



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

**2 Timothy**

**Version 86**

[en]

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## **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

**Date:** 2025-08-01

**Version:** 86

**Published by:** unfoldingWord

## **unfoldingWord® Literal Text**

**Date:** 2025-08-01

**Version:** 86

**Published by:** unfoldingWord

## **unfoldingWord® Simplified Text**

**Date:** 2025-08-01

**Version:** 86

**Published by:** unfoldingWord

## **unfoldingWord® Hebrew Bible**

**Date:** 2022-10-11

**Version:** 2.1.30

**Published by:** unfoldingWord

## **unfoldingWord® Greek New Testament**

**Date:** 2023-09-26

**Version:** 0.34

**Published by:** unfoldingWord

## **unfoldingWord® Translation Academy**

**Date:** 2025-08-01

**Version:** 86

**Published by:** unfoldingWord®

## **unfoldingWord® Translation Words**

**Date:** 2025-08-01

**Version:** 86

**Published by:** unfoldingWord

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**Date:** 2025-08-01

**Version:** 86

**Published by:** unfoldingWord

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## **unfoldingWord® Translation Notes**

### **2 Timothy**

## Introduction to 2 Timothy

### Part 1: General Introduction

#### Outline of 2 Timothy

Opening (1:1–2)

Thanksgiving (1:3–5)

Exhortation to remain faithful (1:6–18)

Encouragement to persevere (2:1–13)

Instructions for opposing false teaching (2:14–4:8)

Travel plans and news (4:9–18)

Greetings (4:19–21)

Letter closing (4:22)

#### Who wrote the book of 2 Timothy?

The author identifies himself as Paul the apostle. Paul was originally from the city of Tarsus, but he lived in Jerusalem. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Saul was a Pharisee, and he persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, Paul traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire, telling people about Jesus. Eventually he was arrested and taken to Rome, the capital of the empire. After several years in jail, he was released. Sometime later, he was arrested again and, eventually, executed. Most likely, Paul composed this letter during this final time in prison.

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, Paul's disciple and his close friend. Most likely, Timothy was in Ephesus during this time. Paul may have written other letters to Timothy; this is the second one that we still have. That is why it is known as 2 Timothy or Second Timothy.

#### What is the book of 2 Timothy about?

When Paul wrote this letter, he knew that he would soon die. He wrote to encourage Timothy to continue serving God as a leader no matter what would happen to Paul. More specifically, he warned Timothy against false teachers, urged him to teach what is true, cautioned him about evil people, and asked him to visit. Throughout the letter, it is clear that Paul cared deeply for Timothy and wanted him to continue to serve God well even after Paul had died.

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

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 Timothy" or "Second Timothy." Or they may choose a different title, such as "Paul's Second Letter to Timothy" or "A Second Letter from Paul to Timothy." (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

### Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

#### Who were the false teachers?

The only information we have about who these false teachers were and what they taught comes from this letter and from the letters called 1 Timothy and Titus. These false teachers were Christians, or at least claimed to be Christians. They taught by using texts and stories that Paul considered unreliable, they spoke about and debated things that Paul considered unimportant, and they caused divisions and controversies. According to 1 Timothy, they told people not to marry and to avoid eating certain kinds of food. According to 2 Timothy, some of them

taught that the resurrection had already happened. Since the only information about the false teachers and what they taught comes from this letter and 1 Timothy and Titus, it is best not to specify precisely what false teaching this was. You should preserve what Paul said about the false teaching without making it fit into a type of false teaching that might be familiar in your area.

## Part 3: Important Translation Issues

### What did Paul mean by the expression “in Christ Jesus”?

Paul uses the spatial metaphor “in Christ Jesus” seven times in this letter. 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, and sometimes he uses “in Christ Jesus” simply to identify that what he is speaking about is true for those who believe in Jesus. At other times he emphasizes union with Christ as the means or the basis for some statement or exhortation. See the notes on specific verses for help in understanding the contextual meaning of “in Christ Jesus.” (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### What does Paul mean when he uses the word “faith”?

Paul uses the abstract noun “faith” eight times in this letter. The word “faith” could refer to the act of having “faith” or to the content of the “faith,” that is, what it is that Christians believe. In many places in 2 Timothy, Christians have different understandings of which meaning Paul intended. In each of these places, a translation note provides examples of how to express the two possible meanings and the UST models how to express the idea when the word “faith” refers to the act of believing. (See: **faith (p.233)**)

### Who receives the “love” that Paul mentions in the letter?

Paul uses the abstract noun “love” four times in this letter. He could mean that believers should love each other or that they should love God or that they should love both God and each other. If possible, though, you should express the idea so that it could include all of these possibilities. If you must express whom people are to love, it is recommended that you indicate that it is fellow believers. The UST models how to express the idea in that way. (See: **love, beloved (p.235)**)

### To whom does Paul refer with the words “we,” “us,” and “our”?

Paul always uses the first-person plural to refer to both himself and Timothy, and he often includes other believers as well. So, you should always use the inclusive form of the first-person plural in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.144)**)

### When is “you” singular, and when is “you” plural?

Since this letter is addressed to an individual, Timothy, every form of “you” throughout the letter is singular except for “you” in the final blessing in [4:22](#). A note will point out this occurrence of a plural form of “you.” (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.149)**)

### What are the major textual issues in the text of the book of 1 Timothy?

In the following verses, ancient manuscripts do not all have the same words. The ULT uses the words that are found in most of the earliest manuscripts. When you translate these verses, you should compare the ULT with any translations with which your readers may be familiar, enabling you to see what your readers may expect. Unless



there is a good reason to use the alternate words, you should follow the ULT. See the footnotes and notes at each of these verses for more information. (See: **Textual Variants (p.220)**)

- “a teacher” (1:11). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “a teacher of the Gentiles.”
- “Suffer together” (2:3). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “You, therefore, suffer.”
- “God” (2:14). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “the Lord.”
- “and by his appearing” (4:1). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “according to his appearing.”
- “The Lord” (4:22). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “The Lord Jesus Christ.”
- “you” (4:22). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “you. Amen.”

## 2 Timothy 1

### 2 Timothy 1 Chapter Introduction

### Structure and Formatting

Opening (1:1-2)

Thanksgiving (1:3-5)

Exhortation to remain faithful (1:6-18)

- Paul urges Timothy not to be ashamed and to preserve the gospel (1:6-14)
- Paul gives examples of unfaithful and faithful people (1:15-18)

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### Timothy's "gift"

In 1:6, Paul speaks about the "gift" that Timothy received. He received it when Paul laid his hands on Timothy to commission him. It is clear from the context that this "gift" is a special skill or ability that Timothy had. Most likely, this skill or ability enabled Timothy to teach and lead believers well. Since Paul does not state or even imply what the "gift" was, you should use a general word or phrase that refers to a special skill or ability.

#### The "deposit"

In 1:12 and 1:14, Paul refers to a "deposit." These two uses of the word "deposit" can be understood in two ways: 1. In verse 12, Paul is referring to something he "deposits" with God, which would be his life or his eternal blessings. In verse 14, Paul is referring to something that God has "deposited" with Timothy, which would be the gospel or his ministry. 2. In verse 12 and in verse 14, Paul is referring to something that God has "deposited" with himself and Timothy, which would be the gospel or their ministries.

See the notes on these verses for more information and translation options.

### Translation Issues in This Chapter

#### Spiritual children

In 1:2, Paul calls Timothy a "beloved child." By that, he means that Timothy is like a son to him in the context of their faith in Jesus. The phrase implies that Paul is a mentor to Timothy and that Timothy is a good student. Since the use of family language for fellow believers is an important metaphor in the New Testament, if possible, preserve the metaphor or express the idea in simile form. See the notes on this verse for translation options. (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:1

### Paul, an apostle

In this culture, letter writers would give their own names first, referring to themselves in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the first person here. Or if your language has a particular way of introducing the author of a letter, and if it would be helpful to your readers, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [From Paul. I am an apostle] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.146)**)

### through the will of God

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **will**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [because that is what God wanted] or [because of what God decided] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### according to

Here the phrase **according to** could indicate: (1) that the purpose for which Paul is an **apostle** is to tell others about **the promise of life**. Alternate translation: [for the purpose of declaring]; (2) that the reason why Paul is an **apostle** is **the promise of life**. Alternate translation: [because of]; (3) that God's **will** contains or includes **the promise of life**. Alternate translation: [which will contains] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### the promise of life

Here Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **promise** that promises **life**. If this is not clear in your language, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the promise that guarantees life] (See: **Possession (p.202)**)

### of life that {is} in Christ Jesus

Here Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in Christ Jesus** to describe **life** that can only be experienced when someone is in union with **Christ Jesus**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that indicates that this **life** can only be experienced when people are united to **Christ Jesus**. Alternate translation: [of life that is received in union with Christ Jesus] or [of life that is gained when people are united to Christ Jesus] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### of life that {is}

Here Paul is referring to new, eternal **life** with God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [of eternal life that is] or [of new life with God that is] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### of life that {is}

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **life**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [about living forever, which people do] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:2

### to Timothy

In this culture, after giving their own names, letter writers would name those to whom they sent the letter, referring to them in the third person. If that is confusing in your language, you could use the second person here. Or if your language has a particular way of introducing the recipient of a letter, and if it would be helpful to your readers, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [This letter is for you, Timothy] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.146)**)

### beloved child

Paul speaks of his close relationship to Timothy as though Timothy were his **beloved child**. Paul means that he considers himself to be Timothy's spiritual father, and Paul loves Timothy in the way a father loves his child. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who is like a beloved child to me] or [a beloved spiritual son] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### beloved child

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was Paul. Alternate translation: [child whom I love] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord

After stating his name and the name of the person to whom he is writing, Paul adds a blessing for Timothy. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: [May you experience grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord] or [I pray that grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord will always be with you] (See: **Blessings (p.119)**)

### Grace, mercy, peace

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **Grace**, **mercy**, and **peace**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [May you be treated graciously, mercifully, and peacefully by God the Father and by Christ Jesus our Lord] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### God the Father

**Father** is an important title for God the **Father** that describes his relationship with **Jesus** his Son. (See: **Translating Son and Father (p.228)**)

