Galatians, it is best to translate this phrase with a general phrase which leaves room for either possibility. (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**) (See: **When to Keep Information Implicit (p.345)**)

you did not despise

Alternate translation: “you did not scorn” or “you did not hate”

trial

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **trial**, you could express the same idea some other way that would be natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

flesh

Here, Paul uses the word **flesh**, one part of his body, to refer to his entire body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or use plain language. See how you translated the phrase **the flesh** in 2:20 where it is used with the same meaning. Alternate translation: “body” (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**)

as an angel of God

The phrase **as an angel of God** means “as if I were an angel of God.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “as if I were an angel of God” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

as Christ Jesus

The phrase **as Christ Jesus** means “as you would welcome Christ Jesus.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “as you would welcome Christ Jesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 4:15

Where, then, {is} your blessing

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form in order to express his disappointment to the Galatian believers and to cause them to think about what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

is} & blessing

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **blessing**, you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

For

Here, the word **For** introduces information which proves how the Galatians had previously felt about Paul. Use a natural form in your language for introducing this material. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

if possible, having torn out your eyes, you would have given {them} to me

Paul is using a hypothetical situation to help his readers remember the way that they formerly felt and thought about Paul. Use the natural form in your language for expressing a hypothetical situation. Alternate translation: "if it were possible that you could have torn out your eyes and then given them to me, you would have done so" (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.275)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.275)**)

if possible

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "if it were possible for you to do so" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

if possible, having torn out your eyes, you would have given {them} to me

The phrase **having torn out your eyes, you would have given them to me** could: (1) be an idiom indicating the great love and devotion which the Galatians formerly had for Paul. In Paul's time the eyes were considered a person's most precious possession, so if it were possible for a person to take out their eyes and give them to another person, this would indicate great love. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "you formerly loved me very much and would have given me your most valued possession to show me your love" (2) indicate that Paul had some type of eye disease. (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Galatians 4:16

So then

Paul is using the phrase **So then** to introduce a reason-result clause in which **speaking truth** to the Galatians is the reason, and them acting as if Paul was their **enemy** is the result. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a reason-result clause. Alternate translation: “Therefore” or “Therefore, as a result of” or “So then, as a result of” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

speaking truth to you, have I become your enemy

The phrase **speaking truth to you, have I become your enemy** is a rhetorical question in which Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to show the Galatian believers his disappointment with them and cause them to think about what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “as a result of my speaking the truth to you, you are acting as if I have become your enemy.” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

speaking truth to you

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea with an adjective such as “true,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “by telling you things that are true” or “because I have told you what is true” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 4:17

They are zealous & they desire

In this verse, the pronouns **They** and **they** both refer to the false teachers who were Judaizers and were teaching the Galatians false things. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “The false teachers are zealous ... these false teachers desire” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

not rightly

Alternate translation: “not in a good way” or “not in a way that is right”

but

Here, the word **but** is introducing a contrast. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “but instead,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

to separate you

Here, the the phrase **to separate you** refers to separating the Galatian believers from Paul and probably also from his ministry partners, because they all taught a gospel message that was different from what the false teachers were teaching the Galatian believers. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly from whom Paul is saying that the false teachers are trying to separate the Galatian believers. Alternate translation: “to separate you from us” or “to make you stop being loyal to us” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

so that

The phrase **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Paul is introducing the purpose for which the false teachers desired **to separate** the Galatian believers from Paul and his ministry partners. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: “in order that” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

you would be zealous for them

Alternate translation: “you would be devoted to them” or “you would be attached to them”

Galatians 4:18

But

Alternate translation: "Now"

good

Here, the word **good** refers to good things. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly.
Alternate translation: "good things" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 4:19

My children

Paul speaks of the Galatian believers as if they were his **children** and he was their parent. The Galatian believers experienced their spiritual birth as a result of Paul's work of proclaiming the gospel to them, so he was their spiritual parent and they were his spiritual **children**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: "You who believed the message about Jesus that I proclaimed to you" or "My spiritual children" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

I am in labor again

Paul speaks of his work of seeking to help the Galatians grow in spiritual maturity and the mental and physical suffering he endured as a result of this work as if it were the **labor** that a mother endures when giving birth to a child. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a simile. Alternate translation: "I am again in anguish as though I am giving birth" or "it is as if I am in labor again" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Christ would be formed in you

In the phrase **Christ would be formed in you** the word **Christ** refers Christ's character and likeness. Christ being formed in them refers to them becoming mature in their spiritual thinking and acting in a way that resembles Jesus' actions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or plain language. Alternate translation: "Christ's nature becomes fully developed in you" or "you become a mature follower of Christ" (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**)

Christ would be formed in you

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that God will do it. Alternate translation: "God forms Christ in you" or "God would form Christ in you" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 4:20

but

Alternate translation: “and”

I am desiring to be present with you now and to change my tone, because I am perplexed about you

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: “because I am perplexed about you, I am desiring to be present with you now and to change my tone” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

to change my tone

The phrase **change my tone** refers to Paul changing the manner of his communication towards the Galatians from sternly rebuking to being more affectionate. Paul loved the Galatian believers. However, because of the serious nature of the false teaching which the Galatians were being tempted to accept, combined with Paul's physical distance from the Galatians, he felt that he needed to write to them and firmly and sternly correct their false thinking with the hope that they would not believe or follow false teaching. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly what the phrase **change my tone** means here. Alternate translation: “to speak in a different manner” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 4:21

Tell me

Alternate translation: "Say to me" or "Answer me"

you

Here, the word **you** is plural. Your language may require you to mark such forms. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.265)**) (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.265)**)

desiring

Alternate translation: "wanting"

under

See how you translated the word **under** in [3:23](#) where it is used with the same meaning. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Tell me, you desiring to be under the law, do you not listen to the law

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form in order to cause the Galatian believers to think about and reflect on what he is going to say next. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "Each of you who desire to be under the law. You should listen to what the law actually says" or "Those of you who desire to be under the law. You pay closer attention to what the law really teaches" (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

do you not listen to the law

Alternate translation: "do you not comprehend what the law is teaching" or "do you not understand what the law is actually teaching"

Galatians 4:22

it is written

Here, Paul uses **it is written** to mean that it is written in the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul assumes that his readers will understand this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Paul is referring to an important text. Alternate translation: "it has been written in the Scriptures" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

it is written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Moses did it. Alternate translation: "Moses wrote" or "Moses wrote in the Scriptures" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Abraham had two sons, one by the slave girl and one by the free woman

In this verse and in all of [4:23](#) Paul is summarizing a story from the book of Genesis and is not directly quoting scripture, so you should not use quotation marks or anything else that might cause your readers to think that Paul is directly quoting scripture here. (See: **Quote Markings (p.318)**) (See: **Quote Markings (p.318)**)

one by the slave girl and one by the free woman

In both instances in the phrases **one by the slave girl and one by the free woman**, Paul is using the adjective "one" as a noun in order to indicate a specific kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could add the word "son" to show Paul's meaning. Alternate translation: "one son by the slave girl and one son by the free woman" (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**)

Galatians 4:23

And

Here, Paul is using the word **And** to introduce additional information regarding the two sons mentioned in 4:22. In the remainder of this verse, Paul contrasts the way in which the two sons were born. Alternate translation: “Now” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

slave girl & free woman

See how you translated **slave girl** and **free woman** in 4:22. (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**)

according to flesh

Here, the phrase **according to the flesh** means that Ishmael was born in the natural way by which all children are born, without God intervening and performing a miracle. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “in the natural way” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

but

Here, the word **but** is introducing a contrast. It is introducing a contrast between Ishmael, **the one who was born from the slave girl according to the flesh** and Isaac, who was born **from the free woman, through promise**. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a contrast. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

through promise

Here, the phrase **through promise** means “through God’s promise to Abraham” and refers to God supernaturally intervening and enabling Abraham’s wife Sarah (**the free woman**) to become pregnant in order to fulfill his **promise** to Abraham. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “through God’s promise to Abraham” or “was conceived supernaturally as a result of what God had promised to Abraham” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 4:24

These things

These things refers to the **things** Paul has just described in 4:22-23 regarding Abraham, his two sons, and Hagar and Sarah. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “These events I have just described to you” or “These things I have just told to you” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

These things are being spoken as an allegory

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that he is doing it. Alternate translation: “I am speaking these things as an allegory” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

These things are being spoken as an allegory

An **allegory** is a story in which things within the story are interpreted as representing something else. Here, the things in the story are meant to be interpreted as representing spiritual truths and realities. In this allegory, the two women referred to in 4:22 represent two different covenants. If your language has a word or phrase for **allegory**, you could use that here. Alternately, if it would help your readers, you could describe what an allegory is in your translation. Alternate translation: “I am speaking of these things in order to teach you a spiritual truth” or “I am speaking of these things in order to use them as an analogy by which to teach you an important truth” (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.340)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.340)**)

they

Here, the word **they** refers to Sarah and Hagar. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “these women” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

One

The word **One** here could refer to: (1) the covenant which God made at Mount Sinai, which resulted in spiritual slavery to the law. Alternate translation: “One covenant” (2) Hagar, in which case Paul means that she corresponds to Mount Sinai (See 4:25) and gave birth to children destined for slavery. Alternate translation: “One woman” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**)

Mount Sinai

Paul uses **Mount Sinai** to refer to the covenant with the laws that Moses gave to the Israelites there. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use plain language to express this. Alternate translation: “Mount Sinai, where Moses received the law and gave it to the Israelites” (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**)

giving birth to slavery

Paul speaks of the law of Moses producing or resulting in something as if the process of producing was like **giving birth**. Paul speaks of the spiritual bondage of being under the authority of the law of Moses as if it were **slavery**. Paul is saying that the law of Moses produces spiritual slavery. If it would be helpful in your language, you could

use equivalent metaphors from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “and produces spiritual slavery” or “and results in spiritual slavery” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

slavery

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **slavery**, you could express the same idea with a concrete noun such as “slave,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 4:25

Hagar is Mount Sinai

Hagar is Mount Sinai means that Hagar symbolizes Mount Sinai. Here, Paul begins to explain the meaning of the allegory which he began in 4:22. If it would help your readers, you could indicate explicitly what the phrase **Hagar is Mount Sinai** means. Alternate translation: “Hagar represents Mount Sinai” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia

Paul uses **Mount Sinai in Arabia** to refer to the covenant and the accompanying laws that Moses gave to the Israelites there. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use plain language to express this. Alternate translation: “Hagar resembles Mount Sinai in Arabia, where Moses received the law and gave it to the Israelites” (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**) (See: **Synecdoche (p.336)**)

corresponds

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. The words that Paul leaves out could be: (1) Hagar. Alternate translation: “Hagar corresponds” (2) Mount Sinai. Alternate translation: “Mount Sinai corresponds” (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery

Paul is describing the religion of Judaism (which emphasized obeying the law of Moses) by association with the city of Jerusalem, which was the center of this religion. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use plain language. Alternate translation: “religion of Judaism, for all who follow this religion are in slavery” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

for she is in slavery with her children

Paul speaks of the religion of Judaism, with its emphasis on obeying the law of Moses, as being **in slavery**. Here, Paul uses the word **slavery** to refer to the spiritual bondage that seeking to obey the religious system based on the law of Moses creates. Here, **slavery** refers to spiritual bondage, and **children** refers to those people who seek to obey the law of Moses as a means of meriting God’s approval. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use equivalent metaphors from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “for Jerusalem represents the religious system of Judaism, which results in spiritual bondage for all those who practice it” or “for Jerusalem represents the religious system based on the laws of Moses, which results in spiritual bondage for all those who seek to be righteous before God by practicing it” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

she is in slavery with her children

Here, Paul refers to the city of **Jerusalem** as though it were a woman (**she** and **her**) who could be **in slavery** and have **children**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Jerusalem represents the religious system of Judaism, which results in spiritual bondage for all those who practice it” (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

she is in slavery

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **slavery**, you could express the same idea with a concrete noun such as “slave,” or you could express the meaning in some other way that is natural in your language. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 4:26

But

Here, the word **But** is introducing a contrast between the present Jerusalem mentioned in 4:25 and **the Jerusalem above** in this verse. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: “On the other hand,” (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

the Jerusalem above

The phrase **the Jerusalem above** refers to the heavenly city of God, which is comprised of all those who trust Jesus to save them from their sins. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the heavenly Jerusalem” or “God’s Jerusalem” or “God’s Jerusalem, which is made up of those who trust in Jesus,” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

above

Paul is describing what is heavenly (what belongs to or comes from heaven) by association with the word **above**, which his readers would have understood to mean “heavenly.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use plain language. (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

free

Here, the word **free** refers to spiritual freedom which consists of freedom from the law of Moses and freedom from the power and condemnation of sin which results in being able to freely worship God. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “spiritually free” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

which is our mother

Paul uses the word **mother** to refer to belonging to a place as a citizen of that place and possessing the rights and privileges which belong to a citizen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “which is the Jerusalem to which we belong” or “which is the place to which we belong” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

our mother

Paul speaks of **the Jerusalem above** as if it was were a **mother**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

our

When Paul says **our**, he is speaking of all believers in Jesus, which would include himself and the Galatian believers, so **our** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

Galatians 4:27

For

Here, Paul uses the word **For** to indicate that he is introducing material which supports what he said in 4:26. Use a natural form in your language for introducing information which supports a prior claim. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

it is written

Here, Paul uses the phrase **it is written** to indicate that what follows is a quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul assumes that his readers will understand this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that indicates that Paul is referring to an important text. Alternate translation: “it is written in the Scriptures” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

it is written

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, Paul implies that the prophet Isaiah did it. Alternate translation: “Isaiah wrote” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Rejoice, you barren woman, the one not giving birth; break forth and shout, you {who are} not suffering the pains of childbirth; because the children of the desolate one {are} many more than of the one having a husband

This is a quotation from Isaiah 54:1. Use a natural way of indicating that something is a quotation. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**)

Rejoice, you barren woman, the one not giving birth; break forth and shout, you {who are} not suffering the pains of childbirth

These two phrases mean the same thing. Isaiah uses a common Hebrew poetic device and says the same thing twice, in slightly different ways. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: “Rejoice, you who are barren” or “Rejoice, you who have been unable to have children” (See: **Parallelism (p.303)**) (See: **Parallelism (p.303)**)

you barren woman, & you {who are} not suffering the pains of childbirth

If your language requires you to state the person who is the object of a command, it is implied that a woman is being addressed. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: “you barren woman ... you woman not suffering the pains of childbirth” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Rejoice, you barren woman, the one not giving birth; break forth and shout, you {who are} not suffering the pains of childbirth; because the children of the desolate one {are} many more than of the one having a husband

Paul is quoting the prophet Isaiah, who is speaking of the city of Jerusalem as if it were a **barren** woman who is unable to give **birth**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

because

The word **because** is introducing the reason to **Rejoice**. Use a natural form for introducing a reason to do something. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

the children of the desolate one {are} many more than of the one having a husband

The prophet Isaiah wrote this scripture passage during the time in which Jerusalem and its people had been conquered by the Babylonian army and the people taken away to Babylon. Isaiah is speaking of the city of Jerusalem as it was at the time of his writing, when it was without most of its original inhabitants. He compares the empty city to a **desolate** woman, a woman whose husband has left her, and he speaks of the inhabitants of Jerusalem as if they were **children**. In this passage from Isaiah 54:1, Isaiah is picturing Israel as a wife who is abandoned by her husband, which is God. Having **children** in this context refers to having inhabitants. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use equivalent metaphors from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the woman who was abandoned by her husband has more children than does the woman living with her husband" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

than

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "than the children" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

Galatians 4:28

Now

Here, Paul uses the word **Now** to indicate that what he writes next is connected to what he wrote immediately before this and that he is continuing his line of thought. Use a natural form in your language to indicate that what follows is in continuity with what precedes it. Alternate translation: “And” (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise

The point of this comparison is that the Galatian believers (who are referred to as **brothers**) are **like Isaac** because both **Isaac** and the Galatians are **children of promise**, meaning that they both owe their birth to God's supernatural working. Isaac's physical birth came about as a result of God's supernatural intervention, and the Galatian believers spiritual birth came about as a result of God's supernatural intervention. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent comparison or express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “my fellow believers, you are similar to Isaac in that God miraculously intervened for both you and him in order to fulfill his promise to Abraham” (See: **Simile (p.327)**) (See: **Simile (p.327)**)

you

Here, the pronoun **you** is plural. Your language may require you to mark such forms. (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.265)**) (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.265)**)

brothers

See how you translated the word **brothers** in [1:2](#) where it is used with the same meaning. Alternate translation: “brothers and sisters” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

children of promise

Here, **children** could be a metaphor which means that the Galatian believers are: (1) God's spiritual descendants. If it would help your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “God's spiritual descendants” or “God's children” (2) Abraham's spiritual descendants. If it would help your readers, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Abraham's spiritual descendants” or “Abraham's children” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

children of promise

Paul is using the possessive form to describe the source of these **children**. He means that the **children** are the **children** or descendants which God promised to supernaturally give to Abraham, and therefore they are **children** whose source derives from God fulfillment of his **promise** to Abraham. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify the relationship for your readers. Alternate translation: “children of God's promise” or “children of God's promise to Abraham” (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

Galatians 4:29

But

Here, the word **But** could be: (1) introducing a contrast. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a contrast. (2) indicating a transition. Alternate translation: "And" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

just as

Here, the word **just as** introduces a comparison. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a comparison. (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

the one

Here, the phrase **the one** refers to Abraham's son Ishmael. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Ishmael, the one" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the one

Here, the phrase **the one** refers to Abraham's son Isaac. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Isaac, the one" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

according to Spirit

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "having been born according to Spirit" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

according to Spirit

Here, **according to Spirit** means that Isaac's birth came about because the Holy Spirit worked in a supernatural way in order to make it happen. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "having been born because of the supernatural working of the Spirit" or "having been born by the miraculous working of the Spirit" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

so {it} also {is

The phrase **so it also is** introduces a comparison. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a comparison. Alternate translation: "so it is also the same" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

Galatians 4:30

what does the scripture say

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form to get the Galatian believers to think about the scripture verse he cites next. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "the scripture says," (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

does the scripture say

Here, Paul speaks of the specific scripture passage he is quoting from Genesis as though it were a person who is speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "does Moses say in the scripture" or "does Moses write in the scripture" (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

Cast 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

This is a quotation from Genesis. Use a natural way in your language to indicate that this is a quotation. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**) (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.316)**)

Cast out

Here, **Cast out** means to send away. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Banish" or "Remove from here" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

certainly not

The phrase **certainly not** translates two negative words in Greek. In the author's culture, two negative words made the statement even more negative. If your language can use two negatives as the author's culture did, you could use a double negative here. If your language does not use two negatives in this way, you could translate with one strong negative. Alternate translation: "by no means" (See: **Double Negatives (p.250)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.250)**)