### our

In this letter, Paul uses the words **our**, "we," and "us" to refer either to Timothy and himself or else to all believers, which would also include the two of them. So, use the inclusive forms of those words throughout your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.144)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:3

### I have gratitude

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **gratitude**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [I am grateful] or [I am thankful] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### whom I serve from my ancestors

Here Paul means that he serves God in the same way that his **ancestors** did. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [whom I serve in the way I received from my ancestors] or [whom my ancestors served and I serve as well] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

### with a pure conscience

A **conscience** that is **pure** is one that does not convict a person of doing anything wrong. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [with a clear conscience] or [with a conscience that is not guilty] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

### as I have the constant remembrance concerning you

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **remembrance**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [as I remember you constantly] or [as I think about you constantly] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### you

In this letter, the words **you**, “your,” and “yourself” are singular because they refer to Timothy. There is only one exception. A note will discuss this one exception in [4:22](#). (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.149)**)

### night and day

Here the phrase **night and day** indicates that Paul prays during both the night and the day. This means that he was praying very often every day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [all the time] or [during every night and every day] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:4

### remembering your tears

Here Paul implies that Timothy shed **tears** when Paul had to leave Timothy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [remembering your tears when we separated] or [remembering your tears when I said goodbye to you] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 113)**)

### your tears

Here the word **tears** represents the act of shedding **tears**, that is, crying. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [your weeping] or [your sadness] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

### I may be filled with joy

Paul speaks of himself as if he were a container that could be **filled with joy**. He means that he will experience very much **joy**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I may have very much joy] or [I may rejoice a lot] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### I may be filled with joy

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [joy may fill me] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### I may be filled with joy

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **joy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [may become joyful] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:5

### having received remembrance

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **remembrance**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [having remembered] or [having been reminded] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### of the sincere faith in you, which dwelled first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that {it is} also in you

Here Paul speaks as if **faith** were a living thing that could be or dwell **in** some location. In this context, he means that Timothy, **Lois**, and **Eunice** all have faith. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [of the sincere faith that you have, which your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice had first, and I am persuaded that you also have it] (See: **Personification (p.197)**)

### of the sincere faith in you, which dwelled first

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [that you sincerely believe, which was true first] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### your grandmother

Paul does not indicate whether this **grandmother** is the mother of Timothy's father or mother. If you must specify, the connection with Timothy's mother might imply that she was the mother of Timothy's mother. Alternate translation: [your maternal grandmother] (See: **Kinship (p.177)**)

### Lois & Eunice

The words **Lois** and **Eunice** are the names of women. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

### I am persuaded

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I am sure] or [I am confident] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:6

### For which reason

Here the phrase **which reason** refers back to the fact of Timothy's sincere faith (see 1:5). If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [Because of your sincere faith] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### to rekindle the gift

Here Paul speaks of Timothy's **gift** as if it were a fire that he needed **to rekindle**. He could mean that: (1) Timothy needs to use his **gift** more than he has in the past. Alternate translation: [to make even more use of the gift]; (2) Timothy needs to start using his **gift** again, with the implication being that he has stopped using it consistently. Alternate translation: [to be eager once more to use the gift] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### the gift of God that is in you

Paul speaks of Timothy as if he were a container that could hold **the gift of God**. He means that Timothy has this gift. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the gift of God that you have] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### the gift of God that is in you

Here Paul implies that this **gift** is a specific ability or skill that **God** had given Timothy for his ministry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [the skill that you have as a gift from God] or [the gift of God in you, your special ability,] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### through the laying on of my hands

Here Paul is speaking of a ceremony during which he put his **hands** on Timothy. When he did that, he was commissioning Timothy to use his gift and to proclaim the gospel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to a comparable action in your culture, or you could explain what this action means. Alternate translation: [through the laying on of my hands to commission you] or [once I authorized you by laying my hands on you] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.216)**)



## 2 Timothy 1:7

### For

Here the word **For** introduces a reason why Timothy should rekindle his gift (1:6). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces a reason or basis for an exhortation, or you could leave **For** untranslated. Alternate translation: [You should do that because] or [I remind you of that because] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.128)**)

### a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of self-control

Here the word **spirit** could refer to: (1) the **spirit** of a person, meaning the inner life of a person, that is, how that person thinks, feels, and makes decisions. Alternate translation: [an attitude of fear, but of power and of love and of disposition] or [a heart of fear, but a heart of power and of love and of disciple]; (2) the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: [the Holy Spirit to make us cowardly, but to make us powerful and loving and self-controlled] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### of cowardice, but of power and of love and of self-control

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **fear**, **power**, **love**, and **self-control**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [that makes us cowardly, but one that makes us powerful, loving, and self-controlled] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### of self-control

Here the word **self-control** could refer to: (1) the ability to control or restrain one's desires. Alternate translation: [of moderation] or [of personal restraint]; (2) the ability to make wise decisions. Alternate translation: [of prudence] or [of clear thinking] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:8

### Therefore

Here the word **Therefore** includes an exhortation that is based on what Paul said in the previous verse about having power, love, and self-control instead of fear. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different word or phrase that introduces an exhortation based on a previous statement. Alternate translation: [So then] or [Because you have that spirit] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.128)**)

### do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [do not let the testimony of our Lord, nor me, his prisoner, shame you] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### the testimony of our Lord

Here Paul is using the possessive form to describe **testimony** that is about **our Lord**. If this is not clear in your language, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the testimony concerning our Lord] or [testifying about our Lord] (See: **Possession (p.202)**)

### his prisoner

Here Paul is using the possessive form to describe himself as a **prisoner** because of how he serves Jesus. If this is not clear in your language, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [a prisoner for his sake] or [a prisoner because I serve the Lord] (See: **Possession (p.202)**)

### suffer together

Here the phrase **suffer together** could indicate that Timothy should suffer with: (1) Paul. Alternate translation: [suffer together with me]; (2) all Christians who suffer. Alternate translation: [suffer together with other believers] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### for the gospel

Here Paul implies that Timothy should be willing to suffer as he believes in and proclaims **the gospel**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [as you preach the gospel] or [for the sake of believing and proclaiming the gospel] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### according to the power of God

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **power**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [as God empowers you] or [which God will make you able to do] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:9

### to a holy calling

Here the phrase **holy calling** could refer to: (1) the result of being called, which is to be **holy**. Alternate translation: [to be holy people]; (2) the way in which God called, which is a **holy** way. Alternate translation: [with a holy calling] or [by means of a holy calling] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

### not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, the {grace} having been given to us

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **works**, **purpose**, or **grace**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [not according to the things we do, but according to what he decided ahead of time and graciously did, which he did for us] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### the {grace} having been given

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was God. Alternate translation: [which God gave] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### in Christ Jesus before eternal times

Here Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in Christ Jesus** to describe the union of believers with **Christ Jesus**. In this case, being **in Christ Jesus**, or united to Christ, is the only way in which believers are given grace. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that indicates that the grace is given to believers as part of their union with **Christ Jesus**. Alternate translation: [before eternal times in union with Christ Jesus] or [before eternal times as part of being united to Christ Jesus] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### before eternal times

Here Paul is indicating that God did this **before** God made the world and before time began to be counted. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [before time began] or [before God made anything] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:10

### and now having been revealed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was God.

Alternate translation: [which now God has revealed] or [which now God has allowed people to know] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### through the appearance of our Savior Christ Jesus

Here the word **appearance** refers to when Jesus became a human being, lived on earth, died, and rose again. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [through how our Savior Christ Jesus became a man and lived, died, and rose again] or [through the incarnation of our Savior Christ Jesus] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### both having abolished death

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **death**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [both having enabled dead people to be dead no longer] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### and having brought to light life and immortality through the gospel

Here Paul speaks as if Jesus used **the gospel** to shine a **light** on **life and immortality**. He means that, by using **the gospel**, Jesus revealed how people can have **life and immortality**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and having taught us about life and immortality through the gospel] or [and having revealed life and immortality through the gospel] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### life and immortality

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **life** and **immortality**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [being able to live and be immortal] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### life and immortality

The two words **life** and **immortality** express a single idea. The word **immortality** describes what kind of **life** Paul is speaking about. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning in a different way. Alternate translation: [immortal life] (See: **Hendiadys (p.155)**)

### life

Here Paul is referring to new, eternal life with God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [eternal life] or [new life with God] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:11

### for which

Here the pronoun **which** refers back to “the gospel” in the previous verse. If this is not clear for your readers, you could refer to “the gospel” more directly. Alternate translation: [for which gospel] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.206)**)

### I was appointed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was God. Alternate translation: [God appointed me] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### a herald

A **herald** is someone who is sent out to announce a message. If your readers would not be familiar with a person who performs this kind of task, you could use the name of something similar in your area or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [an announcer] or [a messenger] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.225)**)

### a teacher

Many ancient manuscripts read **a teacher**. The ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “a teacher of the Gentiles.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of the ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.220)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:12

### for which reason

Here the phrase **which reason** refers back to the fact that Paul was appointed to be a herald, apostle, and teacher (see 1:11). If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [because of which appointment] or [and so] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### I also suffer these things

Here Paul does not mention the specific **things** that he is suffering, but from the context of the letter, Timothy would have known that he was referring to suffering as a prisoner (see 2:9). If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [I also suffer as a prisoner] or [I also suffer while I am in jail] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### I am not ashamed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who would do the action, it is clear from the context that it would be the things that Paul is suffering. Alternate translation: [that does not shame me] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### in whom

The pronoun **whom** could refer: (1) to God generally. Alternate translation: [God, in whom]; (2) to Jesus specifically. Alternate translation: [Jesus, in whom] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.206)**)

### I have been persuaded

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I am confident] or [I know] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### to guard my deposit

Here Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **deposit** that could be: (1) something that Paul has entrusted to God. Alternate translation: [to guard the deposit from me]; (2) something that God has entrusted to Paul. Alternate translation: [to guard the deposit given to me] (See: **Possession (p.202)**)

### to guard my deposit

Here Paul speaks as if God were guarding a **deposit** of money or goods. He means that God will protect or preserve the **deposit**. What the **deposit** represents depends on what you chose in the previous note about who gave the **deposit** to whom. If the **deposit**: (1) was given by Paul to God, then it could represent Paul himself, the rewards he will receive, or his resurrection life. Alternate translation: [to protect my true life] or [to preserve me]; (2) was given by God to Paul, then it could represent the gospel or Paul's ministry. Alternate translation: [to protect the gospel given to me] or [to preserve my ministry] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### that day