Galatians 4:31

Therefore

The word **Therefore** is introducing Paul's conclusion to what he explained immediately prior to this verse. Use a natural form for introducing a concluding statement. Alternate translation: "So then" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

brothers

See how you translated the word **brothers** in [1:2](#) where it is used with the same meaning. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

we are

When Paul says **we**, he is including the Galatian believers, so **we** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**)

children

Paul speaks of spiritual descendants as if they were **children**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express the meaning plainly. See how you translated the word **children** in [4:28](#) where it is also used to mean "spiritual descendants." (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

of a slave girl, but of the free woman

Paul is using the phrase **slave girl** to refer to Hagar, who symbolizes the law of Moses (which brings spiritual bondage), and he is using Sarah, **the free woman**, to symbolize God's promise that he made to Abraham. If your readers would not understand this you could express the meaning in a non-figurative way. Alternate translation: "of the law of Moses, but of the promises that God made to Abraham" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

but

Here, the word **but** is introducing a contrast. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation (as a new sentence): "Instead, we are children" (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**) (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.224)**)

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. In this chapter Paul declares repeatedly that Christ has freed believers from being obligated to obey the law of Moses. (See: **law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God (p.353)**)

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. The word “fruit” is singular and refers to the nine qualities listed in [5:22-23](#) to show that they are a united cluster of qualities that are manifested in each believer. Translators should keep the singular form for “fruit” if possible. (See: **fruit, fruitful, unfruitful (p.352)**)

the law

The phrase “the law” is a singular noun that refers to a group of laws that God gave Israel by dictating them to Moses. This phrase occurs in chapters 2-5. Every time this phrase occurs in Galatians it refers to the group of laws that God dictated to Moses at Mount Sinai. You should translate this phrase the same way each time it occurs. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

Galatians 5:1

For freedom Christ set us free

For freedom Christ set us free implies that Christ **set** believers **free** from being required to obey the laws God gave the Jews. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “Christ has set us free from the law” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

For freedom

For here indicates that what follows is the purpose for which Christ freed believers. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose. Alternate translation: “For the purpose of freedom” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

For freedom & of slavery

See how you translated **freedom** in 2:4 and **slavery** in 4:24. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

us

When Paul says **us** here, he is speaking of himself, his traveling companions, and the Galatian believers, so **us** would be inclusive. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

Stand firm

Stand firm here refers to one remaining steadfast in what one believes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “Be unmoved” or “Remain strong in your faith” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

do not again be subjected to

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “do not again subject yourselves to” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

do not again be subjected to a yoke of slavery

Here Paul speaks of someone being obligated to obey the laws God gave the Jews as if that person were **subjected to a yoke of slavery**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: “do not go back to being obligated to obey the law” or “do not be subjected to the law like one who is under a yoke of slavery” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

a yoke of slavery

Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **yoke** that is **slavery**. If this is not clear in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “a yoke, that is, slavery” (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

Galatians 5:2

Behold

Paul uses the term **Behold** to focus his audience's attention on what he is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: "Understand this!" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

if you would be circumcised

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "if someone circumcises you" or "if you receive circumcision" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Christ will benefit you nothing

In this clause Paul means that if a person is circumcised in order to complete their salvation, then what Christ has done to provide salvation for them will not help them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "what Christ has done will not benefit you at all" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 5:3

being circumcised

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “who has someone circumcise him” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

to do the whole law

Paul implies that a **circumcised** man must obey **the whole law** in order to be righteous. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “to do the whole law to become righteous” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the whole law

Here, **law** is a singular noun that refers to a group of laws that God gave Israel by dictating them to Moses. See how **law** is translated in [2:16](#) and Romans 2:12. Alternate translation: “all of God’s laws” (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

Galatians 5:4

You were cut off from Christ, whoever is being justified by law

You here refers to **whoever is being justified by the law**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this more explicit. Alternate translation: “You who are being justified by the law were cut off from Christ” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.312)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.312)**)

You were cut off & is being justified

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “You cut yourselves off ... is justifying oneself” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

You were cut off from Christ

Here, **cut off** refers to being separated from Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “You have ended your relationship with Christ” or “You are separated from Christ” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

whoever is being justified by law

Paul implies that these people were trying to be **justified by** obeying **the law**, which is impossible. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “whoever attempts to be justified by obeying the law” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

law

See how you translated **law** in the previous verse. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

you fell from grace

Here Paul speaks of **grace** as if it were something that a person could fall away from. He means that people who are trying to save themselves by obeying the law do not receive God's **grace**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you have rejected the grace of God” or “God will no longer be gracious to you” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 5:5

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why what Paul stated in the previous verse is true. Use a natural way in your language for indicating a reason. Alternate translation: “This is due to the fact that” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

through the Spirit

Here and throughout this chapter, **the Spirit** refers to the Holy **Spirit**. See how you translated the same use of **Spirit** in 3:2. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

by faith, & the hope of righteousness

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **faith**, **hope**, and **righteousness**, you could express the same ideas in another way. See how you translated **faith** in 2:16 and **righteousness** in 2:21. Alternate translation: “by trusting ... what is hopeful of what it righteous” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

we

Here, **we** refers to Paul and those who trust in Christ instead of the law, so **we** would be exclusive. Your language may require you to mark this form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness

This could mean: (1) **we eagerly wait by faith**. Alternate translation: “we eagerly wait by faith for the hope of righteousness” (2) **righteousness is by faith**. Alternate translation: “we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (See: **Information Structure (p.283)**) (See: **Information Structure (p.283)**)

the hope of righteousness

This could mean: (1) people **hope** for **righteousness**. Alternate translation: “the hope for righteousness” (2) **the hope is righteousness**. Alternate translation: “the hope, that is, righteousness” (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

Galatians 5:6

For

For here indicates that what follows is a reason why what Paul said in the previous verse is true. Use a natural way in your language for indicating a reason. Alternate translation: “This is due to the fact that” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

in Christ Jesus

See how you translated this phrase in [3:26](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

circumcision & uncircumcision & faith & love

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **circumcision**, **uncircumcision**, **faith**, and **love**, you could express the same ideas in another way. See how you translated **faith** in [2:16](#). Alternate translation: “being circumcised ... not being circumcised ... trusting ... loving” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is capable of anything

Here, **anything** refers to being important to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is capable of being important to God” or “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters” (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

faith working through love

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. Alternate translation: “faith working through love is capable of something” or “faith working through love matters” (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

Galatians 5:7

You were running well

Here Paul refers to becoming more spiritually mature as if someone were **running** a race. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “You were making excellent progress in your faith” or “You were doing so well” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Who hindered you, not to be persuaded by truth

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to emphasize what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “You should not have let someone hinder you, not to be persuaded by truth!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

not to be persuaded by truth

This clause provides the expected result of what Paul said in the previous clause. Use a natural form for indicating a result. Alternate translation: “which is resulting in you not being persuaded by truth” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

not to be persuaded by truth

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “so that the truth is not persuading you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

not to be persuaded by truth

Alternate translation: “not to obey the truth”

by truth

See how you translated **truth** in [2:5](#). (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 5:8

This persuasion

Here, **persuasion** refers to some Galatians being persuaded to obey the laws God gave the Jews instead of trusting solely in Jesus to save them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “You being persuaded to stop trusting in the Messiah” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the one calling you

Here, **the one calling you** refers to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “God, who is calling you” (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.312)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.312)**)

Galatians 5:9

A little leaven leavens the whole lump

Here Paul quotes or creates a proverb, which is a short saying about something that is generally true in life. This proverb gives a comparison: just as a small amount of **leaven leavens** a whole **lump** of dough, so a small amount of false teaching can deceive many people in a church. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture.

Alternate translation: "It has been said that a little leaven causes a whole lump of dough to be leavened" (See: **Proverbs (p.314)**) (See: **Proverbs (p.314)**)

A little leaven leavens the whole lump

The word **leaven** refers to a substance that causes fermentation and expansion within a batch of dough or batter. Here, **leavens** refers to the fermentation process and **lump** refers to the batch of dough. If your readers would not be familiar with **leaven**, you could use the name of a substance that they would be familiar with, or you could use a general term. Alternate translation: "A little yeast causes all of the batch of dough to swell up" (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.340)**) (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.340)**)

Galatians 5:10

in the Lord

Here, **in the Lord** indicates the basis or cause for which Paul was **confident in** the Galatian believers, and **the Lord** refers to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. See how you translated the similar expression “in Christ” in 1:22. Alternate translation: “on the basis of us being in union with the Lord Jesus” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

you will think nothing otherwise

Here, **nothing otherwise** refers to **nothing** other than what Paul has told his readers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “you will think nothing other than what I am telling you” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the one troubling you & whoever he may be

Jesus is speaking of several people who were **troubling** the Galatian believers, not just one particular man. Paul states in 1:7 that there were several false teachers causing trouble. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more general expression. Alternate translation: “those troubling you ... whoever they may be” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.267)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.267)**)

will bear the judgment

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “will be judged” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 5:11

brothers

See how you translated the same use of **brothers** in 1:2. Alternate translation: “brothers and sisters” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I still being persecuted

Paul is using a hypothetical situation to help emphasize that he does not **proclaim circumcision**. Use the natural form in your language for expressing a hypothetical situation. Alternate translation: “suppose I still do proclaim circumcision. Then why am I still being persecuted” (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.275)**) (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.275)**)

proclaim circumcision

Here, **proclaim circumcision** refers to telling people that they must be circumcised in order to be saved. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “proclaim the need to be circumcised” or “proclaim that everyone must be circumcised” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

circumcision

See how you translated **circumcision** in 5:6. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

why am I still being persecuted

Paul is not asking for information, but is using the question form here to emphasize what he is saying. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate his words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: “I should not still be persecuted!” (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**) (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.324)**)

why am I still being persecuted? & the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “why are people still persecuting me ... I would have removed the stumbling block of the cross” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

This sentence gives both the result of proclaiming **circumcision** and the reason why someone who proclaimed **circumcision** would not be **persecuted**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “I would not be persecuted because proclaiming circumcision would remove the stumbling block of the cross” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the stumbling block of the cross

Paul is using the possessive form to describe **the stumbling block** that is **the cross**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “the stumbling block, that is, the cross” (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

the stumbling block

Here, **stumbling block** refers to something that offends people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the offense” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

of the cross

Here, **the cross** refers to Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross, which was a very offensive way to die. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “of what Jesus did when he died on the cross” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

Galatians 5:12

will even castrate themselves

This could mean: (1) Paul wished that the false teachers who wanted to circumcise the Galatian believers would cut off their male organs, as stated literally in the ULT. (2) Paul wished that the false teachers would leave the Christian community. Alternate translation: “will even remove themselves from among you” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 5:13

For

For here could indicate: (1) Paul is transitioning back to the topic he introduced in 5:1. Alternate translation: "Indeed," (2) the reason for the harsh words Paul said in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "I wish they would do so because" (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**) (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.239)**)

you have been called to freedom

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "God has called you to freedom" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

freedom, & the freedom

Here, **freedom** implies that Christ sets believers free from being required to obey the laws God gave the Jews. See how you translated the similar expression in 5:1. Alternate translation: "freedom from the law ... that freedom from the law" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

freedom, & freedom

See how you translated **freedom** in 2:4. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

brothers

See how you translated the same use of **brothers** in 1:2. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

an opportunity for the flesh

Here Paul speaks of **the flesh** as if it were a person who could take advantage of **an opportunity**. He is referring to believers thinking they can sin because they do not have to obey the laws God gave the Jews. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "an opportunity to sin" (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

for the flesh

Here Paul uses **flesh** to refer to sinful human nature. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "for your sinful nature" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

rather, through love serve one another

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: "rather than using your freedom as an excuse to sin, through love serve one another" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

through love

Here, **through** indicates the means by which believers should **serve one another**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “by means of love” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

love

See how you translated **love** in [5:6](#). (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 5:14

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why Paul's readers should obey the command he gave in the previous verse. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a reason. Alternate translation: "You must do this for one another because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

all the law has been fulfilled in one command

This could mean: (1) this **one command** sums up **all the law**. Alternate translation: "all the law is summed up in just one command" (2) someone who obeys this **one command** obeys **all the law**. Alternate translation: "by obeying one commandment, you obey the whole law" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

all the law has been fulfilled in one command

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "one command has fulfilled all the law" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

the law

See how you translated **law** in the [2:16](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

You will love your neighbor as yourself

The words **you**, **your**, and **yourself** are singular here because, even though Moses said this to the Israelites as a group, each individual person was supposed to obey this command. So in your translation, use the singular forms of **you**, **your**, and **yourself** in this verse, if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups (p.330)**) (See: **Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups (p.330)**)

You will love

You will love is a statement that Moses uses to give a command. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "You must love" (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.332)**) (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.332)**)

Galatians 5:15

if you are biting and devouring one another, watch out that you might not be consumed by one another

Paul is using a hypothetical situation to teach the Galatians what the results will be if they fight with each other. The result of consuming each other will happen if they fulfill the condition of **biting and devouring one another**. The word “then” is implied before the phrase **watch out**. If it would help your readers, you could supply this word in your translation. Alternate translation: “if you are biting and devouring one another, then watch out that you might not be consumed by one another” (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**) (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.233)**)

if you are biting and devouring one another

Here Paul speaks of the Galatian believers fighting each other as if they were wild animals that attack each other. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: “if you are mistreating and hurting one another” or “if you are acting like wild animals that bite and devour one another” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

you might not be consumed by one another

Here Paul speaks of the Galatian believers fighting each other as if they were wild animals that eat each other. Here **consumed** could mean: (1) the believers themselves would be destroyed. Alternate translation: “you might not be destroyed by one another” (2) the fellowship of Galatian believers would be destroyed. Alternate translation: “your group of believers might not be destroyed by one another” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

you might not be consumed by one another

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “you might not consume one another” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 5:16

walk by the Spirit

Here Paul uses **walk** to refer to how a person lives and behaves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “act by the Spirit” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

by the Spirit

The phrase **by the Spirit** implies being directed or controlled by the Holy **Spirit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “by the direction of the Holy Spirit” or “according to how the Holy Spirit leads” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

certainly not

The phrase **certainly not** translates two negative words in Greek. Paul uses them together to emphasize what he is saying. If your language can use two negatives together for emphasis without them canceling each other to create a positive meaning, it would be appropriate to use that construction here. (See: **Double Negatives (p.250)**) (See: **Double Negatives (p.250)**)

you would certainly not fulfill desires of the flesh

The phrase **you would certainly not fulfill desires** refers to not doing what someone sinfully wants to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you would certainly not do what the flesh desires” (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

desires of the flesh

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **desires**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “what the flesh desires” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

desires of the flesh

Here Paul speaks of **the flesh** as if it were a person who has **desires**. He is referring to what a person wants to do as a result of having a sinful human nature. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. See how this phrase is translated in Romans 13:14. Alternate translation: “what you want to do because of your sinful nature” or “the things you want to do that are sinful” (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

of the flesh

Here, Paul uses the word **flesh** to refer to sinful human nature. See how you translated the phrase **the flesh** in [5:13](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 5:17

For

Here, the word **For** indicates that what follows is the reason why Paul commanded his readers to walk by the Spirit in the previous verse. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a reason. Alternate translation: "I say this to you because" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

the flesh & the flesh

See how you translated the phrase **the flesh** in 5:13 and in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

the flesh desires against the Spirit

The phrase **desires against** implies desiring to do what is **against the Spirit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the flesh desires to do things that are against the Spirit" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the flesh desires

Here, Paul speaks of **the flesh** as if it were a person who **desires**. He is referring to what a person **desires** to do as a result of having a sinful human nature. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "what you want to do because of your sinful nature is" or "the things you want to do because you are sinful are" (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

the Spirit against the flesh

Paul is leaving out a word that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply the word from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "the Spirit desires against the flesh" (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why the **desires of the flesh** and **the Spirit** are against each other. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a reason. Alternate translation: "This is for the reason that" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

these

The pronoun **these** refers to **the flesh** and **the Spirit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "the flesh and the Spirit" (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.312)**) (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.312)**)

so that

Here, **so that** indicates that what follows is the result of what Paul said in the previous clause. Use a natural way in your language for indicating result. Alternate translation: “and as a result,” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

these things that you would desire

This clause refers to the good **things** that Christians want to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “those good things that you would desire to do as Christians” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 5:18

you are led by the Spirit

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the Spirit leads you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

you are not under the law

Paul speaks of **the law** as if it were a ruler **under** whose authority people had to live. He means that Christians are not controlled by the requirements of **the law** or under its authority. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. See how **under the law** is translated in Galatians 3:23 and Romans 6:14. Alternative translation: “the law does not control you” or “you are not under the authority of the law” (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

the law

See how you translated **the law** in [2:16](#). (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**) (See: **Collective Nouns (p.218)**)

Galatians 5:19

the works of the flesh & sexual immorality, impurity, licentiousness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **impurity** you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “behaves impurely” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

the works of the flesh

Here Paul speaks of **the flesh** as if it were a person who has **works**. He is referring to what a person does as a result of having a sinful human nature. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the things people do because of their sinful natures” or “the things people do because they are sinful” (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

of the flesh

See how you translated **flesh** in 5:13 and 5:16. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 5:20

idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, divisions, factions

Alternate translation: "worshiping idols, practicing witchcraft, being hostile, striving with others, being jealous, angrily bursting out, causing people to divide, making factious groups"

Galatians 5:21

envy, drunkenness, drunken celebrations

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **envy**, **drunkenness**, and **drunken celebrations**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: “being envious, being drunk, being drunk while celebrating” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

will not inherit

Here Paul speaks of **the kingdom of God** as if it were property that a child could **inherit** from a parent when that parent dies. Paul uses the word **inherit** here to refer to being able to dwell in **the kingdom of God**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this figure of speech with a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: “will not dwell in” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 5:22

the fruit of the Spirit

Paul is using the possessive form to describe **the fruit** that **the Spirit** gives to believers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the fruit that the Spirit gives” (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

the fruit

Here, **fruit** refers to a result or outcome. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “the product” or “the result” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: “acting lovingly, joyfully, peacefully, patiently, kindly, in a good manner, faithfully” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

peace

Here, **peace** could mean: (1) a peaceful feeling. Alternate translation: “feeling peaceful” (2) a peaceful relationship with other people. Alternate translation: “peace with others” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 5:23

gentleness, {and} self-control

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **gentleness**, and **self-control**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: “acting gently, and controlling oneself” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 5:24

have crucified the flesh

Here Paul speaks of **the flesh** as if it were a person that believers **have crucified**. He means that Christians refuse to live according to their sinful natures. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “refuse to live according to their sinful natures” (See: **Personification (p.306)**) (See: **Personification (p.306)**)

the flesh

See how you translated the same use of **the flesh** in [5:13](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

the passions and the desires

These phrases specifically refer to the **passions** and **desires of the flesh**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “its passion and desires” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

the passions and the desires

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **passions**, and **desires**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: “what it is passionate about and what it desires” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 5:25

If

Paul is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might misunderstand and think that what Paul is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: “Because” (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.228)**) (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.228)**)

we live by the Spirit

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the Spirit causes us to be alive” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

we live

Here, **live** refers to a Christian's spirit being alive, which will result in that person living forever with God in heaven. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “we live spiritually” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

let us also walk by the Spirit

See how you translated **walk by the Spirit** in [5:16](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 5:26

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Galatians 6

Galatians 6 General Notes

Structure and Formatting

This chapter concludes Paul's letter. His final words address some additional issues that concerned him about the Galatian believers.