Here Paul is referring to the exact moment when Jesus will return to this world, which will also be the end of the current time period. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate

translation: [that day when Jesus will return] or [Jesus' second coming] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:13

### Hold the pattern

Here Paul indicates that he wants Timothy to maintain the basic form and content of the **healthy words**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [Maintain the form] or [Preserve the core content] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### of healthy words

Here Paul speaks as if **words** could be **healthy**. He means that these **words** are good and reliable in every way and have no defect or corruption. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [of words that are like healthy food] or [of correct words] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### of healthy words

Here, the word **words** represents things spoken using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [of healthy statements] or [of healthy declarations] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

### in faith and love {that are} in Christ Jesus

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **faith** and **love**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [believing and loving, which you can do in Christ Jesus] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### that are} in Christ Jesus

Here, the phrase **in Christ Jesus** could describe: (1) both **faith** and **love**. Alternate translation: [that are both in Christ Jesus]; (2) just **love**. Alternate translation: [that is in Christ Jesus] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### that are} in Christ Jesus

Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in Christ Jesus** to describe the union of believers with Christ. In this case, being **in Christ Jesus**, or united to **Christ Jesus**, explains how Timothy can have **faith** and **love**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that indicates that Timothy can have **faith** and **love** as one who has been united to **Christ Jesus**. Alternate translation: [that are obtained in union with Christ Jesus] or [that come from being united to Christ Jesus] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)



## 2 Timothy 1:14

### Guard the good deposit

Here, the phrase **good deposit** refers to something that has been entrusted to Timothy and that he must **Guard**. More specifically, the **good deposit** is the gospel, which God entrusted to Timothy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [guard the good deposit of the gospel] or [guard the good gospel, which God entrusted to you.] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 113)**)

### through the Holy Spirit

Alternate translation: [with the help of the Holy Spirit]

### the one dwelling in us

Here Paul speaks as if believers were buildings and as if the **Holy Spirit** were **dwelling in** them. He means that the Holy Spirit is with believers in a special way and empowers them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who is always with us as if he were dwelling in us] or [the one who is with us to give us power] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:15

### You know this, that

Here the word **this** refers directly ahead to the phrase **all the ones in Asia turned away from me**. Paul expressed the idea in this way because it was powerful in his language. If using the word **this** to refer to what someone is about to say would be redundant in your language, you could omit the redundant information and make the expression powerful in another way. Alternate translation: [You surely know that] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.179)**)

### all the ones in Asia

Paul says **all** here as an overstatement to emphasize how many believers turned away from him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [most of the people who believe in Asia] (See: **Hyperbole (p.162)**)

### the ones in Asia

Here the phrase **the ones in Asia** could refer to: (1) believers who are living in **Asia**. Alternate translation: [the believers living in Asia]; (2) believers who are from **Asia** but who were with Paul where he was imprisoned, which was probably in Rome. Alternate translation: [the believers from Asia] or [the ones who came with me from Asia] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### turned away from me

Here Paul speaks of people who stopped listening to him and helping him as if they had **turned away from** him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [turned their backs on me] or [abandoned me] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### turned away from me

Here Paul implies that these people **turned away** because Paul was accused of doing what was wrong, and he was put in jail. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [turned away from me when I was accused] or [turned away from me because I am in prison] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### Phygelus & Hermogenes

The words **Phygelus** and **Hermogenes** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:16

### May the Lord give mercy to the household of Onesiphorus

Here Paul asks God to bless the family of **Onesiphorus**. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: [I ask the Lord to give mercy to the household of Onesiphorus] or [I pray that the household of Onesiphorus will receive mercy from the Lord] (See: **Blessings (p.119)**)

### May the Lord give mercy

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **mercy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [May the Lord be merciful] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### of Onesiphorus

The word **Onesiphorus** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

### was not ashamed of my chain

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [my chain did not shame him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### my chain

Here, **chain** represents imprisonment or being in jail. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [my imprisonment] or [me being in prison] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:17

### but

Here the word **but** introduces what Onesiphorus did instead of being ashamed of Paul. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces this kind of contrast, or you could leave **but** untranslated. Alternate translation: [but instead,] or [and rather,] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.124)**)

### in Rome

Here Paul implies that he was in prison in **Rome**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [in Rome, where I am,] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 1:18

**May the Lord give to him to find mercy from the Lord in that day. And as much as he served in Ephesus, you know very well**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these sentences since the second sentence continues to describe what Onesiphorus did, as the previous verse does. Alternate translation: [And as much as he served in Ephesus, you know very well. May the Lord give to him to find mercy from the Lord in that day] (See: **Information Structure (p.171)**)

**May the Lord give to him to find mercy from the Lord**

Here Paul again asks God to bless Onesiphorus. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. See how you translated the similar blessing in 1:16. Alternate translation: [I ask the Lord to give to him to find mercy from the Lord] or [I pray that he will have mercy from the Lord] (See: **Blessings (p.119)**)

**to find mercy from the Lord**

Here Paul speaks of **mercy** as if it were an object that Onesiphorus could **find**. He means that he wants Onesiphorus to experience **mercy**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to receive mercy from the Lord] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

**to find mercy from the Lord**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **mercy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [to be treated mercifully by the Lord] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

**in that day**

Here Paul is referring to the exact moment when Jesus will return to this world, which will also be when he judges everyone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [on that day when Jesus will return] or [at the final judgment] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

**as much as he served**

Here Paul could be implying that Onesiphorus **served**: (1) Paul specifically. Alternate translation: [as much as he served me]; (2) believers in general. Alternate translation: [as much as he served believers] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 2

### 2 Timothy 2 Chapter Introduction

#### Structure and Formatting

Encouragement to persevere (2:1–13)

- Paul instructs Timothy in how to serve Jesus (2:1–7)
- Paul and the gospel he preaches (2:8–10)
- A trustworthy saying (2:11–13)

Instructions for opposing false teaching (2:14–4:8)

- Paul instructs Timothy to teach what is right and avoid false teaching (2:14–19)
- God's people as a house (2:20–21)
- Paul explains the traits that should characterize Timothy (2:22–26)

In 2:11–13, Paul either quotes a poetic hymn or composes his own poetry. Because these verses are poetry, the ULT sets each line farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to distinguish them from prose. Consider how you might express these verses as poetry in your language.

### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

#### False teaching

In 2:16–18, Paul refers to false teaching. He describes the teaching as “profane empty sayings” that lead to ungodliness. He further indicates that the false teaching can spread like an infectious disease and destroy people's faith in Jesus. Finally, in 2:23, Paul refers to “foolish and ignorant controversies” that cause debates and divisions within the church. However, Paul writes very little about the content of this false teaching. The only information he gives is that two men who are false teachers say that the resurrection has already happened (see 2:18). This could mean that everyone already has their resurrected bodies, that there is only a spiritual resurrection, or that people who are on earth have somehow missed the resurrection. Paul does not give enough information to know which of these options is what the false teachers were saying. So, it is best to refer to the false teaching in very general terms, as Paul does, without including any information that might be implied.

### Translation Issues in This Chapter

#### The three illustrations in 2:4–6

In these three verses, Paul describes a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer. He describes these people as illustrations to show how Timothy should behave as a leader and teacher in the church. Since Paul tells Timothy to think carefully about these illustrations so that he can understand them (see 2:7), it is best not to explain the illustrations in your translation. However, if it would be helpful in your language, you could include footnotes that explain what the illustrations might mean. Here are likely interpretations: 1. The soldier avoids becoming involved in matters of regular life. That way, he can please his commander. In the same way, Timothy should focus on pleasing Jesus. To do so, he will need to avoid becoming involved in many things that most people care about. 2. The athlete can only be declared the winner if he or she competes according to the rules. In the same way, Timothy must do what God has required. Only then will he successfully lead and teach other believers. 3. The farmer who works hard should receive a share of the crop before anyone else does. In the same way, if Timothy works hard to serve Jesus, he

deserves to receive a reward. This reward could be payment and support from the believers he leads, or it could be the rewards that God will give him at the final judgment.

## A house and the containers in it

In [2:19–21](#), Paul speaks about a house and the containers within it in order to teach Timothy about the church. In [2:19](#), Paul indicates that “the firm foundation of God” stands despite the false teachers. The firm foundation could represent the gospel, which is the basis for the church, or it could represent the church itself. In [2:20](#), Paul refers to “containers” that are found within “a great house.” The implication is that this “great house” is built on the “firm foundation” and so, represents God’s people, the church. Paul then speaks about the “containers,” some of which are valuable and durable and some of which are cheap and breakable. The valuable and durable containers are used for honorable tasks, while the cheap and breakable containers are used for dishonorable tasks. The valuable and durable containers probably represent people who serve God well, while the cheap and breakable containers probably represent people, including the false teachers, who are failing to serve God well. Then in [2:21](#) Paul urges people to cleanse themselves so that they can be like the valuable and durable containers. Since this is an extended metaphor that Paul partly explains in [2:21](#), you should preserve the figure of speech in some form. See the notes on these verses for translation options. (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.116)**)

## Translation Issues in This Chapter

### The poetry in [2:11–13](#)

In these verses, Paul either quotes or composes a short work of poetry. Some scholars think that Paul is quoting part of an early hymn. These verses describe the union of believers with Jesus and how Jesus responds when Christians deny and are unfaithful to him. Consider what form your language uses for poetry and for hymns. If possible, express these verses using that form. (See: **Poetry (p.199)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:1

### You, therefore

Here the word **therefore** could introduce: (1) an inference from 1:15–18. In this case, Paul wants Timothy to act like Onesiphorus and not like Phygelus and Hermogenes. Alternate translation: [Like those who have not abandoned me, you too] or [In contrast to Phygelus and Hermogenes, you]; (2) an inference from most or all of chapter 1. Alternate translation: [Given all that, you]; (3) further exhortation to Timothy that is not based on anything specific. Alternate translation: [Now you] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.128)**)

### my child

Paul speaks of his close relationship to Timothy as though Timothy were his **child**. Paul means that he is Timothy's spiritual father, and Paul loves Timothy in the way a father loves his child. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who are like a child to me] or [my spiritual son] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### be strengthened