Brothers

Paul writes the words in this chapter to Christians. He calls them brothers in [verses 1](#) and [\[18\]\(../06/18.md\)](#).

Special Concepts in this Chapter

New Creation

Someone who becomes Christian is a new creation that is united with Christ ([6:15](#); 2 Corinthians 5:17). Christians have been given a new way of living that will result in eternal life. This is more significant than a person's ancestry or attempts to obey the laws God gave the Jews. (See: **born again, born of God, new birth (p.349)**)

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

Flesh

Paul uses the word "flesh" in a variety of ways throughout this letter. In this chapter he frequently uses flesh to refer to sinful human nature. He contrasts flesh with the Spirit in [verse 8](#). However, he also uses flesh to refer to a person's physical body or outward appearance in [verses 12-13](#). (See: [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/flesh\]\]](#) and [\[\[rc:///tw/dict/bible/kt/sin\]\]](#) and **spirit, wind, breath (p.355)**)

Galatians 6:1

Brothers

See how you translated the same use of **Brothers** in 1:2. Alternate translation: “brothers and sisters” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

a man

Here, **a man** does not refer to a particular man, but to any believer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “anyone among you” or “one of you” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.267)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.267)**)

a man is caught in any trespass

This could refer to: (1) a believer discovering that another believer is committing a sin. Alternate translation: “a man is discovered while committing any trespass” (2) a person who is overcome by temptation and sins. Alternate translation: “a man is overwhelmed by temptation and commits any trespass” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

in any trespass

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **trespass**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “trespassing” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

the spiritual ones

Here, **the spiritual ones** refers to spiritually mature believers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “the spiritually mature ones” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

a spirit of gentleness

Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **spirit** that is characterized by **gentleness**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “a gentle spirit” (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

a spirit

Here, **spirit** refers to a person's attitude or emotional state. It does not refer to the Holy Spirit. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “a mental state” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

considering

Alternate translation: “paying careful attention to” or “looking out for”

yourself

Paul uses the singular pronoun **yourself** here to refer to all his Christian readers. If the singular form would not be natural in your language for someone who was speaking to a group of people, you could use the plural form of **yourself** in your translation. Alternate translation: “yourselves” (See: **Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups (p.330)**) (See: **Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups (p.330)**)

lest you also be tempted

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “lest something also tempts you” or “lest the same thing that tempted that person also tempt you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

Galatians 6:2

Carry the burdens of one another

Paul speaks of the spiritual struggles of immature believers as if they were **burdens** that a person could **carry**. He means that mature Christians should patiently help spiritually weak Christians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “help one another overcome spiritual weakness” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

the burdens of one another

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **burdens**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “whatever burdens one another” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

you will fulfill

Here, **fulfill** refers to obeying completely. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “you will completely obey” (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

the law of Christ

Here, **the law of Christ** most likely refers to Christ’s command to love one another in John 13:34, which Paul also refers to in [5:14](#). It does not refer to a set of rules or the laws that God gave the Jews. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “what Christ commands” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 6:3

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why Paul wants his readers to obey what he commanded in the previous verse. Use a natural way in your language for indicating a reason. Alternate translation: “Do this because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

thinks {himself} & he deceives himself

Although the words **himself** and **he** are masculine, Paul is using the words here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different expression. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

to be something

Here, **to be something** refers to someone arrogantly thinking that he is better than other people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “to be better than others” (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

being nothing

Here, **being nothing** refers to someone not being better than other people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “not being better than others” (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

Galatians 6:4

let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason to boast in himself alone and not in someone else

In this verse Paul is addressing his readers in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the second person instead. Alternate translation: "let each one of you examine your own work, and then you will have reason to boast in yourself and not in someone else" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.262)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.262)**)

his & he will have & himself

Although the words **his**, **he**, and **himself** are masculine, Paul is using the words here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different expression. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

his own work, & he will have reason to boast

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **work** and **reason**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: "the things he does himself ... he can reasonably boast" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

in himself & in someone else

Paul uses **himself** and **someone else** as if they were something that a person could **boast** inside of. He means that people **boast** about themselves or others. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternative translation, "about himself ... about someone else" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 6:5

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why Paul wants his readers to obey what he commanded in the previous verse. Use a natural way in your language for indicating a reason. Alternate translation: “Do this because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

will carry his own burden

The phrase **carry his own burden** could mean: (1) people have their own responsibilities and tasks. Alternate translation: “each person must do the work that God has given him” or “each person is responsible for his own work” (2) people are responsible for their own weaknesses and sins. Alternate translation: “each person is responsible for their own sins” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

his own burden

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **burden**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “what burdens him” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 6:6

let the one being taught the word share in all good things with the one teaching

In this verse Paul is addressing his readers in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the second person instead. Alternate translation: "let you who are being taught the word share in all good things with the one teaching you" (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.262)**) (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.262)**)

the one being taught

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "the one whom someone is teaching" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

the word

Here, **the word** refers to what God had said by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "God's words" (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

in all good things

Here, **all good things** is a polite way of referring to material possessions, including money. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different polite way of referring to these things or you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "in all that one possesses" or "in all possessions" (See: **Euphemism (p.256)**) (See: **Euphemism (p.256)**)

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived. God is not mocked

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “Do not deceive yourselves. No one can mock God” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

for

Here, **for** indicates that what follows is a reason why **God is not mocked**. Use a natural way in your language for indicating a reason. Alternate translation: “due to the fact that” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

a man & that he will also reap

Although **man** and **he** are masculine, Paul is using the words here in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: “a person ... that thing the person will also reap” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)

whatever a man may sow, that he will also reap

Here, **sow** refers to doing things that will have consequences, and **reap** represents experiencing those consequences. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: “just as a farmer gathers in the fruit of the plants he grew from seed, so everyone experiences the results of whatever they do” or “everyone receives the results of whatever they have done” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 6:8

sowing to his own flesh, & sowing to the Spirit

Paul continues the metaphor from the previous verse of a farmer **sowing** seeds and harvesting crops. The word **sowing** refers to doing deeds, which will have consequences. Here, **sowing to his own flesh** refers to a person doing sinful actions in order to satisfy his sinful nature, and **sowing to the Spirit** refers to a person doing good actions in order to please the Holy **Spirit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “does things to satisfy his sinful nature ... doing things to please the Holy Spirit” (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.213)**) (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.213)**)

flesh, & flesh

See how you translated the same use of **flesh** in [5:13](#). (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

will reap & will reap

In this verse **reap** represents experiencing the consequences of doing something. See how you translated the same use of **reap** in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

destruction

Here, **destruction** refers to experiencing punishment forever in hell. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “eternal destruction” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

will reap destruction

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **destruction**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: “will be destroyed” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

Galatians 6:9

we should not become discouraged & we will reap

When Paul says **we**, he is speaking of himself and the Galatian believers, so **we** would be inclusive here. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.260)**)

good

See how you translated **good** in 4:18. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

in due time

Alternate translation: "at the proper time"

not becoming weary

Paul is using a statement to give a condition. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural form for a condition. Alternate translation: "if not becoming weary" (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.332)**) (See: **Statements — Other Uses (p.332)**)

we will reap

See how you translated **reap** in 6:7. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 6:10

So then

So then indicates that what follows in this verse is the concluding result of what Paul has said in 6:1–9. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different expression. Alternate translation: “Because all these things are true” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

we have & we should do

When Paul says **we** he is speaking of himself and the Galatian believers, so we would be inclusive here. Your language may require you to mark these forms. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**) (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.260)**)

good

See how you translated **good** in 4:18. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

all

Paul is using the adjective **all** as a noun in order to indicate **all** people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “all people” (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**) (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.298)**)

the ones of the household of the faith

Here, Paul refers to Christians as if they were a **household of the faith**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “those who are Christians” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

of the faith

Here, **the faith** refers to believing in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “which has faith in Jesus” or “which believes in Jesus” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 6:11

See

See here is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation: “Please observe” (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.280)**) (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.280)**)

with my own hand

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. Alternate translation: “with my own hand in the last part of this letter” (2) Paul wrote the whole letter himself. Alternate translation: “with my own hand in this letter” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 6:12

to make a good impression

Paul's readers would have understood that he was referring to making **a good impression** on legalistic Jews who did not believe in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "to make a good impression on the Jews" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

in the flesh

Here, **the flesh** refers to someone's outward physical appearance, specifically the appearance of someone who has been circumcised in order to impress the Jews. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "with regard to physical appearance" (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

so that

Here, **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: "for the purpose that" (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

they might not be persecuted

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The context indicates that the Jews might do the action. Alternate translation: "the Jews might not persecute them" (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

for the cross of Christ Jesus

Here, **the cross** refers to believing in Christ's sacrificial death on **the cross**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "for believing in what Christ Jesus did when he died on the cross" (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

Galatians 6:13

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why what Paul said in the previous verse is true. Use a natural way in your language for indicating a reason. Alternate translation: “This is due to the fact that” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

the ones circumcised & you to be circumcised

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “the ones who have had a person circumcise them ... a person to circumcise you” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

so that

Here, **so that** introduces a purpose clause. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. Alternate translation: “for the purpose that” (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**) (See: **Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship (p.230)**)

in your flesh

See how you translated the same use of **flesh** in the previous verse. (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

Galatians 6:14

may it never be to me to boast

The phrase **may it never be** is an exclamation that communicates a strong desire against doing something. Use an exclamation that is natural in your language for communicating this meaning. Alternate translation: “may I absolutely never boast” or “may I certainly never boast” (See: **Exclamations (p.258)**) (See: **Exclamations (p.258)**)

may it never be to me to boast except

If it would appear in your language that Paul was making a statement here and then contradicting it, you could reword this to avoid using an exception clause. Alternate translation: “may I only ever boast” (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.226)**) (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.226)**)

in the cross

Here, Paul speaks of **the cross** as if it were a location someone could **boast in**. He means that he boasts with reference to **the cross**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “when referring to the cross” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ

Here, **the cross** refers to Christ’s sacrificial death on **the cross**. Paul uses **the cross** here in a slightly different way than he did in 6:12. See how you translated the same use of **the cross** in 5:11. Alternate translation: “what our Lord Jesus Christ did when he died on the cross” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could state this in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: “God crucified the world to me, and me to the world” (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**) (See: **Active or Passive (p.206)**)

the world & to the world

Here, **the world** could refer to: (1) the entire world system, which is hostile to God. This **world** operates according to the elementary principles (4:3) that exist during this present evil age (1:4). Alternate translation: “this world system that opposes God ... to this world system that opposes God” (2) the system of values that people share who do not honor God, which is how John uses **the world** in 1 John 2:15. Alternate translation: “what people value in the world ... to what people value in the world” (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**) (See: **Metonymy (p.296)**)

the world has been crucified to me

Here, Paul speaks of **the world** no longer influencing him as if **the world** were a dead man who had been **crucified**. Just as a dead person cannot directly influence anyone, so the world could not influence Paul. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly or use a simile. Alternate translation: “the world does not influence me” or “it is as if the world were dead to me” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

and I to the world

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the previous clause. Alternate translation: “and I have been crucified to the world” (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

and I to the world

This could mean: (1) the same as the previous clause, but stated in reverse order for emphasis. Alternate translation: “and I am not influenced by the world” (2) the opposite of the previous clause. Alternate translation: “and I do not influence the world” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 6:15

For

For here indicates that what follows is the reason why Paul only boasts “in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,” as stated in the previous verse. Use a natural way in your language for indicating a reason. Alternate translation: “I may boast in the cross because” (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision

Here, **anything** refers to being important to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: “neither circumcision is important to God, nor uncircumcision” (See: **Idiom (p.278)**) (See: **Idiom (p.278)**)

but a new creation

Paul is leaving out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: “but a new creation is something important” (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**) (See: **Ellipsis (p.253)**)

a new creation

Here, **a new creation** refers to the whole process when someone trusts in Jesus and the Holy Spirit gives that person a new life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. See how **new creation** is translated in 2 Corinthians 5:17. Alternate translation: “the Holy Spirit giving someone a new life” (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

Galatians 6:16

will walk

See how you translated the similar use of **walk** in 5:16. (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

in this standard

Here, **this standard** refers to what Paul said in the previous verse, specifically the importance of someone being a new creation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: “as new creations” or “as those to whom the Holy Spirit has given new lives”(See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

peace and mercy upon them and upon the Israel of God

Paul adds a blessing here. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: “may they and the Israel of God experience peace and mercy” (See: **Blessings (p.216)**) (See: **Blessings (p.216)**)

peace and mercy upon them and upon the Israel of God

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **peace** and **mercy**, you could express the ideas in a different way. See how you translated **peace** in 1:3. Alternate translation: “may God make them feel peaceful and may he be merciful to them and to the Israel of God” (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

and upon the Israel of God

This could refer to: (1) Jews who believe in Jesus, in which case **and** functions as it usually does to connect two things. Alternate translation: “and upon the Jewish believers of God” (2) everyone who believes in Jesus, in which case **and** indicates that **them** refers to the same group of people as **the Israel of God**. Alternate translation: “that is, upon God’s people” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

Galatians 6:17

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

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these clauses, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Because I carry in my body the marks of Jesus, from now on let no one cause me trouble" (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**) (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.235)**)

let no one cause me trouble

Here, **trouble** refers to the distress that some of the Galatian Christians caused for Paul because of the problems that he wrote about in this letter. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: "let no one trouble me with regard to these issues" (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

let no one cause me trouble

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **trouble**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "let no one trouble me" (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

I carry in my body the marks of Jesus

Here, Paul speaks about **the marks** on his **body** as if they were objects that he carried around. He means that **the marks** remained on his **body** everywhere he went. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the marks of Jesus are always on my body" (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**) (See: **Metaphor (p.290)**)

the marks of Jesus

Here, **the marks of Jesus** refers to the scars on Paul's body that were made by people beating him because he taught about **Jesus**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "the scars I received because I taught the truth about Jesus" (See: **Possession (p.308)**) (See: **Possession (p.308)**)

Galatians 6:18

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ {be} with your spirit

As was customary in his culture, Paul closes his letter with a blessing for the Galatian believers. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: “May your spirit experience kindness from our Lord Jesus Christ” or “I pray that your spirit will have grace from our Lord Jesus Christ” (See: **Blessings (p. 216)**) (See: **Blessings (p.216)**)

The grace

See how you translated **grace** in 1:3. (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**) (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.204)**)

your spirit

Jesus is speaking of the spirits of his readers in general, not of one particular **spirit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural phrase. Alternate translation: “your spirits” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.267)**) (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.267)**)

your spirit

Here, **spirit** could refer to: (1) the whole person. Alternative translation: “you” (2) the inner person, which is what a person thinks and feels. Alternative translation: “your inner being” (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**) (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.209)**)

brothers

See how you translated the same use of **brothers** in 1:2. Alternate translation: “brothers and sisters” (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**) (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.343)**)



unfoldingWord® Translation Academy

Version 77

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:

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

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**.

"

Referenced in: Galatians 1:3; Galatians 1:4; Galatians 1:5; Galatians 1:6; Galatians 1:7; Galatians 1:8; Galatians 1:12; Galatians 1:13; Galatians 1:15; Galatians 1:23; Galatians 2:2; Galatians 2:4; Galatians 2:5; Galatians 2:9; Galatians 2:13; Galatians 2:14; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 2:17; Galatians 2:18; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 2:21; Galatians 3:2; Galatians 3:6; Galatians 3:7; Galatians 3:8; Galatians 3:10; Galatians 3:11; Galatians 3:12; Galatians 3:13; Galatians 3:14; Galatians 3:19; Galatians 3:22; Galatians 3:23; Galatians 3:24; Galatians 3:25; Galatians 3:26; Galatians 4:13; Galatians 4:14; Galatians 4:15; Galatians 4:16; Galatians 4:24; Galatians 4:25; Galatians 5:1; Galatians 5:5; Galatians 5:6; Galatians 5:7; Galatians 5:10; Galatians 5:11; Galatians 5:13; Galatians 5:16; Galatians 5:19; Galatians 5:21; Galatians 5:22; Galatians 5:23; Galatians 5:24; Galatians 6:1; Galatians 6:2; Galatians 6:4; Galatians 6:5; Galatians 6:8; Galatians 6:16; Galatians 6:17; Galatians 6:18

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:

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

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 \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Word Order \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: Galatians 1:8; Galatians 1:9; Galatians 1:11; Galatians 1:12; Galatians 1:22; Galatians 2:3; Galatians 2:7; Galatians 2:9; Galatians 2:13; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 2:17; Galatians 2:19; Galatians 3:1; Galatians 3:6; Galatians 3:8; Galatians 3:9; Galatians 3:10; Galatians 3:11; Galatians 3:15; Galatians 3:17; Galatians 3:19; Galatians 3:21; Galatians 3:22; Galatians 3:23; Galatians 3:24; Galatians 3:27; Galatians 4:2; Galatians 4:3; Galatians 4:5; Galatians 4:9; Galatians 4:19; Galatians 4:22; Galatians 4:24; Galatians 4:27; Galatians 5:1; Galatians 5:2; Galatians 5:3; Galatians 5:4; Galatians 5:7; Galatians 5:11; Galatians 5:13; Galatians 5:14; Galatians 5:15; Galatians 5:18; Galatians 5:25; Galatians 6:1; Galatians 6:6; Galatians 6:7; Galatians 6:12; Galatians 6:13; Galatians 6:14

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:

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: Galatians 1 General Notes; Galatians 1:1; Galatians 1:2; Galatians 1:6; Galatians 1:8; Galatians 1:9; Galatians 1:10; Galatians 1:12; Galatians 1:13; Galatians 1:14; Galatians 1:15; Galatians 1:16; Galatians 1:20; Galatians 1:23; Galatians 2:2; Galatians 2:4; Galatians 2:5; Galatians 2:6; Galatians 2:7; Galatians 2:8; Galatians 2:10; Galatians 2:11; Galatians 2:12; Galatians 2:13; Galatians 2:15; Galatians 2:17; Galatians 2:19; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 2:21; Galatians 3:5; Galatians 3:6; Galatians 3:7; Galatians 3:8; Galatians 3:10; Galatians 3:11; Galatians 3:12; Galatians 3:13; Galatians 3:14; Galatians 3:15; Galatians 3:16; Galatians 3:18; Galatians 3:19; Galatians 3:20; Galatians 3:21; Galatians 3:22; Galatians 3:23; Galatians 3:24; Galatians 3:25; Galatians 3:26; Galatians 3:27; Galatians 3:28; Galatians 3:29; Galatians 4:2; Galatians 4:3; Galatians 4:4; Galatians 4:5; Galatians 4:6; Galatians 4:7; Galatians 4:8; Galatians 4:9; Galatians 4:10; Galatians 4:11; Galatians 4:12; Galatians 4:14; Galatians 4:17; Galatians 4:18; Galatians 4:20; Galatians 4:21; Galatians 4:22; Galatians 4:23; Galatians 4:24; Galatians 4:25; Galatians 4:26; Galatians 4:27; Galatians 4:29; Galatians 4:30; Galatians 5:1; Galatians 5:2; Galatians 5:3; Galatians 5:4; Galatians

5:5; Galatians 5:8; Galatians 5:10; Galatians 5:11; Galatians 5:13; Galatians 5:16; Galatians 5:17; Galatians 5:22;
Galatians 5:24; Galatians 5:25; Galatians 6:1; Galatians 6:2; Galatians 6:8; Galatians 6:9; Galatians 6:10; Galatians
6:11; Galatians 6:12; Galatians 6:16; Galatians 6:17; Galatians 6:18

Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

An **extended metaphor** is an explicit metaphor that uses multiple images and multiple ideas at the same time. This is in contrast to a **simple metaphor**, which uses only a single Image and a single Idea. The difference between an extended metaphor and a **complex metaphor** is that an extended metaphor is explicitly stated by a writer/speaker, but a complex metaphor is not.

This page answers the question: *What is an extended metaphor?*

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

Metaphor ([UTA PDF](#))

Simile ([UTA PDF](#))

Explanation of an Extended Metaphor

When using a metaphor, a writer/speaker uses a physical Image in order to express an abstract Idea about some immediate Topic, with at least one point of comparison between the Topic and the Image. In an extended metaphor, the writer/speaker explicitly states the Topic, and then describes multiple images and communicates multiple ideas.

In Isaiah 5:1b-7, the prophet Isaiah uses a vineyard (the **Image**) to express God's disappointment (the **Idea**) with the nation of Israel (the **Topic**) for their unfaithfulness to God and his covenant with them as his people. Farmers care for their gardens, and a farmer would feel disappointed if his vineyard produced bad fruit. If a vineyard produced only bad fruit for a long enough time, the farmer would eventually stop caring for it. We call this an extended metaphor because the prophet describes in detail multiple images relating to a vineyard as well as multiple aspects of God's disappointment.

1b My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill. 2 He **spaded it, removed the stones, and planted it** with an excellent kind of vine. He **built a tower** in the middle of it, and also **built a winepress**. He **waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced wild grapes**. 3 So now, inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah; judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more could have been done for my vineyard, that I have not done for it? **When I looked for it to produce grapes, why did it produce wild grapes?** 5 Now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will remove the hedge; I will turn it into a pasture; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled down. 6 I will lay it waste, and it will not be pruned nor hoed. Instead, briars and thorns will spring up. I will also command the clouds not to rain on it. 7 For **the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel**, and the man of Judah his pleasant planting; **he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help**. (Isa 5:1b-7 ULT)

Other Examples From the Bible

In Psalm 23, the psalmist uses the physical **Image** of a shepherd to describe the way that God (the **Topic**) shows great concern and care (the **Idea**) for his people. The psalmist describes multiple aspects of what shepherds do for sheep (leads them to pasture and to water, protects them, etc.). The psalmist also describes multiple aspects of how God takes care of him (gives him life, righteousness, comfort, etc.). Shepherds give sheep what they need, take them to safe places, rescue them, guide them, and protect them. What God does for his people is like these actions.

1 Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing. 2 He **makes me** to lie down in green pastures; he **leads me** beside tranquil water. 3 He **brings back** my life; he **guides me** along right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through a valley of darkest shadow, I will not fear harm since you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me. (Psalm 23:1-4 ULT)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not realize that the images represent other things.
- People may not be familiar with the things that are used as images.
- Extended metaphors are often so profound that it would be impossible for a translator to show all of the meaning generated by the metaphor.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of the extended metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning more clear to the target audience than it was to the original audience.
- When someone uses an extended metaphor, the images are an important part of what he is trying to say.
- If the target audience is not familiar with some of the images, you will need to find some way of helping them understand the images so that they can understand the whole extended metaphor.

Translation Strategies

Consider using the same extended metaphor if your readers will understand it in the same way the original readers would have understood it. If not, here are some other strategies:

- (1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate the metaphor as a simile by using words such as “like” or “as.” It may be enough to do this in just the first sentence or two.
- (2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.
- (3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate the metaphor as a simile by using words such as “like” or “as.” It may be enough to do this in just the first sentence or two. See Psalm 23:1-2 as an example:

Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing. He makes **me** to lie down in green pastures; **he leads me** beside tranquil water. (ULT)

Can be translated as:

“Yahweh is **like** a shepherd to me, so I will lack nothing. **Like** a shepherd who makes his sheep lie down in green pastures and leads them by peaceful waters, Yahweh helps me to rest peacefully.”

- (2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.

My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill. He **spaded** it, removed the stones, and planted it with **an excellent kind of vine**. He built a **tower** in the middle of it, and also built a **winepress**. He waited for it to produce grapes, but it only produced **wild grapes**. (Isaiah 5:1b-2 ULT)

May be translated as:

My well beloved had a **grapevine garden** on a very fertile hill. He **dug up the ground** and removed the stones, and planted it with **the best grapevines**. He built a **watchtower** in the middle of it, and also built a **tank where he could crush the juice out of the grapes**. He

waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced **wild grapes that were not good for making wine**.

(3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing. (Psalm 23:1 ULT)

“Yahweh **cares for me** like a shepherd that cares for his sheep, so I will lack nothing.”

For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts **is** the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant planting; he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help. (Isaiah 5:7 ULT)

Can be translated as:

For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts **represents** the house of Israel, and the men of Judah **are like** his pleasant planting; he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

or as:

So as a farmer stops caring for a grapevine garden that produces bad fruit, Yahweh will stop protecting Israel and Judah, **because they do not do what is right**. He waited for justice, but instead, there was killing; for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 6:8](#)

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:

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Poetry ([UTA PDF](#))

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."

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:3](#); [Galatians 6:16](#); [Galatians 6:18](#)

Collective Nouns

Description

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

A collective noun is a singular noun that refers to a group of something. Examples: a **family**, **clan**, or **tribe** is a group of people who are related to each other; a **flock** is a group of birds or sheep; a **fleet** is a group of ships; and an **army** is a group of soldiers.

Many collective nouns are used exclusively as a singular replacement for a group as in the examples above. Frequently in the Bible the name of an ancestor is used, through a process of metonymy, as a collective noun referencing the group of his descendants. In the Bible, sometimes the singular noun will take a singular verb form, other times it will take a plural verb form. This may depend on how the author is thinking about the group, or whether the action is being done as a group or as individuals.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

There are several issues that require care when translating collective nouns. Further care is needed because the language you are translating into may not use collective nouns in the same way as the language you are translating from. Issues include:

The source language may have a collective noun for a group that the target language does not and vice-versa. You may have to translate a collective noun with a plural noun in your language, or you may need to translate a plural noun with a collective noun in your language.

Subject-verb agreement. Different languages or dialects may have different rules about using singular or plural verbs with collective nouns. Examples (from Wikipedia):

a singular noun with a singular verb: The team *is* in the dressing room.

a singular noun with a plural verb which is correct in British, but not American, English: The team *are* fighting among themselves. The team *have* finished the project.

Pronoun agreement. Similar to the previous, care needs to be taken to use the correct pronoun plurality and possibly gender or noun class to agree with the number/gender/class of the noun used. See the biblical examples below.

Clarity of referent. Especially if there is a mismatch in your translation between the verb and noun or pronoun concerning any of the factors above, readers may be confused about who or what is being referenced.

Examples from the Bible

And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

The word in bold is written in singular form in both Hebrew and English, but it refers to a group of warriors that fight together.

and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

The word in bold is singular and refers to a group of sheep.

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

Note in this example that the noun is singular but the pronoun is plural. This may or may not be allowed or natural in your language.

Do not let **your heart** be troubled. **You** believe in God; believe also in me. (John 14:1 ULT)

In this verse, the words translated “your” and “you” are plural, referring to many people. The word “heart” is singular in form, but it refers to all of their hearts as a group.

And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

The word **hair** is singular, but it refers to many hairs, not just one.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

Here, “Israel” is singular, but means “the Israelites” by metonymy.

Translation Strategies

If your language has a collective (singular) noun that refers to the same group as referenced by the collective noun in the source text, then translate the word using that term. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

- (1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.
- (2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.
- (3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.
- (4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the Israelites** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the Israelites** go.”

And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

And he shall take the **hairs** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **them** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

- (2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.

And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

And Joab and all the **army men who were** with him arrived

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **people of the crowd were** coming to him, and he was teaching **them**.

- (3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.

and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

and though the **group of sheep** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls.

And Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go." (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the people of Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the people of Israel** go."

(4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Now this John had his clothing from the **hairs** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist (Matthew 3:4a ULT)

Now this John had his clothing from the **hair** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that {is} in **the heavens** above, or that {is} in the earth beneath, or that {is} in **the waters** under the earth. (Deuteronomy 5:8 ULT)

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that is in **heaven** above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in **the water** under the earth.

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:14](#); [Galatians 2 General Notes](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [Galatians 2:19](#); [Galatians 2:21](#); [Galatians 3 General Notes](#); [Galatians 3:2](#); [Galatians 3:5](#); [Galatians 3:10](#); [Galatians 3:11](#); [Galatians 3:12](#); [Galatians 3:13](#); [Galatians 3:17](#); [Galatians 3:18](#); [Galatians 4 General Notes](#); [Galatians 5 General Notes](#); [Galatians 5:3](#); [Galatians 5:4](#); [Galatians 5:14](#); [Galatians 5:18](#)

Connect — Background Information

Time Relationship

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate clauses that give background information?*

Background Clause

Description

A background clause is one that describes something that is ongoing. Then, in the same sentence, another clause indicates an event that begins to happen during that time. These events are also simultaneous events, but they have the further relationship of background event and main event because the event that is already happening serves as the background for the other event, the one that is in focus. The background event simply provides the time frame or other context for the main event or events.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate a shift in time in different ways. You (the translator) need to understand how these shifts in time are indicated in the original languages in order to communicate them clearly in your own language. Background clauses often indicate a time that began long before the event that is in focus. Translators need to understand how both the source language and the target language communicate background events. Some English words that indicate background events are “now,” “when,” “while,” and “during.” Those words can also indicate simultaneous events. To tell the difference, ask yourself if all of the events seem to be equal in importance and started at about the same time. If so, they are probably simultaneous events. But if an event(s) is ongoing and another event(s) just started, then the ongoing event(s) is probably background to the other event(s). Some common phrases that indicate background events are “in those days” and “at that time.”

Examples From OBS and the Bible

When Solomon was old, he also worshiped their gods. (OBS Story 18 Frame 3)

Solomon began to worship foreign gods at a time when he was old. Being old is the background event. Worshiping other gods is the main event.

And his parents went **every year** to Jerusalem to the Feast of the Passover. And when he was 12 years old, they went up according to the custom of the feast. (Luke 2:41-42 ULT)

The first event—going to Jerusalem—is ongoing and started long ago. We know this because of the words “every year.” Going to Jerusalem is the background event. Then an event begins that started during the time “when he was twelve years old.” So the main event is the specific time Jesus and his family traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival **when he was twelve years old**.

And it came about that, **while** they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth. (Luke 2:6 ULT)

Being in Bethlehem is the background event. The birth of the baby is the main event.

And in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—**while** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **during** the high priesthood of

Annas and Caiaphas—the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness.
(Luke 3:1-2 ULT)

This example begins with five background clauses (marked by commas), signalled as background by the words “while” and “during.” Then the main event happens: “the word of God came to John.”

Translation Strategies

If the way that the Background Clauses are marked is also clear in your language, then translate the Background Clauses as they are.

- (1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that what follows is a Background Clause, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.
- (2) If your language marks Background Clauses in a different way than using connecting words (such as by using different verb forms), then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

And in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—**while** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **during** the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness.
(Luke 3:1-2 ULT)

- (1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that what follows is a background clause, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.

It happened during the time that Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, **and during the time that** Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, **and during the time that** his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, **and during the time that** Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **and also during the time that** Annas and Caiaphas were high priests—**that** the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

- (2) If your language marks background clauses in a different way than using connecting words, such as with different verb forms, then use that way.

Pontius Pilate **was governing** Judea, and Herod **was ruling over** Galilee, and his brother Philip **was ruling over** the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias **was ruling over** Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas **were being** high priests—the word of God **came** to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

Example of Differences in Time Relationship Connecting Words:

Category	Example
Background setting	Yahweh's word was rare in those days ;
Background repeated	there was no frequent prophetic vision.
Introduction of main event	At that time, when Eli
Background	whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see well,
Simultaneous background	was lying down in his own bed.
Simultaneous background	The lamp of God had not yet gone out,
Simultaneous background	and Samuel was lying down to sleep in the temple of Yahweh,
Simultaneous background	where the ark of God was.
Main event	Yahweh called to Samuel,
Sequential event	who said, "Here I am." (1 Sam 3:1-4 ULT)

In the above example, the first two lines talk about a condition that was going on for a long time. This is the general, long-term background. We know this from the phrase "in those days." After the introduction of the main event ("At that time,"), there are several lines of simultaneous background. The first one is introduced by "when," and then three more follow, with the last connected by "and." The background clause introduced by "where" explains a little more about the background clause before it. Then the main event happens, followed by more events. Translators will need to think about the best way to show these relationships in their language.

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 2:2](#); [Galatians 4:13](#)

Connect — Contrast Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate a contrast relationship?*

Contrast Relationship

Description

A contrast relationship is a logical relationship in which one event or item is in contrast or opposition to another.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, many events did not happen as the people involved intended or expected them to happen. Sometimes people acted in ways that were not expected, whether good or bad. Often it was God at work, changing the events. These events were often pivotal. It is important that translators understand and communicate these contrasts. In English, contrast relationships are often indicated by the words “but,” “although,” “even though,” “though,” “yet,” or “however.”

Examples From OBS and the Bible

You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, **but** God used the evil for good! (Story 8 Frame 12 OBS)

Joseph’s brothers’ evil plan to sell Joseph is contrasted with God’s good plan to save many people. The word “but” marks the contrast.

For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)

Jesus contrasts the proud way that human leaders behave with the humble way that he behaves. The contrast is marked by the word “yet.”

The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)

It was unexpected that the Israelites, who had been slaves in Egypt, would be able to conquer and lay claim to the promised land.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses contrast relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.
- (2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.
- (3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.

For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)

For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Unlike that person**, I am among you as one who serves.

(2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.

The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)

The hill country will also be yours. It is a forest, **but** you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders. They have chariots of iron, and they are strong, **but** you will drive out the Canaanites.

(3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

{David} found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **However**, Solomon built the house for him. **But** the Most High does not live in houses made with hands. (Acts 7:46-48a ULT)

[David] found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **But** it was, Solomon, **not David**, who built the house for God. **Even though Solomon built him a house**, the Most High does not live in houses made with hands.

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:1](#); [Galatians 1:12](#); [Galatians 1:15](#); [Galatians 1:17](#); [Galatians 1:23](#); [Galatians 2:3](#); [Galatians 2:6](#); [Galatians 2:7](#); [Galatians 2:11](#); [Galatians 2:12](#); [Galatians 2:14](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [Galatians 3:12](#); [Galatians 3:18](#); [Galatians 3:20](#); [Galatians 3:22](#); [Galatians 3:25](#); [Galatians 4:2](#); [Galatians 4:4](#); [Galatians 4:7](#); [Galatians 4:8](#); [Galatians 4:9](#); [Galatians 4:17](#); [Galatians 4:23](#); [Galatians 4:26](#); [Galatians 4:31](#)

Connect — Exception Clauses

Exceptional Relationship

This page answers the question: *How can I translate exception clauses?*

Description

Exceptional relationship connectors exclude one or more items or people from a group.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

English indicates exceptional relationships by first describing a group (Part 1) and then stating what is not in that group by using words like “except,” “but not,” “other than,” “besides,” “unless,” “however ... not,” and “only” (Part 2). Some languages do not indicate in this way that one or more items or people are excluded from a group. Instead, they have other ways of doing this. In some languages this type of construction does not make sense because the exception in Part 2 seems to contradict the statement in Part 1. Translators need to understand who (or what) is in the group and who (or what) is excluded in order to be able to accurately communicate this in their language.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4b ULT)

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not** a man escaped **except for** 400 young men, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

The man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob said, “I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me.” (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If the way that Exceptional Clauses are marked in the source language is also clear in your language, then translate the Exceptional Clauses in the same way.

- (1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”
- (2) Reverse the order of the clauses so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

Examples of Translation Strategy Applied

- (1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not a man escaped except for 400 young men**, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

- Part 1: (**Not** a man escaped)
- Part 2: (**except for** 400 young men)

David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Only** 400 young men escaped; they rode on camels and fled.

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4 ULT)

But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for **you are first in line to redeem it {only you can redeem it}**, and I am after you.

The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." Jacob said, "I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me." (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

The man said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." Jacob said, "I will let you go **only if** you bless me."

(2) Reverse the order of the clauses, so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)

God told Adam that he could **not** eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but he could eat from **any other** tree in the garden.

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:7](#); [Galatians 1:19](#); [Galatians 2:10](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [Galatians 6:14](#)

Connect — Factual Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate factual conditions?*

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words, “if ... then.” Often, however, the word “then” is not stated.

Factual Conditions

Description

A Factual Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true in the speaker’s mind. In English, a sentence containing a Factual Condition can use the words “even though,” “since,” or “this being the case” to indicate that it is a factual condition and not a hypothetical condition.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not state something as a condition if it is certain or true. Translators from these languages may misunderstand the original languages and think that the condition is uncertain. This would lead to mistakes in their translations. Even if the translators understand that the condition is certain or true, the readers may misunderstand it. In this case, it would be best to translate it as a statement of fact rather than as a conditional statement.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

“**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!” (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you keep changing your mind? **If Yahweh is God**, follow him. But if Baal is God, then follow him.” Yet the people did not answer him a word. (1 Kings 18:21 ULT)

This sentence has the same construction as a hypothetical condition. The condition is “if Yahweh is God.” If that is true, then the Israelites should worship Yahweh. But the prophet Elijah does not question whether or not Yahweh is God. In fact, he is so certain that Yahweh is God that later in the passage he pours water all over his sacrifice. He is confident that God is real and that he will burn even an offering that is completely wet. Over and over again, the prophets taught that Yahweh is God, so the people should worship him. The people did not worship Yahweh, however, even though He is God. By putting the statement or instruction into the form of a Factual Condition, Elijah is trying to get the Israelites to understand more clearly what they should do.

“A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If I**, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If I** am a master, where is the reverence for me?” says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

Yahweh has said that he is a father and a master to Israel, so even though this sounds like a hypothetical condition because it begins with “if,” it is not hypothetical. This verse begins with the proverb that a son honors his father. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh. The other proverb in the verse says that a servant honors his master. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh, so it seems that he is not their master. But Yahweh is the master. Yahweh uses the form of a hypothetical condition to demonstrate that the Israelites are wrong. The second part of the condition that should occur naturally is not happening, even though the conditional statement is true.

Translation Strategies

If using the form of a hypothetical condition is confusing or would make the reader think that the speaker doubts what he is saying in the first part of the sentence, then use a statement instead. Words such as “since” or “you know that ...” or “it is true that ...” can be helpful to make the meaning clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

“**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!” (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

“**It is true that** Yahweh is God, so worship him!”