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who does the action, you could indicate that it is: (1) God. Alternate translation: [let God strengthen you]; (2) Timothy himself. Alternate translation: [strengthen yourself] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### in the grace {that is} in Christ Jesus

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: [in the way that God acts graciously toward you in Christ Jesus] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### in the grace

Here the word **in** could introduce: (1) the circumstance in which Timothy is **strengthened**. Alternate translation: [while you experience the grace]; (2) the means by which Timothy is **strengthened**. Alternate translation: [by the grace] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### that is} in Christ Jesus

Here Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in Christ Jesus** to describe the union of believers with Christ Jesus. In this case, being **in Christ Jesus**, or united to **Christ Jesus**, is the way in which Timothy is given **grace**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that indicates that the **grace** is given to Timothy as part of his union with **Christ Jesus**. Alternate translation: [that is given in union with Christ Jesus] or [that you have because you are united to Christ Jesus] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)



## 2 Timothy 2:2

### through many witnesses

Here the phrase **through many witnesses** could indicate that: (1) many people have witnessed or testified to the truth of what Paul has taught Timothy. Alternate translation: [that many witnesses have affirmed]; (2) Timothy has been taught by Paul in the presence of many people who can witness or testify to what Paul said. Alternate translation: [in the presence of many witnesses] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### place these things before

Paul speaks of his teachings as if they were objects that Timothy could physically **place** before other people. He means that Timothy should give these people the same teachings that Paul gave to Timothy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [pass these things on to] or [speak these things to] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### faithful men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Paul is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that makes this clear. Alternate translation: [to faithful men and women] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.230)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:3

### Suffer together

Here the phrase **Suffer together** could indicate that Timothy should suffer with: (1) Paul. Alternate translation: [Suffer together with me]; (2) all Christians who suffer. Alternate translation: [Suffer together with other believers] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### Suffer together

Many ancient manuscripts read **Suffer together**. The ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “You, therefore, suffer.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of the ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.220)**)

### as a good soldier of Jesus Christ

Here Paul speaks as if Timothy were a **soldier** who fights for and serves **Jesus Christ**. A **good soldier** is one who obeys his commander even if that means suffering and pain. So, Timothy will be like **a good soldier** when he obeys Jesus even if that means that he will **Suffer together** with Paul. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [as if you were a good soldier and Jesus Christ were your commander] or [as someone who faithfully serves Jesus Christ no matter what happens] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:4

### No one serving as a soldier is entangled in the affairs of life, so that he may please the one having enlisted him

Here Paul continues to speak about a **soldier** to help Timothy understand how to behave. Just as a soldier focuses on pleasing his commander, so Timothy should focus on pleasing Jesus. To do so, he will have to avoid becoming **entangled in the affairs of life**. Since Paul tells Timothy in 2:7 to think carefully about the examples that he gives in this verse and in 2:5–6, you should not explain the meaning of this metaphor here. However, if it would be helpful in your language, you could use a form that indicates that Paul is using a metaphor or giving an example. Alternate translation: [Imagine that you are a soldier. No one serving as a soldier is entangled in the affairs of life, so that he may please the one having enlisted him] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.116)**)

### is entangled in the affairs of life

Paul speaks of **the affairs of life** as if they were a net that could trap people and keep them from being able to move freely. He means that **the affairs of life** would prevent a soldier from doing what he is supposed to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is trapped by the affairs of life] or [is distracted by the affairs of life] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### is entangled

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [entangles himself] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### in the affairs of life

Here the phrase **the affairs of life** refers to the normal things that people who are not soldiers do and care about, including having a job and owning a home. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to those things more explicitly. Alternate translation: [in the normal tasks of everyday life] or [in the everyday jobs of civilian life] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### the one having enlisted him

Alternate translation: [his leader] or [the one who commands him]

## 2 Timothy 2:5

### But also

Here the phrase **But also** introduces another example or metaphor that Paul uses to explain how Timothy should serve Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces another example, or you could leave **But also** untranslated. Alternate translation: [Further] or [Similarly] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.130)**)

### if anyone competes, he is not crowned if he has not competed lawfully

Here Paul speaks about an athlete who **competes** in a sport. He speaks about this to help Timothy understand how to behave. Just as an athlete will only receive the crown given to the winner if he competes **lawfully**, so Timothy will only be rewarded if he serves Jesus **lawfully**, that is, as Jesus desires. Since Paul tells Timothy in 2:7 to think carefully about the examples that he gives in this verse and in 2:4 and 2:6, you should not explain the meaning of this metaphor here. However, if it would be helpful in your language, you could use a form that indicates that Paul is using a metaphor or giving an example. Alternate translation: [imagine that you are an athlete. If anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned if he has not competed lawfully] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### if anyone competes, he is not crowned if he has not competed lawfully

Here Paul uses an imaginary situation to show what happens when athletes do not compete **lawfully**. Use a natural method in your language for introducing an imaginary situation. Alternate translation: [suppose someone did not compete lawfully. In that case, he would not be crowned] (See: **Hypothetical Situations (p.166)**)

### competes

Here the word **competes** refers specifically to competing in an athletic event. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [competes in an athletic event] or [competes as an athlete] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### he is not crowned if he has not competed lawfully

If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning in positive form. Alternate translation: [he can only be crowned if he has competed lawfully] (See: **Double Negatives (p.134)**)

### he is not crowned

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who would do the action, it is clear from the context that it would be the officials or referees who were judging the competition. Alternate translation: [the officials will not crown him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### he is not crowned

In Paul's culture, when athletes won competitions, they were **crowned** with wreaths made from the leaves of plants. If your readers would not be familiar with this custom, you could refer to how athletes are recognized as winners in your culture, or you could use a more general statement. Alternate translation: [he is not given an award] or [he is not declared the winner] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.225)**)

## he has not competed lawfully

Here Paul refers to the rules that governed a competition. The athletes had to obey the rules, or they would be removed from the competition and not have an opportunity to win. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [he has not competed according to the rules of the competition] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:6

### It is necessary for the hardworking farmer first to share in the fruits

Here Paul speaks about a **farmer** who is **hardworking**. He speaks about this to help Timothy understand how to behave. Just as this kind of **farmer** should be **first to share in the fruits**, so Timothy will be **first** to receive rewards if he works hard to serve Jesus. Since Paul tells Timothy in 2:7 to think carefully about the examples that he gives in this verse and in 2:4-5, you should not explain the meaning of this metaphor here. However, if it would be helpful in your language, you could use a form that indicates that Paul is using a metaphor or giving an example. Alternate translation: [Now imagine that you are a farmer. It is necessary for the hardworking farmer first to share in the fruits] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### for the hardworking farmer

The word **farmer** represents farmers in general, not one particular farmer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [any hardworking farmer] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.151)**)

### first to share in the fruits

Here Paul implies that other people will **share in the fruits**, but the farmer is one who should **share in** them **first**. In other words, he is the one who deserves to receive the benefits of his work before anyone else does. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [to share in the fruits before anyone else does] or [to receive the first share of the fruits] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:7

### Think about what I am saying

Here Paul means that Timothy should **Think about** what Paul has written about soldiers, athletes, and farmers (2:4-6). He wants Timothy to apply these examples to himself as he serves Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [Think about the examples I have given] or [Think about what I have said about soldiers, athletes, and farmers] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.113))

### will give you understanding

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **understanding**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [will help you to understand] (See: **Abstract Nouns** (p.108))

### in everything

Here the phrase **in everything** could refer to: (1) everything related to the three examples that Paul has given to Timothy in the previous verses. Alternate translation: [about everything that I have just said] or [about all those examples]; (2) everything that Timothy needs to know to serve Jesus well. Alternate translation: [about everything that you need to know] or [about all things related to serving him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.113))

## 2 Timothy 2:8

### Remember

Here the word **Remember** indicates that Timothy should think consistently about **Jesus Christ**. It does not imply that Timothy might completely forget about **Jesus Christ**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [Concentrate on] or [Consistently think about] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### having been raised from the dead, from the seed of David

Jesus was born **from the seed of David** before he was **raised from the dead**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these clauses to express the ideas in sequential order. Alternate translation: [from the seed of David, having been raised from the dead] (See: **Order of Events (p.195)**)

### having been raised

Here the word **raised** refers to someone who died coming back to life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [having been restored to life] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

### having been raised

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, Paul implies that God did it. Alternate translation: [whom God has raised] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### from the dead

Paul is using the adjective **dead** as a noun in order to refer to people who are **dead**. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: [from among the dead people] or [from the corpses] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

### from the seed of David

Here Paul speaks as if Jesus were a plant that grew from a **seed** that came from **David**. He means that Jesus is a descendant of **David**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who is descended from David] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### according to my gospel

Here Paul is using the possessive form to describe the **gospel** that God gave to him to preach. If this is not clear in your language, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [according to the gospel message that I preach] or [according to the gospel that was given to me] (See: **Possession (p.202)**)



## 2 Timothy 2:9

### even to chains

Here, **chains** represent imprisonment. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [even to imprisonment] or [even up to being imprisoned] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

### like a criminal

Paul is saying that he is being treated **like a criminal** because he has been put in jail with those who break laws. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [like someone who has committed crimes] or [like someone who has disobeyed the government] (See: **Simile (p.213)**)

### the word of God has not been bound

Here Paul speaks as if **the word of God** could have been **bound**, as Paul has been. However, even when Paul is in jail and cannot preach the gospel in many places, **the word of God** cannot be restrained or contained in one place. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the word of God cannot be restrained as a prisoner can be restrained by chains] or [nothing is holding back the message from God] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### the word of God has not been bound

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, you could use an indefinite subject. Alternate translation: [nothing has bound the word of God] or [nobody has bound the word of God] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### the word of God

Here Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **word** that comes from God. Alternate translation: [the word that comes from God] (See: **Possession (p.202)**)

### the word

Here, **word** represents the gospel, which people communicate using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the gospel] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:10

### Because of this, I endure all things

The pronoun **this** could refer to: (1) what Paul said in the previous verse about how God's word is not bound. Alternate translation: [Because God's word has not been bound, I endure all things]; (2) what Paul is about to say about **the elect** and their **salvation**. Alternate translation: [Here is why I endure all things:] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.206)**)