“A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?” says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

“A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **Since** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **Since** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?”

”

Referenced in: [Galatians 2:14](#); [Galatians 2:17](#); [Galatians 4:7](#); [Galatians 5:25](#)

Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate a goal (purpose) relationship?*

Goal (or Purpose) Relationship

Description

A Goal Relationship is a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first event. In order for something to be a goal relationship, someone must do the first event with the intention that it will cause the second event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, the goal or purpose may be stated either first or second. But in some languages, the goal or purpose must always occur in the same position (either first or second) in order for that logical relationship to be understood. You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between the two parts and communicate those accurately in your language. This may require changing the order of the two events. It may also require specific words to indicate that one is the goal or purpose of the other. Words commonly used to indicate a goal relationship in English are “in order to,” “in order that” or “so that.” It is important that the translator recognize the words that signal a goal relationship and translate that relationship in a natural way.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

She became angry and falsely accused Joseph **so that he was arrested and sent to prison.**
(Story 8 Frame 5 OBS)

The goal or purpose of the woman’s false accusation was to get Joseph arrested and sent to prison.

Meanwhile Gideon, his son, was threshing out wheat at the winepress **in order to hide from the presence of Midian.** (Judges 6:11b ULT)

Here the prepositional phrase begins with “in order to.”

Now if I have found favor in your eyes, show me your ways **so that I may know you and continue to find favor in your eyes.** Remember that this nation is your people. (Exodus 33:13 ULT)

Moses wants God to show him God’s ways for the goal or purpose of Moses knowing God and continuing to find favor with God.

Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean,** and do not rebuke her! (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

The goal or purpose of Boaz instructing the men to pull out the grain from their bundles and leave it was for Ruth to gather (glean) it.

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened,** which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULT)

The purpose of going to Bethlehem was to see the thing that had happened. Here the purpose is not marked and might be misunderstood.

“... if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17b ULT)

The goal of keeping the commandments is to enter into life.

Do not turn from it to the right or to the left **so that you may be wise** in everything in which you walk. (Joshua 1:7c ULT)

The purpose of not turning away from the instructions that Moses gave to the Israelites was so that they would be wise.

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.’ So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

The purpose of the vine growers killing the heir was so they could take his inheritance. They state both events as a plan, joining them only with “and.” Then the word “so” marks the reporting of the first event, but the second event (the goal or purpose) is not stated.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses Goal or Purpose relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the construction of the Goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.
- (2) If the order of the statements makes the Goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the construction of the goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.

“Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her!” (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

“Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **so that she can glean it**, and do not rebuke her!”

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULT)

The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem **so that we can see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us.”

- (2) If the order of the statements makes the goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

“... if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17b ULT)

“... keep the commandments if you want **to enter into life**.” or: “... keep the commandments **so that you can enter into life**.”

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.’ So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

(1) and (2)

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance.**' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **so that we can take over his inheritance.**' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him **so that they could take over his inheritance.**

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Referenced in: [Galatians 1:4](#); [Galatians 1:16](#); [Galatians 2:4](#); [Galatians 2:5](#); [Galatians 2:9](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [Galatians 2:19](#); [Galatians 3:14](#); [Galatians 3:19](#); [Galatians 3:22](#); [Galatians 3:23](#); [Galatians 3:24](#); [Galatians 4:5](#); [Galatians 4:17](#); [Galatians 5:1](#); [Galatians 6:12](#); [Galatians 6:13](#)

Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate hypothetical conditions?*

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words “if ... then.” Often, however, the word “then” is not stated.

Hypothetical Condition

Description

A Hypothetical Condition is a condition in which the second event (the “then” clause) will only take place if the first event (the “if” clause) takes place or is fulfilled in some way. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

It is important that translators understand whether or not something is a Hypothetical Condition so that they translate it in the correct way. For example, some of God’s promises to Israel were conditional, based on whether or not Israel obeyed God. However, many of God’s promises to Israel were not conditional; God would keep these promises whether or not the Israelites obeyed. It is important that you (the translator) know the difference between these two types of promises and communicate each one accurately in your own language. Also, sometimes conditions are stated in an order different than the order in which they would happen. If the target language would state the clauses in a different order, then you will need to make that adjustment.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

There are two hypothetical conditions in this frame. In both of these conditions, the first event (the “if clause”) is stated after the “then” clause. If this is unnatural or confusing, the clauses can be restated in the more natural order. The first hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites obeyed God, then God would bless and protect them. The second hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites did not obey God, then God would punish them.

If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? (Genesis 4:7a ULT)

If Cain does what is right, then he will be accepted. The only way for Cain to be accepted is by doing what is right.

... **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. (Acts 5:38b-39aULT)

There are two hypothetical conditions here: (1) If it is true that this plan is of men, then it will be overthrown; (2) If it is true that this plan is of God, then it cannot be overthrown.

Translation Strategies

- (1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.
- (2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

God promised to bless the people and protect them **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

If the people obeyed these laws, God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, God said that he would punish them.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

If the people obeyed these laws, **then** God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, **then** God said that he would punish them.

... **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; (Acts 5:38b-39a ULT)

... **if** this plan or this work is of men, **then** it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, **then** you will not be able to overthrow them;

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Referenced in: [Galatians 1:8](#); [Galatians 1:9](#); [Galatians 1:10](#); [Galatians 2:21](#); [Galatians 3:21](#); [Galatians 3:29](#); [Galatians 5:15](#)

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the reason-result relationship?*

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

A reason-and-result relationship is a logical relationship in which one event is the **reason** or cause for another event. The second event, then, is the **result** of the first event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

A reason-and-result relationship can look forward — “I did Y because I wanted X to happen.” But usually it is looking backward — “X happened, and so I did Y.” Also, it is possible to state the reason either before or after the result. Many languages have a preferred order for the reason and the result, and it will be confusing for the reader if they are in the opposite order. Common words used to indicate a reason-and-result relationship in English are “because,” “so,” “therefore,” and “for.” Some of these words can also be used to indicate a goal relationship, so translators need to be aware of the difference between a goal relationship and a reason-and-result relationship. It is necessary for translators to understand how the two events are connected, and then communicate them clearly in their language.

If the reason and result are stated in different verses, it is still possible to put them in a different order. If you change the order of the verses, then put the verse numbers together at the beginning of the group of verses that were rearranged like this: 1-2. This is called a [Verse Bridge](#).

Examples From OBS and the Bible

The Jews were amazed, **because** Saul had tried to kill believers, and now he believed in Jesus!
(Story 46 Frame 6 OBS)

The **reason** is the change in Saul — that he had tried to kill people who believed in Jesus, and now he himself believed in Jesus. The **result** is that the Jews were amazed. “Because” connects the two ideas and indicates that what follows it is a reason.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves.
(Matthew 8:24a ULT)

The **reason** is the great storm, and the **result** is that the boat was covered with the waves. The two events are connected by “so that.” Notice that the term “so that” often indicates a goal relationship, but here the relationship is reason-and-result. This is because the sea cannot think and therefore does not have a goal.

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

The **result** is that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The **reason** is because he rested on the seventh day from his work.

“Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20b ULT)

The **result** is that the poor are blessed. The **reason** is that the kingdom of God is theirs.

But he raised up in their place their sons that Joshua circumcised, being uncircumcised, **because** they had not been circumcised on the way. (Joshua 5:7 ULT)

The **result** is that Joshua circumcised the boys and men who had been born in the wilderness. The **reason** was that they had not been circumcised while they were journeying.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses reason-and-result relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

- (1) If the order of the clauses is confusing for the reader, then change the order.
- (2) If the relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a more clear connecting word.
- (3) If it is more clear to put a connecting word in the clause that does not have one, then do so.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

- (1) God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done in his creation. **That is why** he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 ULT)

- (1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.
- (2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.
- (3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

- (1) Behold, the boat was covered with the waves **because** a great storm arose on the sea.
- (2) Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **with the result that** the boat was covered with the waves.
- (3) Behold, **because** a great storm arose on the sea, the boat was covered with the waves.

Since he was not able to find out anything for certain because of the noise, he ordered that he be brought into the fortress. (Acts 21:34b ULT)

- (1) The captain ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress, **because** he could not tell anything because of all the noise.
- (2) **Because** the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.
- (3) The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, **so** he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

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Referenced in: [Galatians 1:24](#); [Galatians 2:11](#); [Galatians 2:12](#); [Galatians 2:13](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [Galatians 3:17](#); [Galatians 3:24](#); [Galatians 3:28](#); [Galatians 4:6](#); [Galatians 4:7](#); [Galatians 4:12](#); [Galatians 4:13](#); [Galatians 4:16](#); [Galatians 4:20](#); [Galatians 4:27](#); [Galatians 5:5](#); [Galatians 5:6](#); [Galatians 5:7](#); [Galatians 5:14](#); [Galatians 5:17](#); [Galatians 6:3](#); [Galatians 6:5](#); [Galatians 6:7](#); [Galatians 6:10](#); [Galatians 6:13](#); [Galatians 6:15](#); [Galatians 6:17](#)

Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

Time Relationships

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate clauses with a sequential time relationship?*

Sequential Clause

Description

A sequential clause is a time relation that connects two events in which one happens and then the other happens.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate sequences of events in different ways; some use ordering, some use connecting words, some even use relative tense (Relative tense is a tense that refers to a time in relation to a reference point in the context.) Connecting words that may indicate sequence are words such as “then,” “later,” “after,” “afterward,” “before,” “first,” and “when.” Translators need to be certain that they communicate the order of the events in a way that is natural in their language. This may require ordering clauses differently than in the original languages.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

When Joseph came to his brothers, they kidnapped him and sold him to some slave traders.
(OBS Story 8 Frame 2)

First Joseph came to his brothers, and then they kidnapped and sold him. We know this because of the connecting word “**when**.” The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

It was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but **after** I ate it, my stomach became bitter. (Revelation 10:10b ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs first, and the event of the last clause occurs later. We know this because of the connecting word “**after**.” The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs after the event of the second clause. First the land they dread will be desolate, and then the child will know to refuse evil and choose good. We know this because of the connecting word “**before**.” However, stating the clauses in this order may communicate the wrong order of events in your language. The translator may have to change the order so that the clauses come in the order that they happen. Or it may be possible to keep the order of the original language text and mark the ordering of sequence so that it is clear to the readers. You (the translator) need to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)

Here the general connector “**and**” connects four events. These are sequential events—each happens after the one before it. We know this because that is the only way that these events would happen. So in English, the general connector “and” is enough to make the sequence clear for events such as these. You will need to decide if this also communicates this sequence clearly and correctly in your language.

Translation Strategies

If the sequence of events is clear in your language, then translate the sequence as it is.

- (1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.
- (2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.

Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)

Then Mary arose in those days. **Then** she quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah. **Then** she entered into the house of Zechariah, **and then** she greeted Elizabeth.

For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)

For the time will come when the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, **but even before that time**, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate.

- (2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

For the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good.

For more about sequences of events, see [Sequence of Events](#).

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Referenced in: [Galatians 1:18](#); [Galatians 1:21](#); [Galatians 2:1](#)

Connecting Words and Phrases

Description

This page answers the question: *How do connecting words work to join parts of the text in different ways?*

As humans, we write our thoughts in phrases and sentences. We usually want to communicate a series of thoughts that are connected to each other in different ways. **Connecting words and phrases** show how these thoughts are related to each other. For example, we can show how the following thoughts are related by using the Connecting Words in bold type:

- It was raining, **so** I opened my umbrella.
- It was raining, **but** I did not have an umbrella. **So** I got very wet.

Connecting words or phrases can connect phrases or clauses within a sentence. They can connect sentences to each other. They can also connect entire chunks to one another in order to show how the chunk before relates to the chunk after the connecting word. Very often, the connecting words that connect entire chunks to one another are either conjunctions or adverbs.

It was raining, but I did not have an umbrella, so I got very wet.

Now I must change my clothes. Then I will drink a cup of hot tea and warm myself by the fire.

In the above example, the word **now** connects the two short chunks of text, showing the relationship between them. The speaker must change his clothes, drink hot tea, and warm himself because of something that happened earlier (that is, he got wet in the rain).

Sometimes people might not use a connecting word because they expect the context to help the readers understand the relationship between the thoughts. Some languages do not use connecting words as much as other languages do. They might say:

- It was raining. I did not have an umbrella. I got very wet.

You (the translator) will need to use the method that is most natural and clear in the target language. But in general, using connecting words whenever possible helps the reader to understand the ideas in the Bible most clearly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You need to understand the relationship between paragraphs, between sentences, and between parts of sentences in the Bible, and how connecting words and phrases can help you to understand the relationship between the thoughts that they are connecting.
- Each language has its own ways of showing how thoughts are related.
- You need to know how to help readers understand the relationship between the thoughts in a way that is natural in your language.

Translation Principles

- You need to translate in a way that readers can understand the same relationship between thoughts that the original readers would have understood.
- Whether or not a connecting word is used is not as important as readers being able to understand the relationship between the ideas.

The Different Types of Connections

Listed below are different types of connections between ideas or events. These different types of connections can be indicated by using different connecting words. When we write or translate something, it is important to use the right connecting word so that these connections are clear for the reader. If you would like additional information, simply click the colored, hyperlinked word to be directed to a page containing definitions and examples for each type of connection.

- [Sequential Clause](#) — a time relationship between two events in which one happens and then the other happens.
- [Simultaneous Clause](#) — a time relationship between two or more events that occur at the same time.
- [Background Clause](#) — a time relationship in which the first clause describes a long event that is happening at the time when the beginning of the second event happens, which is described in the second clause.
- [Exceptional Relationship](#) — one clause describes a group of people or items, and the other clause excludes one or more items or people from the group.
- [Hypothetical Condition](#) — the second event will only take place if the first one takes place. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.
- [Factual Condition](#) — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true, so that the condition is guaranteed to happen.
- [Contrary-to-Fact Condition](#) — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain that it is not true. See also: [Hypothetical Statements](#).
- [Goal Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first.
- [Reason and Result Relationship](#) — a logical relationship in which one event is the reason for the other event, the result.
- [Contrast Relationship](#) — one item is being described as different or in opposition to another.

Examples from the Bible

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT)

The word “instead” introduces something that contrasts with what was said before. The contrast here is between what Paul did not do and what he did do. The word “then” introduces a sequence of events. It introduces something that Paul did after he returned to Damascus.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

The word “therefore” links this section with the section before it, signaling that the section that came before gave the reason for this section. “Therefore” usually links sections larger than one sentence. The word “and” links only two actions within the same sentence, that of breaking commandments and teaching others. In this verse the word “but” contrasts what one group of people will be called in God’s kingdom with what another group of people will be called.

We place nothing as a stumbling block in front of anyone, **so that** our ministry might not be discredited. **Instead**, we commend ourselves in everything as God’s servants. (2 Corinthians 6:3-4 ULT)

Here the words “so that” connect what follows as the reason for what came before; the reason that Paul does not place stumbling blocks is that he does not want his ministry brought into disrepute. “Instead” contrasts what Paul does (prove by his actions that he is God’s servant) with what he said he does not do (place stumbling blocks).

General Translation Strategies

See each type of Connecting Word above for specific strategies

If the way the relationship between thoughts is shown in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).
- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be strange to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.
- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Then immediately they left the nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18 ULT)

They followed Jesus because he told them to. Some translators may want to mark this clause with the connecting word "so."

Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." **So**, immediately they left the nets and followed him.

- (2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one, and if people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Some languages would prefer not to use connecting words here because the meaning is clear without them and using them would be unnatural. They might translate like this:

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments, teaching others to do so as well, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT) (Galatians 1:16-18 ULT)

Some languages might not need the words "instead" or "then" here. They might translate like this:

I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days.

- (3) Use a different connecting word.

Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Instead of a word like “therefore,” a language might need a phrase to indicate that there was a section before it that gave the reason for the section that follows. Also, the word “but” is used here because of the contrast between the two groups of people. But in some languages, the word “but” would show that what comes after it is surprising because of what came before it. So “and” might be clearer for those languages. They might translate like this:

Because of that, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.
And whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

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Referenced in: [Galatians 1:11](#); [Galatians 1:12](#); [Galatians 2:17](#); [Galatians 2:19](#); [Galatians 2:20](#); [Galatians 3:6](#); [Galatians 3:11](#); [Galatians 3:12](#); [Galatians 3:16](#); [Galatians 3:27](#); [Galatians 3:28](#); [Galatians 3:29](#); [Galatians 4:3](#); [Galatians 4:6](#); [Galatians 4:7](#); [Galatians 4:15](#); [Galatians 4:23](#); [Galatians 4:27](#); [Galatians 4:28](#); [Galatians 4:29](#); [Galatians 4:31](#); [Galatians 5:13](#)

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:

[Translate Unknowns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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 — זְפַנְיָהּ
 "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"

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:5](#); [Galatians 4 General Notes](#); [Galatians 4:6](#)

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

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

Pronouns ([UTA PDF](#))

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Quotations and Quote Margins ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
(Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming**,
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

And he commanded him to tell no one, but, **“Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”** (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**

- (2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

And he commanded him **to tell no one**, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

He commanded him, **“Tell no one.** But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_quotations.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Quotes within Quotes ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 2:14](#)

Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

Description

In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

This page answers the question: *When a phrase is used with a noun, what is the difference between phrases that distinguish the noun from others and phrases that simply inform or remind?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

When the phrase that modifies a noun is a relative clause (a phrase that starts with a word such as “who” or “which”), some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that the added phrase is making a distinction:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister who was very thankful**.
 - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase “who was thankful” could distinguish this sister of Mary’s from another sister who was not usually thankful.

With the comma, the phrase is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
 - This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary’s sister. It tells us about how Mary’s sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

Examples From the Bible

Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

■ The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

The words “holy” and “most holy” distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

■ A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to **the woman who bore him**. (Proverbs 17:25 ULT)

The phrase “who bore him” distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

... for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word “righteous” simply reminds us that God’s judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)

The phrases “to your needy and to your poor” give further information about “your brother.” They do not refer to a separate group of people.

How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is a reminder of Sarah’s age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age.

I will wipe away mankind **whom I have created** from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULT)

The phrase “whom I have created” is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying “worthless idols,” David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.

Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose. (2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

Because idols are worthless, I hate those who serve them.

... for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

... for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.

Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

Can Sarah bear a son **even when she is 90 years old**?

You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)

You must surely open your hand to any of **your needy and poor brothers** in your land.

(2) Use one of your language's ways for expressing that this is just added information.

You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)

You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.

Receiving my love, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.

You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)

You must surely open your hand to your brother **who is needy and poor** in your land.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Double Negatives ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:1](#); [Galatians 1:4](#); [Galatians 1:15](#); [Galatians 2:3](#)

Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each express the meaning of “not.” Double negatives mean very different things in different languages. To translate sentences that have double negatives accurately and clearly, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express this idea in your language.

This page answers the question: *What are double negatives?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

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 English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one, creating a positive sentence. So, “He is not unintelligent” means “He is intelligent.”
- In some languages, such as French and Spanish, two negative words in a clause do not cancel each other to become a positive. 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 double negative creates a stronger negative statement.
- In some languages, a 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, including the languages of the Bible, a double negative can produce a stronger positive meaning than a simple positive statement. So, “He is not unintelligent” can mean “He is very intelligent.” In this case, the double negative is actually the figure of speech called [litotes](#).

Biblical Greek can do all of the above. So to translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language, you need to know what each double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The Greek of John 15:5 says:

χωρὶς ἐμοῦ οὐ δύνασθε ποιεῖν οὐδέν
Without me **not** you can do **nothing**

We cannot reproduce this double negative in the English ULT because in English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one. In English, and perhaps in your language, we need to choose only one of the negatives and say either:

Without me, you can do **nothing**.

or:

Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

... in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

This means "in order to be fruitful."

A prophet is **not without** honor (Mark 6:4 ULT)

This means "a prophet is honored."

I do **not** want you to be **ignorant**. (1 Corinthians 12:1)

This means "I want you to be knowledgeable."

Translation Strategies

If the way that the double negative is used in the Bible is natural and has the same meaning as in your language, consider using it in the same way. Otherwise, you could consider these strategies:

- (1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is 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 negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.
- (3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is 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 negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.

χωρὶς ἐμοῦ οὐ δύνασθε ποιεῖν οὐδέν
Without me **not** you can do **nothing** (John 15:5)

Without me, you can do **nothing**.

or:

Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

...ἰῶτα ἐν ἡ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (Matthew 5:18)

...iota one or one serif **not not** may pass away from the law

...**not even** one iota or one serif may pass away from the law

or:

...**certainly no** iota or serif may pass away from the law

Next we recommend you learn about:

Verbs ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:1](#); [Galatians 4:30](#); [Galatians 5:16](#)

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis¹ occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

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

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will** sinners **stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

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:

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)

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

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

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.

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. ↩

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:7](#); [Galatians 1:12](#); [Galatians 2:2](#); [Galatians 2:8](#); [Galatians 2:9](#); [Galatians 2:20](#); [Galatians 3:3](#); [Galatians 3:16](#); [Galatians 3:19](#); [Galatians 4:12](#); [Galatians 4:15](#); [Galatians 4:25](#); [Galatians 4:27](#); [Galatians 4:29](#); [Galatians 5:6](#); [Galatians 5:13](#); [Galatians 5:17](#); [Galatians 6:14](#); [Galatians 6:15](#)

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

... they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa.
(1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons “were dead.” It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

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

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
- (2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**”

“... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**”

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?” (Luke 1:34 ULT)

But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man?**"

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

"They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa."

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 6:6](#)

Exclamations

Description

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

This page answers the question: *What are ways of translating exclamations?*

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

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)

When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, "This has never been seen before in Israel!" (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have "Oh" and "Ah." The word "oh" here shows the speaker's amazement.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word "Alas" below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Some exclamations start with a question word such as "how" or "why," even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God's judgments are.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."
- (2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
- (3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
- (4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.
- (5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”

You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

“You **are** such a worthless person!”

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

“Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!”

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word “wow” shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression “Oh no” shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

They were extremely astonished, saying, “He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” (Mark 7:37 ULT)

“They were extremely astonished, saying, “**Wow!** He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.””

Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)

“**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

“**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

“Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me?** For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” “**Help**, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

“His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!”

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. **He was terrified** and said, “**Alas**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

”

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:20](#); [Galatians 2:17](#); [Galatians 3:1](#); [Galatians 3:21](#); [Galatians 6:14](#)

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

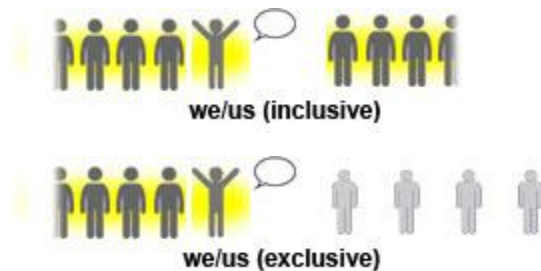
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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:

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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 (UTA PDF)

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:3](#); [Galatians 1:4](#); [Galatians 1:8](#); [Galatians 1:9](#); [Galatians 2:4](#); [Galatians 2:5](#); [Galatians 2:9](#); [Galatians 2:10](#); [Galatians 2:15](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [Galatians 2:17](#); [Galatians 3:13](#); [Galatians 3:14](#); [Galatians 3:23](#); [Galatians 3:24](#); [Galatians 3:25](#); [Galatians 4:3](#); [Galatians 4:5](#); [Galatians 4:26](#); [Galatians 4:31](#); [Galatians 5:1](#); [Galatians 5:5](#); [Galatians 6:9](#); [Galatians 6:10](#)

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:

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Pronouns ([UTA PDF](#))

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 ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:1](#); [Galatians 6:4](#); [Galatians 6:6](#)

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 ([UTA PDF](#))

Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural ([UTA PDF](#))

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_younum.

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of “you” even though he is speaking to a crowd. For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- [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 or she is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_youform.

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- [Forms of “You” — Formal or Informal](#)

Masculine and Feminine

Some languages have a **masculine** form and a **feminine** form of the word for “you.” People use the **masculine** form when speaking to a man or boy and the **feminine** form when speaking to a woman or girl.

English does not make any of the above distinctions, so they are absent in the ULT. Please be aware of this and use the appropriate forms of “you” if your language does make any of these distinctions.

”

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:3](#); [Galatians 3:16](#); [Galatians 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:

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Forms of You ([UTA PDF](#))

Pronouns ([UTA PDF](#))

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 and he used the singular form. So languages that have singular and plural forms of "you" need the singular form here, as well as for the verbs "sell," "distribute," "come," and "follow."

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 angel used singular forms here and the context makes it clear that he 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," "put on," and "follow" need the form that indicates a singular subject.

All the ones {who are} with me greet **you**. **Greet** the ones loving us in faith. Grace {be} with all of **you**. (Titus 3:15 ULT)

Paul wrote this letter to one person, Titus, so most of the time the word “you” in this letter is singular and refers only to Titus. In this verse, the first “you” is singular, so the greeting is for Titus, as well as the instruction to greet the others there. The second “you,” however, is plural, so the blessing is for Titus and for all of the believers there in Crete.

“Having gone, **search** carefully for the young child, and after **you** have found him, **report** to me so that I also, having come, might worship him.” (Matthew 2:8 ULT)

Since Herod is speaking to all of the learned men, the word “you” and the commands “search” and “report” are plural.

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.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 2:14](#); [Galatians 3:29](#); [Galatians 4:10](#); [Galatians 4:11](#); [Galatians 4:12](#); [Galatians 4:21](#); [Galatians 4:28](#)

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

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

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet? So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife; the one who touches her** will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

The phrases in bold above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

The phrase "a good man" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who is good. The phrase "a man who makes evil plans" does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.
- (2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.
- (3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."
- (4) Use the plural form, as in "people."
- (5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word "the" in the noun phrase.

Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

"Yahweh gives favor to **the good man**, but he condemns **the man who makes evil plans**." (Proverbs 12:2)

(2) Use the word "a" in the noun phrase.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **a man** who refuses to sell grain."

(3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **any man** who refuses to sell grain."

(4) Use the plural form, as in "people" (or in this sentence, "men").

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **men** who refuse to sell grain"

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

"People curse **whoever** refuses to sell grain."

Next we recommend you learn about:

When Masculine Words Include Women ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 3:15](#); [Galatians 5:10](#); [Galatians 6:1](#); [Galatians 6:18](#)

Go and Come

Description

This page answers the question: *What do I do if the word "go" or "come" is confusing in a certain sentence?*

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words "go" or "come" and whether to use the words "take" or "bring" when talking about motion. For example, when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say "I'm coming," while Spanish speakers say "I'm going." You will need to study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words "go" and "come" (and also "take" and "bring"), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words "go" and "come" or "take" and "bring" differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

Examples From the Bible

Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark." (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham's relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land ..."

They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.
(Genesis 24:41 ULT)

But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

- (2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ... (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

“When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it ...”

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark ...” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

Yahweh said to Noah, “**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark ...”

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

”

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:17](#); [Galatians 1:18](#); [Galatians 2:1](#); [Galatians 2:2](#); [Galatians 2:11](#); [Galatians 2:12](#)

How to Translate Names

Description

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

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

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

Translate Unknowns ([UTA PDF](#))

Meaning of names

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

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

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

His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

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

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

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

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

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

Saul was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)

But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites**.

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, "Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you." (Luke 13:31 ULT)

At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, "Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you."

- (2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

She called his name **Moses (which sounds like 'drawn out')**, and she said, "For out of the water I drew him."

- (3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?”
Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called “Saul” before Acts 13 and “Paul” after Acts 13. You could translate his name as “Paul” all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)

... a young man named **Paul** ¹

The footnote would look like:

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

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

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

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

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write “Saul” where the source text has “Saul” and “Paul” where the source text has “Paul.”

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

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

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

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

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

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

^[1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [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:

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

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.

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 2:21](#); [Galatians 3:4](#); [Galatians 4:15](#); [Galatians 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:

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

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**

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:13](#); [Galatians 1:15](#); [Galatians 2:5](#); [Galatians 2:6](#); [Galatians 2:11](#); [Galatians 3:19](#); [Galatians 4:4](#); [Galatians 4:15](#); [Galatians 5:6](#); [Galatians 5:16](#); [Galatians 6:2](#); [Galatians 6:3](#); [Galatians 6:15](#)

Imperatives — Other Uses

Description

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. In the Bible, sometimes imperative sentences have other uses.

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for imperative sentences in the Bible?*

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

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use an imperative sentence for some of the functions that they are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Speakers often use imperative sentences to tell or ask their listeners to do something. In Genesis 26, God spoke to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but to live where God would tell him to live.

Now Yahweh appeared to him and said, “**Do not go down** to Egypt; **live** in the land that I tell you to live in.” (Genesis 26:2 ULT)

Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

Imperatives that make things happen

God can make things happen by commanding that they happen. Jesus healed a man by commanding that the man be healed. The man could not do anything to obey the command, but Jesus caused him to be healed by commanding it. (In this context, the command “Be clean” means to “be healed” so that others around would know that it was safe to touch the man again.)

“I am willing. **Be clean.**” Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

In Genesis 1, God commanded that there should be light, and by commanding it, he caused it to exist. Some languages, such as the Hebrew of the Bible, have commands that are in the third person. English does not do that, and so it must turn the third-person command into a general, second-person command, as in the ULT:

God said, “**Let there be** light,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Languages that have third-person commands can follow the original Hebrew, which translates into English as something like “light must be.”

Imperatives that function as blessings

In the Bible, God blesses people by using imperatives. This indicates what his will is for them.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

Imperatives that function as conditions

An imperative sentence can also be used to tell the **condition** under which something will happen. The proverbs mainly tell about life and things that often happen. The purpose of Proverbs 4:6 below is not primarily to give a command, but to teach what people can expect to happen **if** they love wisdom.

Do not abandon wisdom and she will watch over you; **love** her and she will keep you safe.
(Proverbs 4:6 ULT)

The purpose of Proverbs 22:6, below, is to teach what people can expect to happen if they teach their children the way they should go.

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.
- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.
- (3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.

Be clean. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

“You are now clean.” “I now cleanse you.”

God said, “**Let there be light**,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, “**There is now light**” and there was light.

God blessed them and said to them, “**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

God blessed them and said to them, “**My will for you is that you be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **I want you to have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

- (2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.

God said, “**Let there be light**,” and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

God said, ‘Let there be light,’ **so** there was light. God said, “Light must be;” **as a result**, there was light.

- (3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translated as:

"If you teach a child the way he should go, **then** when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction."

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 6:11](#)

Information Structure

Description

Different languages arrange the parts of the sentence in different ways. In English, a sentence normally has the subject first, then the verb, then the object, then other modifiers, like this: Peter painted his house yesterday.

Many other languages normally put these things in a different order such as: Painted yesterday Peter his house.

Although all languages have a normal order for parts of a sentence, this order can change depending on what information the speaker or writer considers to be the most important.

Suppose that someone is answering the question, "What did Peter paint yesterday?" The person asking the question already knows all of the information in our sentence above except for the object, "his house." Therefore, that becomes the most important part of the information, and a person answering in English might say "His house is what Peter painted (yesterday)."

This puts the most important information first, which is normal for English. Many Other Languages would normally put the most important information last. In the flow of a text, the most important information is usually what the writer considers to be new information for the reader. In some languages the new information comes first, and in others it comes last.

This page answers the question: *How do languages arrange the parts of a sentence?*

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

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Different languages arrange the parts of a sentence in different ways. If you (the translator) copy the order of the parts of a sentence from the source, it may not make sense in your language.
- Different languages put important or new information in different places in the sentence. If you keep the important or new information in the same place that it had in the source language, it may be confusing or give the wrong message in your language.

Examples From the Bible

They all ate until they were satisfied. (Mark 6:42 ULT)

The parts of this sentence were in a different order in the original Greek source language. They were like this: And they ate all and they were satisfied.

In English, this means that the people ate everything. But the next verse says that they took up twelve baskets full of leftover pieces of food. In order for this to not be so confusing, the translators of the ULT put the parts of the sentence in the right order for English.

And the day began to end, and the twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so that, going into the surrounding villages and countryside, they may find lodging and food, because we are here in an desolate place." (Luke 9:12 ULT)

In this verse, what the disciples say to Jesus puts the important information first, that he should send the crowd away. In languages that put the important information last, people would understand that the reason that they gave, being in an isolated place, is the most important part of their message to Jesus. They might then think that the disciples are afraid of the spirits in that place, and that sending the people to buy food is a way to protect them from the spirits. That is the wrong message.

Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers treated the false prophets in the same way. (Luke 6:26 ULT)

In this verse, the most important part of the information is first, that “woe” is coming on the people for what they are doing. The reason that supports that warning comes last. This could be confusing for people who expect the important information to come last.

Translation Strategies

- (1) Study how your language arranges the parts of a sentence, and use that order in your translation.
- (2) Study where your language puts the new or important information, and rearrange the order of information so that it follows the way it is done in your language.

Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Study how your language arranges the parts of a sentence, and use that order in your translation.

This is the verse in the original Greek order:

And he went out from there and came to the hometown his, and they followed him the disciples his. (Mark 6:1)

The ULT has put this into the normal order for English:

Now Jesus went out from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. (Mark 6:1 ULT)

- (2) Study where your language puts the new or important information and rearrange the order of information so that it follows the way it is done in your language.

And the day began to end, and the twelve came and said to him, “Send the crowd away so that, going into the surrounding villages and countryside, they may find lodging and food, because we are here in a desolate place.” (Luke 9:12 ULT)

If your language puts the important information last, you can change the order of the verse.

Now the day was about to come to an end, and the twelve came to him and said, “Because we are here in an desolate place, send the crowd away that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and food.”

Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets. (Luke 6:26 ULT)

If your language puts the important information last, you can change the order of the verse.

When all men speak well of you, which is just as people’s ancestors treated the false prophets, then woe to you!

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Word Order \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Galatians 2:8](#); [Galatians 5:5](#)

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:

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

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 ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 3:1](#)

Litotes

Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by negating a word or phrase that means the opposite of the meaning that he intends. For example, someone could intend to communicate that something is extremely good by describing it as "not bad." The difference between a litotes and a **double negative** is that a litotes heightens the positive meaning beyond what a plain positive statement would do, and a double negative does not. In the example above, the literal meaning of "not bad," taken as a plain double negative, would be "acceptable" or even "good." But if the speaker intended it as a litotes, then the meaning is "very good" or "extremely good."

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

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

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."

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:20](#); [Galatians 2:21](#); [Galatians 4:12](#)

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:

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Simile ([UTA PDF](#))

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](#).

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Referenced in: [Introduction to Galatians](#); [Galatians 1:14](#); [Galatians 1:22](#); [Galatians 2:2](#); [Galatians 2:4](#); [Galatians 2:9](#); [Galatians 2:18](#); [Galatians 2:19](#); [Galatians 2:20](#); [Galatians 3:1](#); [Galatians 3:7](#); [Galatians 3:9](#); [Galatians 3:13](#); [Galatians 3:16](#); [Galatians 3:18](#); [Galatians 3:22](#); [Galatians 3:23](#); [Galatians 3:24](#); [Galatians 3:25](#); [Galatians 3:26](#); [Galatians 3:27](#); [Galatians 3:28](#); [Galatians 3:29](#); [Galatians 4:3](#); [Galatians 4:5](#); [Galatians 4:6](#); [Galatians 4:7](#); [Galatians 4:8](#); [Galatians 4:9](#); [Galatians 4:19](#); [Galatians 4:24](#); [Galatians 4:25](#); [Galatians 4:26](#); [Galatians 4:27](#); [Galatians 4:28](#); [Galatians 4:31](#); [Galatians 5:1](#); [Galatians 5:2](#); [Galatians 5:4](#); [Galatians 5:6](#); [Galatians 5:7](#); [Galatians 5:10](#); [Galatians 5:11](#); [Galatians 5:12](#); [Galatians 5:13](#); [Galatians 5:14](#); [Galatians 5:15](#); [Galatians 5:16](#); [Galatians 5:17](#); [Galatians 5:19](#); [Galatians 5:21](#); [Galatians 5:22](#); [Galatians 5:24](#); [Galatians 5:25](#); [Galatians 6:2](#); [Galatians 6:4](#); [Galatians 6:5](#); [Galatians 6:7](#); [Galatians 6:8](#); [Galatians 6:9](#); [Galatians 6:10](#); [Galatians 6:14](#); [Galatians 6:15](#); [Galatians 6:16](#); [Galatians 6:17](#)

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:

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

... 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](#).

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Referenced in: [Galatians 1:1](#); [Galatians 1:4](#); [Galatians 1:23](#); [Galatians 2:6](#); [Galatians 2:7](#); [Galatians 2:8](#); [Galatians 2:9](#); [Galatians 2:12](#); [Galatians 2:14](#); [Galatians 3:3](#); [Galatians 3:8](#); [Galatians 3:13](#); [Galatians 3:22](#); [Galatians 3:27](#); [Galatians 4:6](#); [Galatians 4:10](#); [Galatians 4:25](#); [Galatians 4:26](#); [Galatians 5:11](#); [Galatians 6:6](#); [Galatians 6:12](#); [Galatians 6:13](#); [Galatians 6:14](#)

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:

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

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**.

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Referenced in: [Galatians 1:1](#); [Galatians 2:10](#); [Galatians 3:11](#); [Galatians 4:22](#); [Galatians 4:23](#); [Galatians 4:24](#); [Galatians 6:10](#)

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:

Translate Unknowns ([UTA PDF](#))

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:

Ordinal Numbers ([UTA PDF](#))

Fractions ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 3:17](#)

Parallelism

Description

Parallelism is a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

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

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "**doublet**" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

Yahweh sees everything a person does
and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The first phrase and the second phrase mean the same thing. There are three ideas that are the same between these two phrases. "Sees" corresponds to "watches," "everything...does" corresponds to "all the paths...takes," and "a person" corresponds to "he."