### I endure all things

Paul says **all** here as an overstatement to emphasize that he endures every bad thing that happens to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [I endure all of these sufferings] or [I endure many things] (See: **Hyperbole (p.162)**)

### the elect

Paul is using the adjective **elect** as a noun to mean people whom God has chosen. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [the elect people] or [those who have been chosen] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

### they also may obtain salvation {that is} in Christ Jesus

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **salvation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [they also may be saved, which happens in Christ Jesus] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### that is} in Christ Jesus

Here Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in Christ Jesus** to describe the union of believers with **Christ Jesus**. In this case, being **in Christ Jesus**, or united to **Christ Jesus**, is the only way in which believers **obtain salvation**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that indicates that believers **obtain salvation** as part of their union with **Christ Jesus**. Alternate translation: [that is received in union with Christ Jesus] or [that they have because they are united to Christ Jesus] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### with eternal glory

Here the phrase **with eternal glory** could refer to **glory**: (1) that goes along with salvation. Alternate translation: [along with eternal glory]; (2) that characterizes salvation. Alternate translation: [salvation that has eternal glory] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### with eternal glory

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Be sure that your translation fits with the option you chose in the previous note. Alternate translation: [and they will live gloriously forever] or [along with being eternally great] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:11

### The word {is} trustworthy

Here, **word** represents what Paul is about to write using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [What I am about to write is trustworthy] or [The following words are trustworthy] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

**For if we died with {him}, we will also live with {him} & If we endure, we will also reign with {him}. If we deny {him}, he also will deny us & If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he is not able to deny himself**

These words are the **word** that Paul shares with Timothy. To indicate this, the ULT and UST put quotation marks around these words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use quotation marks or another form to indicate which words are the ones that Paul introduces as the word. (See: **Quote Markings (p.210)**)

### For

Here the word **For** could: (1) be part of the **word** that Paul quotes here. In this case, **For** does not connect directly with anything that Paul has previously said. Alternate translation: [In fact,]; (2) introduce the **word** as the reason for what Paul has said in the previous verses about remembering Jesus and enduring in suffering. Alternate translation: [We should endure because] or [Remember Christ Jesus because] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.130)**)

### if we died with {him}

Paul speaks as if this were a hypothetical situation, but he means that this does certainly happen. If your language does not state something as a condition if it does happen, and if your readers might think that what Paul is saying is uncertain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: [when we died with him] (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.126)**)

### we died with {him}

Here Paul refers to how believers, in their union with Christ, share in Christ's death. In this way, they too have died. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [we died, as it were, with him] or [we participated in the Messiah's death] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### we will also live with {him}

Here Paul refers to the new life that believers receive in their union with Christ. This new life can be experienced now, but Paul seems especially to be speaking about the eternal life that believers will have after Jesus comes back. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [we will also experience new life with him] or [we will also have eternal life with him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:12

### we endure

Here Paul implies that believers must **endure** suffering and persecution. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [we endure suffering] or [we endure persecution] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### we deny {him

Here Paul refers to people denying that they know and believe in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [we deny that we believe in him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### he also will deny us

Here Paul implies that at the final judgment Jesus **will deny** that these people know him and believe in him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [he also will deny that we believe in him] or [he also will deny at the final judgment that we are his followers] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:13

### we are unfaithful

Here the word **unfaithful** could refer to: (1) failing to be loyal to Jesus and disobeying him. Alternate translation: [we disobey Jesus] or [we are disloyal to Jesus]; (2) failing to believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: [we stop believing in Jesus] or [if we no longer trust Jesus] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### he remains faithful

Here the word **faithful** could indicate that: (1) Jesus remains loyal to these people. In other words, he still does what he said he would, even if they do not. Alternate translation: [he continues to do what he said he would] or [he remains true to them]; (2) Jesus consistently acts based on who he is. In this case, Jesus will be **faithful** to his promise to deny those who deny him. Alternate translation: [he remains consistent and will deny them] or [he is true to himself and will judge them] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### he is not able to deny himself

Here the phrase **deny himself** refers to a person choosing not to do what they would naturally do. Here, then, Paul means that Jesus is able to do only what he would naturally do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [he is not able to stop doing what he does] or [he will always do what fits with who he is] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:14

### Remind {them} of

Here Paul implies that Timothy should **Remind** the believers who are with him and over whom he has responsibility. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [Remind the believers there of] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### these things

Here the phrase **these things** refer to what Paul has previously written. This includes the trustworthy word in [2:11–13](#) and perhaps also [2:1–10](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [what I have written] or [the things I have just said] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### declaring before God

Here Paul could be: (1) indicating that **God** knows and approves what Timothy should command the believers. Alternate translation: [declaring with God hearing and approving] or [declaring by God's authority]; (2) asking Timothy to put the believers under oath, making them swear by **God**, that they will do what Timothy tells them to do. Alternate translation: [making them swear before God] or [requiring that they solemnly promise God] (See: **Oath Formulas (p.191)**)

### God

Many ancient manuscripts read **God**. The ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “the Lord.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of the ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.220)**)

### not to battle about words

Here Paul refers to arguments about what **words** mean as if they were battles. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [not to dispute about words] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### to the destruction of the ones hearing

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: [and it destroys the ones hearing] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### to the destruction of the ones hearing

Here Paul implies that battling about words damages the faith **of the ones hearing** and stops their spiritual growth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [to the destruction of the faith of the ones hearing] or [to the ruin of the spiritual growth of the ones hearing] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:15

### Strive to present yourself approved to God

Here Paul means that Timothy should **Strive** to be the kind of person who is **approved** by **God**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Work hard so that God approves of you] or [Do your best to please God] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

### a worker

Here Paul speaks as if Timothy were a skilled **worker**. He means that Timothy works for God as a teacher and leader. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [like a craftsman] or [someone who works for God and is] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### not ashamed

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say what would do the action, it is clear from the context that it would be his work. Alternate translation: [without shame] or [whose work does not shame him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### cutting the word of truth straight

Paul refers to **the word of truth** as if it were wood or cloth that Timothy should cut **straight**. He means that Timothy should understand and teach **the word of truth** carefully and properly. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [teaching the word of truth rightly as if it were a piece of cloth that you were cutting straight] or [instructing others properly in the word of truth] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### the word of truth

Here Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **word** that could be: (1) true. Alternate translation: [the word that is true]; (2) that is about something that is true. Alternate translation: [the word about what is true] (See: **Possession (p.202)**)

### the word of truth

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Be sure that your translation fits with the option you chose in the previous note. Alternate translation: [the true word] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### the word

Here, **word** represents the gospel, which people communicate with words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the gospel] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:16

### But

Here the word **But** introduces how Timothy should treat **profane empty sayings** in contrast with how he should treat “the word of truth” (2:15). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces this kind of contrast, or you could leave **But** untranslated. Alternate translation: [In contrast,] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.124)**)

### profane, empty sayings

Here Paul implies that the **sayings** are **empty** of useful or true information. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [the profane sayings that have no meaning] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### they will advance

The pronoun **they** could refer to: (1) the people who speak and listen to the **profane empty sayings**. When Paul refers to “their word” in 2:17, he seems to be speaking about these people. Alternate translation: [the people who indulge in them will advance] or [those who speak and listen to them will advance]; (2) the **profane empty sayings** themselves. In this case, Paul means that the **sayings** become more and more ungodly as people use them. Alternate translation: [these sayings will advance] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.206)**)

### they will advance further in ungodliness

Here Paul speaks of people who speak the **profane empty sayings** as if they could physically **advance further** or progress in a certain direction, and he speaks of **ungodliness** as that direction. He means that these people become more and more ungodly as they speak these **sayings**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they have even more ungodliness] or [they will be characterized by even more ungodliness] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### in ungodliness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **ungodliness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [in being ungodly] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)



## 2 Timothy 2:17

### their word

Here, **word** represents what people communicate using words. In this case, Paul is referring specifically to the “profane empty sayings” to which he referred in [2:16](#). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [their sayings] or [their message] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

### will have a spreading like gangrene

Paul is saying that profane empty sayings will spread **like gangrene** because both these sayings and **gangrene** spread quickly and are dangerous. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [will spread quickly and destroy things, just as gangrene does] (See: **Simile (p.213)**)

### gangrene

The word **gangrene** refers to a type of tissue death caused by infection or lack of blood circulation. The type of **gangrene** that Paul is referring to can spread quickly through a person's body and can lead to death. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of infection, you could use the name of something similar in your area or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [a contagious infection] or [a deadly disease] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.225)**)

### Hymenaeus and Philetus

The words **Hymenaeus** and **Philetus** are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:18

### have missed the mark concerning the truth

Paul speaks as if **the truth** were a mark or target that these two men have **missed**. Paul means that these men have failed to maintain **the truth**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [have not remained in the truth] or [have ceased to have the truth] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### concerning the truth

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [concerning what is true] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### the resurrection has already happened

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **resurrection**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [that people have already resurrected] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### who} overturn the faith of some

Here Paul speaks of **faith** as if it were an object that these two men could **overturn**. He means that they are disrupting or destroying people's faith in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who tear down the faith of some] or [who cause some to lose their faith] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### the faith of some

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [how some believed] or [some who used to believe] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:19

### the firm foundation of God stands

Here Paul speaks of a **firm foundation** that **stands** to indicate that something that **God** has established is secure and will remain. Paul could be referring to: (1) God's people, the church. In this case, God has established his people as a **firm foundation**, and no false teaching can make them stop believing. Alternate translation: [the church of God stands like a firm foundation]; (2) the gospel. In this case, God has established the gospel as a **firm foundation**, and no false teaching can corrupt it. Alternate translation: [the gospel of God stands like a firm foundation] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### having this seal

Here Paul speaks as if the **foundation** had a **seal** on it. He means that God has made official statements about the **foundation**. These official statements guarantee that the **foundation** is valid and belongs to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [having these official statements from God which are like a seal] or [about which God has officially said] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### The Lord knew the ones being his,” and “Let everyone naming the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness

Here Paul introduces a quotation and a summary, both of which come from the Old Testament Scriptures. The first quotation is from Numbers 16:5. Paul quotes these words from an ancient translation into Timothy's language. The second quotation is a summary of many verses in the Old Testament. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could format these words as quotations, as the ULT and UST do, and you could include information about the quotations in a footnote. (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.208)**)