Praise Yahweh, all you nations;
exalt him, all you peoples! (Psalm 117:1 ULT)

Both parts of this verse tell people everywhere to praise Yahweh. The words 'Praise' and 'exalt' mean the same thing. The words 'Yahweh' and 'him' refer to the same person. The terms 'all you nations' and 'all you peoples' refer to the same people.

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people,
and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2b ULT)

The two parts of this verse say that Yahweh has a serious disagreement with his people, Israel. These are not two different disagreements or two different groups of people.

Translation Strategies

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
- (2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as "truly" or "certainly."
- (3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like "very," "completely," or "all."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.

Until now you have deceived me with your lies.
Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The phrase "all the paths he takes" is a metaphor for "all he does."

Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.
For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULT)

This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:

For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.

- (2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as "truly" or "certainly."

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet
(Psalm 8:6 ULT)

You have certainly made him to rule over everything that you have created.

(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

All you have done is lie to me.

Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Personification ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:12](#); [Galatians 4:27](#)

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:

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

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:

Apostrophe ([UTA PDF](#))

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 3:8](#); [Galatians 3:23](#); [Galatians 3:24](#); [Galatians 3:25](#); [Galatians 4:3](#); [Galatians 4:25](#); [Galatians 4:26](#); [Galatians 4:30](#); [Galatians 5:13](#); [Galatians 5:16](#); [Galatians 5:17](#); [Galatians 5:18](#); [Galatians 5:19](#); [Galatians 5:24](#)

Possession

Description

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word “**of**,” by using **an apostrophe and the letter “s”**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my grandfather **'s** house
- **his** house

This page answers the question: *What is possession and how can I translate phrases that show it?*

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

Parts of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
 - The clothes of me - my clothes — The clothes that I own
- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
 - The mother of John — John's mother - the woman who gave birth to John, or the woman who cared for John
 - A teacher of Israel - Israel's teacher — a person who teaches Israel
- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
 - The sickness of David - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
 - the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents — Something has something in it.
 - a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
 - my head — the head that is part of my body
 - the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession**. This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language. In languages that mark the difference, the expression of inalienable possession and alienable possession will be different.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.
- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

Ownership — In the example below, the son owned the money.

The younger son ... wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

Social Relationship — In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

Then **the disciples of John** came to him. (Matthew 9:14a ULT)

Association — In the example below, the gospel is the message associated with Paul because he preaches it.

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to **my gospel**,
(2 Timothy 2:8 ULT)

Material — In the example below, the material used for making the crowns was gold.

On their heads were something like **crowns of gold**. (Revelation 9:7b)

Contents — In the example below, the cup has water in it.

For whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Part of a whole — In the example below, the door was a part of the palace.

But Uriah slept at **the door of the king's palace**. (2 Samuel 11:9a ULT)

Part of a group — In the example below, “us” refers to the whole group and “each one” refers to the individual members.

Now to **each one of us** grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.
(Ephesians 4:7 ULT)

Events and Possession

Sometimes one or both of the nouns is an abstract noun that refers to an event or action. In the examples below, the abstract nouns are in **bold** print. These are just some of the relationships that are possible between two nouns when one of them refers to an event.

Subject — Sometimes the word after “of” tells who would do the action named by the first noun. In the example below, **John baptized people**.

The **baptism of John**, was it from heaven or from men? Answer me. (Mark 11:30)

In the example below, **Christ loves us**.

Who will separate us from the **love of Christ**? (Romans 8:35)

Object — Sometimes the word after “of” tells who or what something would happen to. In the example below, **people love money**.

For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10a ULT)

Instrument — Sometimes the word after “of” tells how something would happen. In the example below, God would **punish people by sending enemies to attack them with swords**.

Then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings **the punishment of the sword**. (Job 19:29a ULT)

Representation — In the example below, John was baptizing people who were repenting of their sins. They were being baptized to show that they were repenting. Their **baptism represented their repentance**.

John came, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching **a baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4 ULT)

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

- (1) Read the surrounding verses to see if they help you to understand the relationship between the two nouns.
- (2) Read the verse in the UST. Sometimes it shows the relationship clearly.
- (3) See what the notes say about it.

Translation Strategies

If possession would be a natural way to show a particular relationship between two nouns, consider using it. If it would be strange or hard to understand, consider these.

- (1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.
- (2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.
- (3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.

On their heads were something like **crowns of gold**. (Revelation 9:7b)

"On their heads were **gold crowns**"

- (2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.

Whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink ... will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink ... will not lose his reward.

Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath**. (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)

Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**. or: Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

- (3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb. (In the example below, there are two possession relationships, "punishment of Yahweh" and "your God.")

Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God**. (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)

Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.

You will only observe and see the **punishment of the wicked**. (Psalms 91:8 ULT)

You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.

You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)

You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you**.

"

Referenced in: Galatians 1:2; Galatians 1:7; Galatians 1:12; Galatians 2:5; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 3:2; Galatians 3:5; Galatians 3:10; Galatians 3:14; Galatians 4:28; Galatians 5:1; Galatians 5:5; Galatians 5:11; Galatians 5:22; Galatians 6:1; Galatians 6:17

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

When we talk or write, we use pronouns to refer to people or things without always having to repeat the noun or name. Usually, the first time we refer to someone in a story, we use a descriptive phrase or a name. The next time we might refer to that person with a simple noun or by name. After that we might refer to him simply with a pronoun as long as we think that our listeners will be able to understand easily to whom the pronoun refers.

This page answers the question: *How do I decide whether or not to use a pronoun?*

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. **This man** came to Jesus at night. Jesus replied and said to **him** ... (John 3:1, 2a, 3a ULT)

In John 3, Nicodemus is first referred to with noun phrases and his name. Then he is referred to with the noun phrase “this man.” Then he is referred to with the pronoun “him.”

Each language has its rules and exceptions to this usual way of referring to people and things.

- In some languages, the first time something is referred to in a paragraph or chapter, it is referred to with a noun rather than a pronoun.
- The main character is the person whom a story is about. In some languages, after a main character is introduced in a story, he is usually referred to with a pronoun. Some languages have special pronouns that refer only to the main character.
- In some languages, marking on the verb helps people know who the subject is. (See [Verbs](#).) In some of these languages, listeners rely on this marking to help them understand who the subject is. Speakers will use a pronoun, noun phrase, or proper name only when they want either to emphasize or to clarify who the subject is.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- If translators use a pronoun at the wrong time for their language, readers might not know about whom the writer is talking.
- If translators too frequently refer to a main character by name, listeners of some languages might not realize that the person is a main character, or they might think that there is a new character with the same name.
- If translators use pronouns, nouns, or names at the wrong time, people might think that there is some special emphasis on the person or thing to which it refers.

Examples From the Bible

The example below occurs at the beginning of a chapter. In some languages it might not be clear to whom the pronouns refer.

Then Jesus entered into the synagogue again, and there was a man who had a withered hand. Some people watched **him** closely to see if **he** would heal **him** on the Sabbath so that they might accuse **him**. (Mark 3:1-2 ULT)

In the example below, two men are named in the first sentence. It might not be clear whom “he” in the second sentence refers to.

Now after some days had passed, **King Agrippa** and Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay their respects to **Festus**. After **he** had been there for many days, Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul. (Acts 25:13-14)

Jesus is the main character of the book of Matthew, but in the verses below he is referred to four times by name. This may lead speakers of some languages to think that Jesus is not the main character. Or it might lead them to think that there is more than one person named Jesus in this story. Or it might lead them to think that there is some kind of emphasis on him, even though there is no emphasis.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **Jesus** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.
- (2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.

Again **he** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **him** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:1-2)

Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

- (2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **Jesus** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

This may be translated as:

At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **him**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **he** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **he** left from there and went into their synagogue.

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 5:4](#); [Galatians 5:8](#); [Galatians 5:17](#)

Proverbs

Description

Proverbs are short sayings that give wise advice or teach something that is generally true about life. People enjoy proverbs because they give a lot of wisdom in few words. Proverbs in the Bible often use metaphor and parallelism. Proverbs should not be understood as absolute and unchangeable laws. Rather, proverbs offer general advice to a person about how to live his life.

Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers over all offenses. (Proverbs 10:12 ULT)

Here is another example from the book of Proverbs.

Look at the ant, you lazy person, consider her ways, and be wise. It has no commander, officer, or ruler, yet it prepares its food in the summer, and during the harvest it stores up what it will eat. (Proverbs 6:6-8 ULT)

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

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

Metaphor ([UTA PDF](#))

Parallelism ([UTA PDF](#))

Writing Styles ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying proverbs. There are many proverbs in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say proverbs in your language so that people recognize them as proverbs and understand what they teach.

Examples From the Bible

A good name is to be chosen over great riches, and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

This means that it is better to be a good person and to have a good reputation than it is to have a lot of money.

Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26 ULT)

This means that a lazy person is very annoying to those who send him to do something.

The way of Yahweh protects those who have integrity, but it is destruction for the wicked. (Proverbs 10:29 ULT)

This means that Yahweh protects people who do what is right, but he destroys those who are wicked.

Translation Strategies

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

- (1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.
- (2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.
- (3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.
- (4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.

A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

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

It is better to have a good name than to have great riches,
and to be favored by people than to have silver and gold.

Wise people choose a good name over great riches,
and favor over silver and gold.

Try to have a good reputation rather than great riches.

Will riches really help you?
I would rather have a good reputation.

(2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

Like **snow in summer** or rain in harvest,
so a fool does not deserve honor. (Proverbs 26:1 ULT)

It is not natural for **a cold wind to blow in the hot season** or for it to rain
in the harvest season;
And it is not natural to honor a foolish person.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring. (Proverbs 27:1a ULT)

Do not count your chickens before they hatch.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

There is a generation that curses their father
and does not bless their mother.
There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes,
and yet they are not washed of their filth. (Proverbs 30:11-12 ULT)

People who do not respect their parents think that they are righteous,
and they do not turn away from their sin.

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 5:9](#)

Quotations and Quote Margins

Description

This page answers the question: *What are quote margins and where should I put them?*

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, whom they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and whom they spoke to is called the quote margin. What the person said is the quotation. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

The quote margins are bolded below.

- **She said**, "The food is ready. Come and eat."
- "The food is ready. Come and eat," **she said**.
- "The food is ready," **she said**. "Come and eat."

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning "said."

But his mother **answered** and **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas (" "). Some languages use other symbols around the quotation, such as these angle quote marks (« »), or something else.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning "said."
- Translators need to decide which marks to use around the quotation.

Examples From the Bible

Quote margin before the quote

Then Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days." (Luke 1:18 ULT)

Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and **they said to him**, "Teacher, what should we do?" (Luke 3:12 ULT)

So **he said to them**, "Collect nothing more than what you have been ordered." (Luke 3:13 ULT)

Quote margin after the quote

Yahweh relented concerning this. "It will not happen," **he said**. (Amos 7:3 ULT)

Quote margin between two parts of the quote

"I will hide my face from them," **he said**, "and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful." (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULT)

For look, days are coming—**this is Yahweh's declaration**—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. (Jeremiah 30:3a ULT)

Translation Strategies

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.
- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

He said, "Therefore, those among you who are leaders should go down with us. If there is something wrong with the man, let them accuse him." (Acts 25:5 ULT)

"Therefore, those who can should go there with us," **he said**. "If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

"Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him," **he said**.

"Therefore, those who can," **he said**, "should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

- (2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

But his mother **answered and said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

But his mother **replied**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

But his mother **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

But his mother **answered** like this. "No. Rather, he will be called John," she **said**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Direct and Indirect Quotations ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 3:8](#); [Galatians 3:11](#); [Galatians 3:12](#); [Galatians 3:13](#); [Galatians 4:27](#); [Galatians 4:30](#)

Quote Markings

Description

Some languages use quotation marks to mark off direct quotes from the rest of the text. English uses the mark " immediately before a quote and " immediately after it.

- John said, "I do not know when I will arrive."

Quotation marks are not used with indirect quotes.

- John said that he did not know when he would arrive.

When there are several layers of quotations inside of other quotations, it might be hard for readers to understand who is saying what. Alternating two kinds of quotation marks can help careful readers to keep track of them. In English, the outermost quotation has double quote marks, and the next quotation within it has single marks. If there is a third embedded quote, that quotation again has double quotation marks.

- Mary said, "John said, 'I do not know when I will arrive.'"
- Bob said, "Mary told me, 'John said, "I do not know when I will arrive.'" "

Some languages use other kinds of quotation marks: Here are some examples: , ' ' " " < > « » 7 — .

Examples From the Bible

The examples below show the kind of quotation markings used in the ULT.

A quotation with only one layer

A first layer direct quote has double quotation marks around it.

So the king replied, "That is Elijah the Tishbite." (2 Kings 1:8b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

A second layer direct quote has single quotation marks around it. We have printed it and the phrase in bold type for you to see them clearly.

They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, '**Pick it up and walk**'?" (John 5:12 ULT)

He sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you. As you enter, you will find a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it to me. If any one asks you, '**Why are you untying it?**' you will say thus, '**The Lord has need of it.**'" (Luke 19:29b-31 ULT)

A quotation with three layers

A third layer direct quote has double quotation marks around it. We have printed it in bold type for you to see them clearly.

Abraham said, "Because I thought, 'Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.' Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. When God caused me to leave my father's

This page answers the question: *How can quotes be marked, especially when there are quotes within quotes?*

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

Direct and Indirect Quotations ([UTA PDF](#))

house and travel from place to place, I said to her, 'You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, "**He is my brother.**"' (Genesis 20:11-13 ULT)

A quotation with four layers

A fourth layer direct quote has single quotation marks around it. We have printed it in bold for you to see it clearly.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: **'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'**"' " (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

Quote Marking Strategies

Here are some ways you may be able to help readers see where each quote starts and ends so they can more easily know who said what.

- (1) Alternate two kinds of quote marks to show layers of direct quotation. English alternates double quote marks and single quote marks.
- (2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes in order to use fewer quote marks, since indirect quotes do not need them. (See [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#).)
- (3) If a quotation is very long and has many layers of quotation in it, indent the main overall quote, and use quote marks only for the direct quotes inside of it.

Examples of Quote Marking Strategies Applied

- (1) Alternate two kinds of quotation marks to show layers of direct quotation as shown in the ULT text below.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

- (2) Translate one or more of the quotes as indirect quotes in order to use fewer quotation marks, since indirect quotes do not need them. In English, the word "that" can introduce an indirect quote. In the example below, everything after the word "that" is an indirect quote of what the messengers said to the king. Within that indirect quote, there are some direct quotes marked with double and single quotation marks.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They told him **that** a man came to meet them who said to them, "Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, 'Yahweh says this: "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"'"

- (3) If a quotation is very long and has many layers of quotation in it, indent the main overall quote, and use quote marks only for the direct quotes inside of it.

They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

They said to him,

A man came to meet us who said to us, "Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, 'Yahweh says this: "Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'""

Next we recommend you learn about:

Quotes within Quotes [\(UTA PDF\)](#)

Referenced in: [Galatians 3:6](#); [Galatians 4:22](#)

Reflexive Pronouns

Description

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

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

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

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Sentence Structure \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Uses of Reflexive Pronouns

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

So they left the crowd, taking Jesus with them, just as he was, in the boat. There also were other boats with him. Then a violent windstorm arose and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already full of water. But **Jesus himself** was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. (Mark 4:36-38a ULT)

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) In some languages people modify the verb to show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject.

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

“If I should **self-testify** alone, my testimony would not be true.”

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

“Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem out from country before the Passover in order to **self-purify**.”

(2) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by referring to it in a special place in the sentence.

He himself took our sickness and bore our diseases. (Matthew 8:17 ULT)

“**It was he who** took our sickness and bore our diseases.”

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

“**It was not Jesus who** was baptizing, but his disciples were.”

(3) In some languages people emphasize a certain person or thing by adding something to that word or putting another word with it. English adds the reflexive pronoun.

But Jesus said this to test Philip, for he **himself** knew what he was going to do. (John 6:6)

(4) In some languages people show that someone did something alone by using a word like “alone.”

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

“When Jesus realized that they were about to come and seize him by force to make him king, he withdrew again **alone** up the mountain.”

(5) In some languages people show that something was alone by using a phrase that tells about where it was.

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

“He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth that had been on his head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up and lying **in its own place**.”

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 2:17](#)

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:

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

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

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:10](#); [Galatians 2:14](#); [Galatians 2:17](#); [Galatians 3 General Notes](#); [Galatians 3:1](#); [Galatians 3:2](#); [Galatians 3:3](#); [Galatians 3:4](#); [Galatians 3:5](#); [Galatians 3:19](#); [Galatians 3:21](#); [Galatians 4:9](#); [Galatians 4:15](#); [Galatians 4:16](#); [Galatians 4:21](#); [Galatians 4:30](#); [Galatians 5:7](#); [Galatians 5:11](#)

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

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

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

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus' enemies would attack his disciples.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God's word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people's attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience. (2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote. (3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.

See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.

For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

(2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.

See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!

If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** ... (Matthew 17:20)

If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

(3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)

See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.

How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)

How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

Next we recommend you learn about:

Metaphor ([UTA PDF](#))

Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 4:28](#)

Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups

Description

The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. These 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. However, sometimes speakers in the Bible used the singular form of “you” even though they were speaking to a group of people. This is not obvious when you read the Bible in English because English does not have different forms that indicate where “you” is singular and where “you” is plural. But you may see this if you read a Bible in a language that does have distinct forms.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate singular pronouns that refer to groups of people?*

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

[Forms of You \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Forms of ‘You’ — Singular \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

Also, speakers and writers of the Old Testament often referred to groups of people with the singular pronoun “he,” rather than with the plural pronoun “they.”

Finally, Old Testament speakers and writers sometimes referred to actions that they performed as part of a group by saying ‘I’ did it when, really, the whole group was involved.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- For many languages, a translator who reads a Bible with a general form of “you” will need to know whether the speaker was speaking to one person or to more than one.
- In some languages, it might be confusing if a speaker uses a singular pronoun when speaking to or about more than one person.

Examples From the Bible

1 Now take heed that **you** do not do **your** acts of righteousness before people to be seen by them, otherwise **you** will not have a reward with **your** Father who is in heaven. 2 So when **you** give alms, do not sound a trumpet before **yourself** as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have the praise of people. Truly I say to **you**, they have received their reward. (Matthew 6:1-2 ULT)

Jesus said this to a crowd. He used “you” plural in verse 1, and “you” singular in the first sentence of verse 2. Then, in the last sentence, he used the plural again.

God spoke all these words: “I am Yahweh, **your** God, who brought **you** out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. **You** must have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:1-3 ULT)

God said this to all the people of Israel. He had taken them all out of Egypt and he wanted them all to obey him, but he used the singular form of you here when speaking to them.

This is what Yahweh says, “For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn away punishment, because **he** pursued **his** brother with the sword and cast off all pity. **His** anger raged continually, and **his** wrath lasted forever.” (Amos 1:11 ULT)

Yahweh said these things about the nation of Edom, not about only one person.