### The Lord & of the Lord

Here the word **Lord** could refer to: (1) Jesus specifically. Alternate translation: [Jesus the Lord ... of Jesus the Lord]; (2) God generally. Alternate translation: [The Lord God ... of the Lord God] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### knew

Here the author of the quotation uses the past tense to refer to something that is always true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use whatever tense is natural for stating a general truth. Alternate translation: [has known] (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.173)**)

### Let everyone naming the name of the Lord depart from

Here Paul speaks of **unrighteousness** if it were a location from which people should **depart**. He means that these people should stop doing what is unrighteous. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Let everyone naming the name of the Lord avoid] or [Let everyone naming the name of the Lord reject] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

## Let everyone naming the name of the Lord depart

If your language does not use the third-person imperative in this way, you could state this in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Everyone naming the name of the Lord should depart] (See: **Third-Person Imperatives (p.222)**)

## naming the name of the Lord

Here the phrase **naming the name of the Lord** refers to claiming that one serves and believes in **the Lord**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who claims to follow the Lord] or [who claims to believe in the Lord] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

## from unrighteousness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **unrighteousness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [from acting unrighteously] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:20

### Now

Here the word **Now** introduces the next thing that Paul wants to write about. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces the next topic, or you could leave **Now** untranslated. Alternate translation: [Further,] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.130)**)

### in a great house, there are not only gold and silver containers, but also wood and clay, and some for honor and some for dishonor

To teach Timothy, Paul speaks of the church as if it were a **great house** that contained **containers**, which represent people who are part of the church. This is an important figure of speech that Paul continues in the next verse, so you should preserve it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use a form that introduces an illustration or example. Alternate translation: [here is an illustration: in a great house, there are not only gold and silver containers, but also wood and clay, and some for honor and some for dishonor] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.116)**)

### containers

The word translated as **container** is a general term for items that people use when they are performing household duties. These items include bowls and pots but also tools such as knives and shovels. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a general word that refers to this kind of item, or you could list several examples. Alternate translation: [bowls, knives, and similar items] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### but also wood and clay

Paul is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [but there are also wood and clay containers] (See: **Ellipsis (p.139)**)

### some for honor and some for dishonor

Paul is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [some are made for honor and some are made for dishonor] (See: **Ellipsis (p.139)**)

### some for honor and some for dishonor

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **honor** and **dishonor**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [some for being used in honorable ways and some for being used in dishonorable ways] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:21

**if someone has cleansed himself from these, he will be a container for honor, having been sanctified, useful to the master, having been prepared for every good work**

Here Paul continues to speak of believers as if they were each a **container**. In this verse, Paul gives some explanation of this figure of speech. When people cleanse themselves, they become like clean containers that can be used in honorable ways and that are useful to the **master** of the house, who represents God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form to explain the figure of speech. Alternate translation: [if someone has cleansed himself from these, he will be like a container for honor. Like such a container, he will be sanctified and useful to God, who is like the master of the house. He will be prepared for every good work] (See: **Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors (p.116)**)

### these

Here the word **these** could refer to: (1) what Paul has said in [2:16–18](#) about what the false teachers do and say. The particular focus, then, is on ungodliness and false teaching. Alternate translation: [from ungodliness and false teaching] or [these ungodly things]; (2) the containers for dishonor that Paul mentioned in [2:20](#). In this case, the focus could be on the containers or the dishonor. Alternate translation: [these containers for dishonor] or [that dishonor] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### himself & he will be

Although the terms **himself** and **he** are masculine, Paul is using the words in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that makes this clear. Alternate translation: [himself or herself ... he or she will be] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.230)**)

### for honor

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **honor**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [that is used in honorable ways] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### having been sanctified

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was God. Alternate translation: [having become holy] or [one that God has sanctified] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### having been prepared

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was God. Alternate translation: [being ready] or [one that God has prepared] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:22

### But

Here the word **But** introduces the next thing that Paul wants to write about. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces the next idea, or you could leave **But** untranslated. Alternate translation: [Now] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.130)**)

### flee

Paul speaks of **youthful lusts** as if they were things a person could physically run away from. He means that Timothy should always avoid these **lusts**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [make sure that you do not have] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### youthful lusts

Here Paul is referring to **lusts** that generally characterize **youthful** people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [the lusts that youthful people often have] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with the ones calling on the Lord from a pure heart

Here the phrase **with the ones calling on the Lord from a pure heart** could modify: (1) **pursue**. In this case, Timothy is supposed to **pursue** these good qualities along with the people who are **calling on the Lord from a pure heart**. Alternate translation: [pursue, with the ones calling on the Lord from a pure heart, righteousness, faith, love, peace]; (2) **peace**. In this case, the people with whom Timothy should have peace are those **calling on the Lord from a pure heart**. Alternate translation: [pursue righteousness, faith, and love, and pursue peace with the ones calling on the Lord from a pure heart] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### pursue

Paul speaks of **righteousness** and other good qualities as if they were things that a person could **pursue** and catch. He means that Timothy should try very hard to be characterized by these good things. Alternate translation: [seek to acquire] or [work hard to be characterized by] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### righteousness, faith, love, peace

If your language does not use abstract nouns for some or all of the ideas in this list, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [becoming more righteous, believing, loving, peaceful] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### faith

Here the word **faith** could refer to: (1) belief in Jesus. Alternate translation: [faith in Jesus]; (2) faithfulness in doing what God requires. Alternate translation: [faithfulness] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## the ones calling on the Lord

The phrase **calling on the Lord** refers to worshiping and praying to **the Lord**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the ones praying to the Lord] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

## the Lord from a pure heart

Here the phrase **from a clean heart** could be: (1) another description of these people. Alternate translation: [the Lord who have a pure heart]; (2) a description of how they are **calling on the Lord**. Alternate translation: [the Lord, which they do with a pure heart] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## from a pure heart

In Paul's culture, the **heart** is the place where humans think and feel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate **heart** by referring to the place where humans think and feel in your culture or by expressing the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [from a pure mind] or [from pure thoughts] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)



## 2 Timothy 2:23

### But

Here the word **But** introduces how Timothy should treat **foolish and uneducated controversies** in contrast to how he should “pursue” the good qualities that Paul listed in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces this kind of contrast, or you could leave **But** untranslated. Alternate translation: [In contrast,] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.124)**)

### foolish and ignorant controversies

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of controversies, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [debating about foolish and ignorant things] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### foolish and ignorant

The terms **foolish** and **ignorant** mean similar things. Paul is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [very foolish] or [completely ignorant] (See: **Doublet (p.137)**)

### they give birth to

Here Paul speaks of the **controversies** as if they were mothers giving birth to children, the **battles**. He means that these **controversies** cause the **battles**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they cause] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### battles

Here Paul speaks of strife and quarrels within a community as if they were **battles**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [quarrels that are like battles] or [strife] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:24

### But

Here the word **But** introduces how **a slave of the Lord** acts in contrast to how the “controversies” that Paul mentioned in the previous verse cause people to act. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces this kind of contrast, or you could leave **But** untranslated. Alternate translation: [In contrast.] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.124)**)

### for a slave of the Lord

The word **slave** represents any person who is a **slave of the Lord**, not one particular person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [each slave of the Lord] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.151)**)

### for a slave of the Lord

Here Paul speaks of people who worship and obey **the Lord**, and especially leaders in the church, as if they were each **a slave of the Lord**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [those who worship and obey the Lord] or [people who do what the Lord commands] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### not to battle

Here Paul speaks of arguing and quarreling in a community as if it were battling. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. See how you expressed the similar figure of speech in 2:23. Alternate translation: [not to quarrel, which is like fighting in a battle] or [not to cause strife] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### all

Paul is using the adjective **all** as a noun to mean all people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [everyone] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:25

### in meekness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **meekness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [meekly] or [in a meek way] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### the ones opposing

Here Paul could be implying that these people are **opposing**: (1) the “slave of the Lord” (2:24). Alternate translation: [the ones opposing him]; (2) the gospel. Alternate translation: [the ones opposing the gospel] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### God may perhaps give them repentance

Here Paul speaks of **repentance** as if it were an object that God could give people. He means that God may enable these people to have **repentance**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [God may perhaps cause them to have repentance] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### may perhaps give them repentance for knowledge of the truth

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **repentance**, **knowledge**, and **truth**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [may perhaps cause them to repent so that they can know the true teaching] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 2:26

### they may become sober again from the trap of the devil, having been captured by him for the will of that one

These people must have been **captured** by the devil before they could **become sober again from the trap of the devil**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these clauses to express the ideas in sequential order. Alternate translation: [having in the past been captured by the devil for the will of that one, they may become sober again from the trap of the devil] (See: **Order of Events (p.195)**)

### they may become sober again from the trap of the devil

Here Paul implies that being **sober again** also means escaping **from the trap of the devil**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [they may become sober again and escape from the trap of the devil] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### they may become sober again

Here Paul speaks of being able to think clearly about what is true as if it were becoming **sober again**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they may be able to reason properly again] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### from the trap of the devil, having been captured by him

Here Paul speaks of how the devil has gained power or control over these people as if he had **captured** them in a **trap**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [from what is like a trap of the devil, in which they have been captured like animals by him] or [from the power of the devil, having been dominated by him] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### having been captured by him

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [he having captured them] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### by him for the will of that one

Here Paul uses the pronoun **him** and the phrase **that one**. He could be: (1) using both terms to refer to the devil. Alternate translation: [the devil for the devil's own will]; (2) be using the word **him** to refer to the devil and the phrase **that one** to refer to God. In this case, the phrase **for the will of that one** gives the result of these people becoming sober again. Alternate translation: [the devil, but now they can do the will of God] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.206)**)

### for the will of that one

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **will**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [for what that one desires] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 3

### 2 Timothy 3 Chapter Introduction

#### Structure and Formatting

Instructions for opposing false teaching (2:14–4:8)

- False teachers in the last days (3:1–9)
- Instructions to Timothy to remain faithful (3:10–15)
- The nature of Scripture (3:16–17)

#### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

##### The last days

Many Christians understand the phrase “last days” (3:1) to refer to the entire time from when Jesus first came to when he will return, which includes Paul’s time. If so, then what Paul says about false teachers and evil people applies to his time, the present time, and the future. In contrast, some Christians understand the phrase “last days” to refer to a time in the future just before Jesus returns. If that is the meaning, then what Paul says about false teachers and evil people applies primarily to the future. Since Christians disagree about what time period the phrase “last days” refers to, if possible use a phrase that is general enough to allow for several interpretations. See the notes on 3:1 for translation options.

##### Jannes and Jambres

In 3:8–9, Paul refers to two men named Jannes and Jambres. These were the traditional names in Paul’s culture for two of the sorcerers or magicians who served Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. When God told Moses to tell Pharaoh to release the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses by doing the same kind of miracle that he did (see Exodus 7:8–13). However, later on they were not able to imitate the miracles that Moses did (see Exodus 8:18–19), and they were even affected directly by one of the miracles that Moses did (see Exodus 9:11). Paul compares the false teachers he is speaking about to these two men. Just like Jannes and Jambres, they oppose what is true but will eventually be proven foolish. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include some of this information in a footnote.

#### Translation Issues in This Chapter

##### “God-breathed”

In 3:16, Paul states that all Scripture is “God-breathed.” This is an important metaphor that indicates that God is the origin of Scripture as surely as if it were a breath that he had exhaled. This means that Scripture contains God’s words and is as true and reliable as God himself is. Paul does not mean that Scripture was not written by humans. Rather, Paul means that God enabled and guided humans as they wrote Scripture so that it truly is God’s words. If possible, preserve this important metaphor or express the idea in simile form. See the notes on this verse for translation options. (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:1

### But

Here the word **But** introduces the next thing that Paul wants to write about. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces the next idea, or you could leave **But** untranslated. Alternate translation: [Now] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.130)**)

### know this, that

The expression **know this, that** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in some languages. If this is true of your language, you could shorten the expression. Alternate translation: [know that] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.179)**)

### in the last days

Here the phrase **last days** refers to the period of time before Jesus comes back. Christians have different understandings about whether Paul believed that this time period had already begun or would begin sometime in the future. If possible, your translation should refer to this time period without indicating whether it had already begun. Alternate translation: [during the time before Jesus' second coming] or [in the final time period] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

### difficult times will be present

Here Paul implies that the **times** will be **difficult** for believers because of what other people do and say that may harm or injure them (see [3:2-5](#)). If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [believers will face difficult situations] or [believers will be in danger] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:2

### For

Here the word **For** introduces a reason why the times will be difficult. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces a reason or basis for a claim, or you could leave **For** untranslated. Alternate translation: [That is because] or [Here is why:] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.128)**)

### the men

The phrase **the men** represents people in general, not one particular set of **men**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [men] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.151)**)

### the men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Paul is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that makes this clear. Alternate translation: [the men and women] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.230)**)

### lovers of self

Here the phrase **lovers of self** refers people who love themselves more than they love other people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [lovers of themselves more than others] or [lovers of themselves most of all] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:3

### not lovers of the good

Paul is using the adjective **good** as a noun to mean good things and actions. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [not lovers of good things] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)



## 2 Timothy 3:4

### puffed up

Here Paul speaks of proud people as if it they were **puffed up** by air. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [conceited] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### puffed up

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [puffing themselves up] or [haughty] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 110)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:5

### having a form of godliness, but denying its power

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **godliness** and **power**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [seeming to be godly, but denying how powerful being godly really is] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### having a form of godliness

Here the phrase **a form of godliness** refers to the appearance of **godliness**. In other words, these people appear to be acting in godly ways. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [seeming to have godliness] or [looking like people characterized by godliness] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### denying its power

Here Paul implies that these people refuse to experience and act upon the **power** that comes with real godliness. In other words, they do not actually do what is godly, and they do not allow God to change them so that they become more godly. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [refusing to experience its power] or [ignoring the work that it requires] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### And

Here the word **And** introduces an inference based on what Paul has said about these people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces an inference, or you could leave **And** untranslated. Alternate translation: [So] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.128)**)

### turn away from these

Here Paul speaks of avoiding people as if it were done by turning **away from** them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [turn your back on these] or [avoid these] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### these

Paul is using the adjective **these** as a noun to mean the people he has been describing. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [these people] or [the kind of people I have described] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:6

### For

Here the word **For** introduces a reason why Timothy should “turn away from these” people (see 3:5). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces a reason or basis for a command, or you could leave **For** untranslated. Alternate translation: [Turn away from them because] or [I say that because] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.128)**)

### from these

Paul is using the adjective **these** as a noun to mean the people he has described in the previous verses. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. See how you translated the word “these” in 3:5. Alternate translation: [from these people] or [from the kind of people I have described] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

### the ones entering into households

Here Paul is referring to how these people visit other people’s homes. The word translated **entering** implies that these people used false pretenses and deception to visit these homes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [the ones using deceit to enter into households] or [the ones sneaking into other people’s households] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### taking captive

Here Paul speaks about how these people influence **little women** as if they were **taking** these women **captive**. He means that they gain control and power over these women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [gaining influence over] or [manipulating] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### little women

Here Paul refers to the **women** who are deceived by the false teachers as if they were physically **little**. He could mean that: (1) these women are spiritually weak and immature. Alternate translation: [women who are spiritually weak]; (2) gullible or easily deceived. Alternate translation: [gullible women] or [silly women] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### having been heaped with sins

Paul speaks of these women’s **sins** as if they were **heaped** on their backs. He could mean that: (1) these women sin often or even continually. Alternate translation: [who sin frequently]; (2) these women feel terrible guilt because of their sins. Alternate translation: [who feel very guilty for their sins] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### having been heaped with sins

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, you could indicate that they themselves did. Alternate translation: [who carry many sins] or [having heaped themselves with sins] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

## being led away by various desires

Paul speaks about these **various desires** as if they could physically lead the women away. He means that these women do whatever they desire without trying to control themselves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [following various desires] or [always doing the various things that they desire] (See: **Personification (p.197)**)

## being led away by various desires

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [various desires leading them away] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 110)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:7

### and

Here the word **and** introduces something that contrasts with how these women are **always learning**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces a contrast. Alternate translation: [yet] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.130)**)

### never being able to come to knowledge of the truth

Here Paul speaks of the **knowledge of the truth** as if it were a destination at which people could arrive. He is indicating that these women cannot gain the **knowledge of the truth**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [never able to grasp knowledge of the truth] or [never able to gain knowledge of the truth] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### to knowledge of the truth

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **knowledge** and **truth**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [to know the true teaching] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:8

### Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses

Here Paul refers to something that happened when God sent **Moses** to tell Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to set the Israelites free. When Moses performed a miracle, some of the magicians and sorcerers who served Pharaoh also performed that miracle. In this way, they tried to prevent **Moses** from doing what God had told him to do. You can read this story in Exodus 7:8–13. While the names of these magicians are not mentioned in the story in Exodus, their traditional names are **Jannes** and **Jambres**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make some of this information more explicit, or you could include a footnote that gives this information. Alternate translation: [Jannes and Jambres, who were two of Pharaoh's sorcerers, opposed Moses when he spoke to Pharaoh] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### Jannes and Jambres

The words **Jannes** and **Jambres** are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

### these

Here, as in 3:5, Paul is using the adjective **these** as a noun to refer to the false teachers that he has described. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [these people] or [the kind of people I have described] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

### the truth

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the true teaching] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Paul is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that makes this clear. Alternate translation: [men and women] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.230)**)

### having been corrupted {in} the mind

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was they themselves. Alternate translation: [whose mind is corrupt] or [who have corrupted their mind] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### in} the mind

If it would not be natural in your language to speak as if a group of people had only one **mind**, you could use the plural form of that word in your translation. Alternate translation: [in their minds] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.121)**)

## unapproved concerning the faith

Here Paul implies that, when God tests the **faith** of these people, he will not approve of it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [whose faith is not approved by God] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## concerning the faith

Here the word **faith** could refer to: (1) the act of having **faith** in Jesus. Alternate translation: [concerning the faith that they claim to have]; (2) what people believe about Jesus when they have **faith** in him. Alternate translation: [concerning what Christians believe] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## concerning the faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea in another way. Make sure that your translation fits with the option you chose in the previous note. Alternate translation: [in how they claim to believe in Jesus] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:9

### But

Here the word **But** introduces what will happen to these false teachers in contrast to what they are trying to do, which is to oppose the truth. (See [3:8](#).) If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different word or phrase that introduces this kind of contrast. Alternate translation: [Despite that,] or [Although they try to oppose the truth,] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### they will not advance further

Here Paul speaks of people having success in teaching as if they were advancing **further** in a direction. He means that these people will cease to have success in teaching. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they will not be able to teach even more people] or [they will not succeed in continuing to teach] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### their foolishness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **foolishness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [how foolish they are] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### to all

Paul is using the adjective **all** as a noun to mean all people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [to all people] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

### to all

Paul says **all** here as an overstatement for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [to most] (See: **Hyperbole (p.162)**)

### that of those

Paul is using the adjective **that** as a noun to mean foolishness. He is using the adjective **those** to refer to Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's magicians. Your language may use adjectives in these same ways. If not, you could translate these words with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: [the foolishness of Jannes and Jambres] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

### became

Paul is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [became obvious] (See: **Ellipsis (p.139)**)

### became

Here Paul is referring to how Pharaoh's magicians failed to oppose Moses. They could not copy some of the miracles that Moses did (see Exodus 8:18–19), and they were affected by other miracles that Moses did (see Exodus 9:11). In that way, everyone realized that they were foolish. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make



some of that information more explicit or include the information in a footnote. Alternate translation: [became when they failed to stop Moses] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:10

### But you

Here the word **But** introduces how Timothy behaves in contrast to how the false teachers behave. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces this kind of contrast, or you could leave **But** untranslated. Alternate translation: [You, however,] or [As for you, though, you] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.124)**)

### you have followed

Here Paul speaks as if Timothy **followed** the things that Paul has done and experienced. He means that Timothy has paid attention to these things and imitates how Paul does and experiences them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [you have observed and emulated] or [you have modeled your behavior on] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance & persecutions, sufferings, such as