And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. And I was going up by the wadi at night, and I was looking intently at the wall. And I turned back, and I entered by the gate of the valley, and I returned. (Nehemiah 2:12a,15 ULT)

Nehemiah makes clear that he brought other people with him on his inspection tour of the wall of Jerusalem. But as he describes the tour, he just says “I” did this and that.

Translation Strategies

If the singular form of the pronoun would be natural when referring to a group of people, consider using it.

(1) If using the singular form of the pronoun when referring to a group of people would not be natural in your language, use the plural form of the pronoun.

- Whether you can use the singular form of the pronoun may depend on who the speaker is and who the people are that he is talking about or talking to.
- It may also depend on what the speaker is saying.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If using the singular form of the pronoun when referring to a group of people would not be natural in your language, use the plural form of the pronoun.

This is what Yahweh says, “For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn away punishment, because **he** pursued **his** brother with the sword and cast off all pity. **His** anger raged continually, and **his** wrath lasted forever.” (Amos 1:11 ULT)

This is what Yahweh says, “For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn away punishment, because **they** pursued **their brothers** with the sword and cast off all pity. **Their** anger raged continually, and **their** wrath lasted forever.”

And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. And **I** was going up by the wadi at night, and **I** was looking intently at the wall. And **I** turned back, and **I** entered by the gate of the valley, and **I** returned. (Nehemiah 2:12a,15 ULT)

And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. ... And **we** were going up by the wadi at night and **we** were looking intently at the wall. And **we** turned back and **we** entered by the gate of the valley, and **we** returned.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of ‘You’ — Dual/Plural ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 5:14](#); [Galatians 6:1](#)

Statements — Other Uses

Description

Normally statements are used to give information. Sometimes they are used in the Bible for other functions.

This page answers the question: *What other uses are there for statements?*

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

Sentence Types ([UTA PDF](#))

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use a statement for some of the functions that statements are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Statements are normally used to give **information**. All of the sentences in John 1:6-8 below are statements, and their function is to give information.

There was a man who was sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness in order to testify about the light, that all might believe through him. John was not the light, but came that he might testify about the light. (John 1:6-8 ULT)

A statement can also be used as a **command** to tell someone what to do. In the examples below, the high priest used statements with the verb “will” to tell people what to do.

He commanded them, saying, “This is what you **must** do. A third of you who come on the Sabbath **will** keep watch over the king’s house, and a third **will** be at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guardhouse.” (2 Kings 11:5 ULT)

A statement can also be used to give **instructions**. The speaker below was not just telling Joseph about something Joseph would do in the future; he was telling Joseph what he needed to do.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

A statement can also be used to make a **request**. The man with leprosy was not just saying what Jesus was able to do. He was also asking Jesus to heal him.

Behold, a leper came to him and bowed before him, saying, “Lord, if you are willing, **you can make me clean.**” (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

A statement can also be used to **perform** something. By telling Adam that the ground was cursed because of him, God actually cursed it.

... **cursed is the ground** because of you; (Genesis 3:17b ULT)

By telling a man that his sins were forgiven, **Jesus forgave** the man’s sins.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, “**Son, your sins are forgiven.**” (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a sentence type** that would express that function.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **add a sentence type** that would express that function.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a verb form** that would express that function.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a sentence type that would express that function.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

The phrase “you will call his name Jesus” is an instruction. It can be translated using the sentence type of a normal instruction.

She will give birth to a son. **Name him Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, add a sentence type that would express that function.

Lord, **please heal me**, because I know you are able to heal me if you are willing to. (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

The function of “I know you can” is to make a request. In addition to the statement, a request can be added.

Lord, **I know you can heal me**. If you are willing, please do so.

Lord, if you are willing, please heal me. **I know you can do so**.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a verb form that would express that function.

She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

She will give birth to a son, and **you must call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins.

Son, your sins are forgiven. (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Son, I forgive your sins.

Son, God has forgiven your sins.

”

Referenced in: [Galatians 5:14](#); [Galatians 6:9](#)

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:

Translate Unknowns ([UTA PDF](#))

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.

"

Referenced in: [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)

■ I looked on all the deeds that **I** had accomplished

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:

Figures of Speech ([UTA PDF](#))

Metonymy ([UTA PDF](#))

Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies ([UTA PDF](#))

Next we recommend you learn about:

Metonymy ([UTA PDF](#))

Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:16](#); [Galatians 1:22](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [Galatians 2:20](#); [Galatians 4:13](#); [Galatians 4:14](#); [Galatians 4:19](#); [Galatians 4:24](#); [Galatians 4:25](#)

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.

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:

Choosing a Source Text ([UTA PDF](#))

Original Manuscripts ([UTA PDF](#))

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.

Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ ^[1]

^[1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest manuscripts. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

53 [Then everyone went to his own house ... 11 She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more."] ^[2]

^[2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." ¹⁶ [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." ¹⁶ [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

¹⁴ He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man. ¹⁶ If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." [1]

[1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Chapter and Verse Numbers ([UTA PDF](#))

Original Manuscripts ([UTA PDF](#))

Terms to Know ([UTA PDF](#))

The Original and Source Languages ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Introduction to Galatians](#)

Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

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

Sentence Structure ([UTA PDF](#))

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples From the Bible

So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
- (4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
- (5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

- (2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

Your sins ... will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

Your sins ... will be white like **milk**.

Your sins ... will be white like **the moon**.

- (3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word "medicine."

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT) —
People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made
of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).

We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread**
and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

"We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

... to him who made **great lights** ... (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words ([UTA PDF](#))

How to Translate Names ([UTA PDF](#))

Referenced in: [Galatians 3:24](#); [Galatians 4:2](#); [Galatians 4:24](#); [Galatians 5:9](#)

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.

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)

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:

[Pronouns \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Generic Noun Phrases \(UTA PDF\)](#)

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.”

”

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:1](#); [Galatians 1:2](#); [Galatians 1:8](#); [Galatians 1:9](#); [Galatians 1:10](#); [Galatians 1:11](#); [Galatians 1:12](#); [Galatians 2:6](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [Galatians 3:7](#); [Galatians 3:15](#); [Galatians 3:26](#); [Galatians 4:5](#); [Galatians 4:6](#); [Galatians 4:7](#); [Galatians 4:12](#); [Galatians 4:28](#); [Galatians 4:31](#); [Galatians 5:11](#); [Galatians 5:13](#); [Galatians 6:1](#); [Galatians 6:3](#); [Galatians 6:4](#); [Galatians 6:7](#); [Galatians 6:18](#)

When to Keep Information Implicit

Description

Sometimes it is better not to state assumed knowledge or implicit information explicitly. This page gives some direction about when not to do this.

This page answers the question: *When should I not make implicit information explicit?*

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

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information ([UTA PDF](#))
Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit ([UTA PDF](#))

Translation Principles

- If a speaker or author intentionally left something unclear, do not try to make it more clear.
- If the original audience did not understand what the speaker meant, do not make it so clear that your readers would find it strange that the original audience did not understand.
- If you need to explicitly state some assumed knowledge or implicit information, try to do it in a way that does not make your readers think that the original audience needed to be told those things.
- Do not make implicit information explicit if it confuses the message or leads the reader to forget what the main point is.
- Do not make assumed knowledge or implicit information explicit if your readers already understand it.

Examples From the Bible

From the eater came forth food; and from the strong one came forth sweetness. (Judges 14:14 ULT)

This was a riddle. Samson purposely said this in a way that it would be hard for his enemies to know what it meant. Do not make it clear that the eater and the strong thing was a lion and that the sweet thing to eat was honey.

Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." They reasoned among themselves saying, "It is because we did not take bread." (Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Some possible implicit information here is that the disciples should beware of the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But Jesus' disciples did not understand this. They thought that Jesus was talking about real yeast and bread. So it would not be appropriate to state explicitly that the word "yeast" here refers to false teaching. The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant until they heard what Jesus said in Matthew 16:11.

"How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he was not telling them to beware of yeast in bread, but to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16:11-12 ULT)

Only after Jesus explained that he was not talking about bread did they realize that he was talking about the false teaching of the Pharisees. Therefore, it would be wrong to explicitly state the implicit information in Matthew 16:6.

Translation Strategies

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies applied.

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 1:1](#); [Galatians 2:2](#); [Galatians 2:16](#); [Galatians 3:4](#); [Galatians 3:20](#); [Galatians 3:21](#); [Galatians 4:13](#); [Galatians 4:14](#)



unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 77

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

”

Referenced in: [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

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Referenced in: [Galatians 6 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

Referenced in: [Galatians 1 General Notes](#)

fruit, fruitful, unfruitful

Definition:

The term “fruit” refers to the part of a plant that can be eaten. Something that is “fruitful” produces a lot of fruit. Something that is “unfruitful” does not produce fruit.

- In general, the expression “fruit of” refers to anything that comes from or that is produced by something else. For example, the phrase “the fruit of every tree” refers to the fruit that comes from these trees.
- 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.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate the term “fruit” 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.
- When used literally, the term “fruitful” could be translated as “producing much fruit.”
- 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 used literally, the expression “will be more fruitful” could also be translated as “will produce more fruit.”

(See also: [descendant](#), [grain](#), [grape](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [vine](#), [womb](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 1:11
- 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

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Referenced in: [Galatians 5 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

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Referenced in: [Galatians 1 General Notes](#); [Galatians 2 General Notes](#); [Galatians 5 General 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

"

Referenced in: [Galatians 6 General Notes](#)

Contributors

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes Contributors

Door43 World Missions Community

Aaron Fenlason

Abner Bauman

Adam Van Goor

Alan Bird

Alan Borkenhagen

Alfred Van Dellen

Alice Wright

Allen Bair

Allyson Presswood Nance

Amanda Adams

Andrew Belcher

Andrew Johnson

Andrew Rice

Angelo Palo

Anita Moreau

April Linton

Aurora Lee

Barbara Summers

Barbara White

Becky Hancock

Beryl Carpenter

Bethany Fenlason

Betty Forbes

Bianca Elliott

Bill Cleveland

Bill Pruett

Bob Britting

Bram van den Heuvel

Brian Metzger

Bruce Bridges

Bruce Collier

Bruce Smith

Caleb Worgess

Carlyle Kilmore

Carol Pace

Carol Heim

Caroline Crawford

Caroline Fleming

Caroline S Wong

Carol Lee

Carol Moyer

Carolyn Lafferty

Catherine C Newton

Charese Jackson

Charlotte Gibson

Charlotte Hobbs

Cheryl A Chojnacki
Cheryl Stieben
Cheryl Warren
Christian Berry
Christine Harrison
Clairmene Pascal
Connie Bryan
Connie Goss
Craig Balden
Craig Lins
Craig Scott
Cynthia J Puckett
Dale Hahs
Dale Masser
Daniel Lauk
Daniel Summers
Darlene M Hopkins
Darlene Silas
David Boerschlein
David F Withee
David Glover
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David Mullen
David N Hanley
David Sandlin
David Shortess
David Smith
David Whisler
Debbie Nispel
Debbie Piper
Deborah Bartow
Deborah Bush
Deborah Miniard
Dennis Jackson
Dianne Forrest
Donna Borkenhagen
Donna Mullis
Douglas Hayes
Drew Curley
Ed Davis
Edgar Navera
Edward Kosky
Edward Quigley
Elaine VanRegenmorter
Elizabeth Nataly Silvestre Herbas
Ellen Lee
Emeline Thermidor
Emily Lee
Esther Roman
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Ethel Lynn Baker
Evangeline Puen
Evelyn Wildgust
Fletcher Coleman

Freda Dibble
Gail Spell
Gary Greer
Gary Shogren
Gay Ellen Stulp
Gene Gossman
George Arlyn Briggs
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Glen Tallent
Grace Balwit
Grace Bird
Greg Stoffregen
Gretchen Stencil
Hallie Miller
Harry Harriss
Heather Hicks
Helen Morse
Hendrik deVries
Henry Bult
Henry Whitney
Hilary O'Sullivan
Ibrahim Audu
Ines Gipson
Irene J Dodson
Jackie Jones
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James Giddens
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Janet O'Herron
Janice Connor
Jaqueline Rotruck
Jeanette Friesen
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Jeff Martin
Jennifer Cunneen
Jenny Thomas
Jerry Lund
Jessica Lauk
Jim Frederick
Jim Lee
Jimmy Warren
Jim Rotruck
Jim Swartzentruber
Jody Garcia
Joe Chater
Joel Bryan
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John Anderson
John Geddis
John D Rogers
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John Luton

John Pace
John P Tornifolio
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Jon Haahr
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Joseph Greene
Joseph Wharton
Joshua Berkowitz
Joshua Calhoun
Joshua Rister
Josh Wondra
Joy Anderson
Joyce Jacobs
Joyce Pedersen
JT Crowder
Judi Brodeen
Judith Cline
Judith C Yon
Julia N Bult
Patty Li
Julie Susanto
Kahar Barat
Kannah Sellers
Kara Anderson
Karen Davie
Karen Dreesen
Karen Fabean
Karen Riecks
Karen Smith
Karen Turner
Kathleen Glover
Kathryn Hendrix
Kathy Mentink
Katrina Geurink
Kay Myers
Kelly Strong
Ken Haugh
Kim Puterbaugh
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Kristin Rinne
Kwesi Opoku-debrah
Langston Spell
Larry Sallee
Lawrence Lipe
Lee Sipe
Leonard Smith
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Lia Hadley
Linda Buckman
Linda Dale Barton
Linda Havemeier
Linda Homer
Linda Lee Sebastien
Linn Peterson
Liz Dakota

Lloyd Box
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Maggie D Paul
Marc Nelson
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Michael Bush
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Michael Francis
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Nancy C. Naughton
Nancy Neu
Nancy VanCott
Neal Snook
Nicholas Scovil
Nick Dettman
Nils Friberg
Noah Crabtree
Pamela B Johnston
Pamela Nungesser
Pamela Roberts
Pam Gullifer
Pat Ankney
Pat Giddens
Patricia Brougher
Patricia Carson
Patricia Cleveland
Patricia Foster
Patricia Middlebrooks
Paul Mellema
Paula Carlson
Paula Oestreich
Paul Holloway

Paul Nungesser
Peggy Anderson
Peggyrose Swartzentruber
Peter Polloni
Phillip Harms
Phyllis Mortensen
Priscilla Enggren
Rachel Agheyisi
Rachel Ropp
Raif Turner
Ray Puen
Reina Y Mora
Rene Bahrenfuss
Renee Triplett
Rhonda Bartels
Richard Beatty
Richard Moreau
Richard Rutter
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Robby Little
Robert W Johnson
Rochelle Hook
Rodney White
Rolaine Franz
Ronald D Hook
Rosario Baria
Roxann Carey
Roxanne Pittard
Ruben Michael Garay
Russell Isham
Russ Perry
Ruth Calo
Ruth E Withee
Ruth Montgomery
Ryan Blizek
Sam Todd
Samuel Njuguna
Sandy Anderson
Sandy Blanes
Sara Giesmann
Sara Van Cott (Barnes)
Sharon Johnson
Sharon Peterson
Sharon Shortess
Shelly Harms
Sherie Nelson
Sherman Sebastien
Sherry Mosher
Stacey Swanson
Steve Gibbs
Steve Mercier
Susan Langohr
Susan Quigley
Susan Snook

Suzanne Richards
Sylvia Thomas
Sze Suze Lau
Tabitha Price
Tammy L Enns
Tammy White
Teresa Everett-Leone
Teresa Linn
Terri Collins
Theresa Baker
Thomas Jopling
Thomas Nickell
Thomas Warren
Tim Coleman
Tim Ingram
Tim Linn
Tim Lovestrand
Tim Mentink
Tom Penry
Tom William Warren
Toni Shuma
Tracie Pogue
Tricia Coffman
Vicki Ivester
Victoria G DeKraker
Victor M Prieto
Vivian Kamph
Vivian Richardson
Ward Pyles
Warren Blaisdell
Wayne Homer
Wendy Coleman
Wendy Colon
Wilbur Zirk
Wil Gipson
William Carson
William Cline
William Dickerson
William Smitherman
William Wilder
Yvonne Tallent

unfoldingWord® Literal Text Contributors

Nicholas Alsop
Scott Bayer
Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
Matt Carlton
George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages
Dan Dennison
Jamie Duguid
Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D.Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Michael Francis
Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation
Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages

Jesse Harris
 C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.
 Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.
 Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.
 John Huffman
 D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament
 Jack Messarra
 Gene Mullen
 Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University
 Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies
 Kristy Nickell
 Tom Nickell
 Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics
 Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
 James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
 Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary
 Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
 Dean Ropp
 Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch
 Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary
 Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy
 Doug Smith, M.T.S., M.Div., Th.M., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
 Leonard Smith
 Suzanna Smith
 Tim Span
 Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary
 Maria Tijerina
 David Trombold, M. Div.
 Aaron Valdizan, M.Div., Th.M. in Old Testament, The Masters Seminary
 James Vigen
 Hendrik "Henry" de Vries
 Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary
 Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)
 Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics
 Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University
 Grant Ailie, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.
 Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text Contributors

Nicholas Alsop
 Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
 Matt Carlton
 George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages
 Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D. Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
 Michael Francis
 Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation
 Kailey Gregory
 Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages
 C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.
 Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.
 Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.
 John Huffman
 D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament
 Robert Hunt

Demsin Lachin
 Jack Messarra
 Gene Mullen
 Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University
 Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies
 Kristy Nickell
 Tom Nickell
 Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics
 Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
 James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
 Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary
 Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
 Dean Ropp
 Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch
 Larry Saltee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary
 Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy
 Christopher Smith, M.A.T.S. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Ph.D. Boston College
 Leonard Smith
 Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary
 David Trombold, M. Div.
 James Vigen
 Hendrik ♦ Henry ♦ de Vries
 Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary
 Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)
 Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics
 Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University
 Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Academy Contributors

Jesse Griffin, BA in Biblical Studies, MA in Biblical Languages
 Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics, MA in Theology, BA in Biblical Studies
 Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
 Henry Whitney, BA in Linguistics
 James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
 Ben Jore, BA Biblical Studies, M.Div.
 Joel D. Ruark, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Theology
 Todd L. Price, PhD in New Testament/Linguistics
 Bev Staley
 Carol Brinneman
 Jody Garcia
 Kara Anderson
 Kim Puterbaugh
 Lizz Carlton
 Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Words Contributors

Andrew Belcher
 David Book
 Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages
 Henry Whitney, Bible translator, Papua New Guinea, 1982-2000
 Larry Saltee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary
 Lizz Carlton

Jan Zanutto
Matthew Latham
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
Richard Joki
Door43 World Missions Community

unfoldingWord® Translation Words Links Contributors

Door43 World Missions Community
Jesse Griffin (BA Biblical Studies, Liberty University; MA Biblical Languages, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary)
Perry Oakes (BA Biblical Studies, Taylor University; MA Theology, Fuller Seminary; MA Linguistics, University of Texas at Arlington; PhD Old Testament, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary)
Larry Sallee (Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary)
Joel D. Ruark (M.A.Th. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary; Th.M. Stellenbosch University; Ph.D. Candidate in Old Testament Studies, Stellenbosch University)