If your language does not use abstract nouns for some or all of the ideas in this list, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [what I teach, how I conduct myself, what I have chosen to do, how I have believed, how patient I am, how I love others, how I endure everything, how I am persecuted, and how I suffer. You know what] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:11

### such as

Here the phrase **such as** could refer back to: (1) just the **sufferings**. Alternate translation: [sufferings such as those that]; (2) both the **sufferings** and the **persecutions**. Alternate translation: [sufferings and persecutions such as those that] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### what kind of persecutions I endured

Here the phrase **what kind of persecutions I endured** could be: (1) a further definition of what Paul experienced in the three cities to which he has referred. Alternate translation: [how I endured various persecutions]; (2) an explanation that indicates how much Paul experienced. Alternate translation: [what persecutions I endured!] or [I endured so many persecutions!] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### what kind of persecutions I endured

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **persecutions**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [how I was persecuted and had to endure it] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### And

Here the word **And** introduces what **the Lord** did in contrast to what Paul was experiencing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces this kind of contrast. Alternate translation: [And yet,] or [But] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.130)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:12

### But also

Here the phrase **But also** introduces the idea that what has been true for Paul will be true for all true believers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces an expansion or further application of an idea. Alternate translation: [In fact] or [Beyond that] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases** (p. 130))

### all the ones wanting to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, you could use an indefinite subject. Alternate translation: [people will persecute all the ones wanting to live godly in Christ Jesus] (See: **Active or Passive** (p.110))

### in Christ Jesus

Here Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in Christ Jesus** to describe the union of believers with **Christ Jesus**. In this case, being **in Christ Jesus**, or united to **Christ Jesus**, is how believers **live godly**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that indicates that believers can **live** in this way because of their union with **Christ Jesus**. Alternate translation: [in union with Christ Jesus] or [as those who are united to Christ Jesus] (See: **Metaphor** (p.181))

## 2 Timothy 3:13

### But

Here the word **But** introduces what happens to **evil men and impostors** in contrast with what happens to people who want to live in godly ways. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces this kind of contrast, or you could leave **But** untranslated. Alternate translation: [However,] or [In contrast,] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.124)**)

### men

Although the term **men** is masculine, Jesus is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that makes this clear. Alternate translation: [men and women] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.230)**)

### evil men and impostors

Here the phrase **evil men and impostors** could: (1) refer to two different groups of people. Alternate translation: [men who are evil and men who are impostors]; (2) describe one group of people using two terms connected with **and**. Alternate translation: [evil people who are impostors] or [evil impostors] (See: **Hendiadys (p.155)**)

### will advance to the worse

Here Paul speaks of these people as if they could physically **advance** or progress in a certain direction, and he speaks of **the worse** as that direction. He means that these people become **worse** and **worse**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [will grow worse and worse] or [will be characterized by being increasingly worse] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### to the worse

Paul is using the adjective **worse** as a noun to mean behavior and character that is worse. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [to worse behavior] or [to worse character] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

### leading astray and being led astray

Here Paul speaks as if the **evil men and impostors** could literally lead people **astray** and be **led astray**. He means that they will deceive others and be deceived themselves. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [causing people to believe what is wrong and themselves believing what is wrong] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### being led astray

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, you could use an indefinite subject. Alternate translation: [others leading them astray] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:14

### But you

Here the word **But** introduces how Timothy should behave in contrast to how the false teachers behave. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces that kind of contrast. Alternate translation: [You, however] or [As for you, though] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.124)**)

### remain in what you learned and were convinced of, knowing from whom you learned

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these clauses, since the second clause gives the reason for the result that the first clause describes. Alternate translation: [you know from whom you learned what you learned and were convinced of. So, remain in those things, knowing that truth] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.128)**)

### remain in

Here Paul speaks as if what Timothy **learned** and was **convinced of** were places in which Timothy could **remain**. He means that Timothy should continue to believe and trust those things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [continue to trust] or [maintain] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### were convinced of

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [trusted in] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### knowing from whom you learned

Here Paul implies that Timothy knows that these people are trustworthy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [knowing that the people from whom you learned are trustworthy] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:15

### from infancy

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **childhood**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [since you were an infant] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### for salvation through faith {that is} in Christ Jesus

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **salvation** and **faith**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [so that you are saved through believing in Christ Jesus] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### that is} in Christ Jesus

Here Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in Christ Jesus** to describe the union of believers with Christ. In this case, being **in Christ Jesus**, or united to **Christ Jesus**, explains how Timothy can have **faith**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that indicates that Timothy can have **faith** as one who has been united to **Christ Jesus**. Alternate translation: [that you have in your union with Christ Jesus] or [that comes from being united to Christ Jesus] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

## 2 Timothy 3:16

### All Scripture {is} God-breathed and {is} profitable

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [God has breathed out all Scripture, and it is profitable] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### All Scripture {is} God-breathed and

Here Paul speaks as if God had **breathed** all **Scripture**. He means that God is the one who spoke or gave **Scripture** through his Spirit. In other words, **All Scripture** has its origin in God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [All Scripture comes from God, as if he had breathed it out, and it] or [All Scripture is produced by God and] or [All Scripture originates in God and] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### All Scripture

Here the phrase translated as **All Scripture** refers to what we call the Old Testament. Paul could be referring to: (1) the entirety of **Scripture**. Alternate translation: [The whole of Scripture]; (2) each of the individual scriptures. Alternate translation: [Every scripture] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### is} profitable

Here Paul could be implying that Scripture is **profitable**: (1) for someone to use in the following ways. Alternate translation: [is profitable for people to use for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness]; (2) as it functions in the following ways for those who read or hear it. Alternate translation: [is profitable for our teaching, for our reproof, for our correction, for our training in righteousness] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness

If your language does not use abstract nouns for some or all of the ideas in this list, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [for instructing, for reproof, for correcting, for training to be righteous] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)



## 2 Timothy 3:17

### so that

Here the phrase **so that** could introduce: (1) a result that comes from how Scripture is God-breathed and profitable in the ways that Paul has described. Alternate translation: [and so]; (2) a purpose for which Scripture is God-breathed and profitable in the ways that Paul has described. Alternate translation: [in order that] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.128)**)

### the man of God

Here Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **man** who serves and obeys **God**. If this is not clear in your language, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the man who obeys God] or [the man who worships God] (See: **Possession (p.202)**)

### the man of God

The word **man** represents men in general, not one particular man. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [men of God] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.151)**)

### the man of God

Although the term **man** is masculine, Paul is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that makes this clear. Alternate translation: [the person of God] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.230)**)

### complete, having been equipped for every good work

The terms **complete** and **equipped for every good work** mean similar things. Paul is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [fully equipped for every good work] or [fully capable for every good work] (See: **Doublet (p.137)**)

### having been equipped

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was God. Alternate translation: [having everything he needs] or [one whom God has equipped] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

## 2 Timothy 4

### 2 Timothy 4 Chapter Introduction

#### Structure and Formatting

Instructions for opposing false teaching (2:14–4:8)

- Paul gives a solemn charge to Timothy (4:1–8)

Travel plans and news (4:9–18)

Greetings (4:19–21)

Letter closing (4:22)

#### Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

##### Paul's situation and his defense

In this chapter, Paul writes about how many people abandoned him and failed to support him at his “first defense.” These people behaved in that way because Paul had been accused of acting against the Roman Empire. While he was waiting to defend himself at his trial, he was held as a prisoner, almost certainly in the capital of the empire, Rome. By the time he wrote this letter, he had already had his “first defense,” which was the first time he appeared in court to defend himself against the accusations. Paul implies that the judge did not decide what to do with him, so Paul would have to appear in court at least one more time. So, people abandoned Paul because they might also be arrested and accused if they stayed with him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include some of this information in a footnote.

##### Greetings

In this culture, it was common for those who sent letters to include greetings to and from others in their letters. In this way, many people could greet each other but only send one letter. In 4:19 and 4:21, Paul includes greetings to and from people whom he and the Timothy knew. Express these greetings in a natural form in your language.

#### Translation Issues in This Chapter

##### Sports and military metaphors

In 4:7–8, Paul speaks as if he were a soldier who has fought well and an athlete who has competed well. Just as athletes in his culture received crowns when they won, so Paul is sure that he will receive a “crown” from Jesus. Paul means that he has persisted in believing in and serving Jesus, even when it was difficult, and he is sure that Jesus will reward him for that. If possible, preserve these metaphors or express the ideas in simile form. See the notes on these verses for translation options. (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:1

### I declare before God and Christ Jesus, the one being about to judge living and dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom

Here Paul could be: (1) indicating that **God and Christ Jesus** know and approve what Paul is about to write. Also, he means that he is as sure about what he is about to write as he is sure about Jesus' **appearing** and **kingdom**.

Alternate translation: [God and Christ Jesus, the one being about to judge living and dead, hear and approve when I declare by his appearing and kingdom] or [What I declare is approved by God and Christ Jesus, the one being about to judge living and dead, and I am as sure about it as I am sure about his appearing and his kingdom]; (2) putting Timothy under oath, making him swear by **God** and **Christ Jesus**, that he will do what Paul is about to write. Also, he wants Timothy to be as sure about doing what Paul is about to write as Timothy is sure about Jesus' **appearing** and **kingdom**. Alternate translation: [I make you swear before God and Christ Jesus, the one being about to judge living and dead, and as you think about his appearing and his kingdom] or [I require that you solemnly promise God and Christ Jesus, the one being about to judge living and dead, that you will do what I am about to write, and I want you to guarantee it as much as Jesus' appearing and kingdom are guaranteed] (See: **Oath Formulas (p.191)**)

### living and dead

Paul is using the adjectives **living** and **dead** as nouns to mean people who are living and people who are dead. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [those who are still alive and those who are dead] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

### and by his appearing

Many ancient manuscripts read **and by his appearing**. The ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read "according to his appearing." If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of the ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.220)**)

### by his appearing

Here the phrase **his appearing** refers to when Jesus will come back to this world, which is when he will **judge** everyone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [by his second coming] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:2

### the word

Here, **word** represents the gospel, which people communicate using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the gospel] or [God's message] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

### stand by

Here Paul speaks as if Timothy should **stand by** something. He could mean that Timothy: (1) should be ready or prepared to preach the gospel. Alternate translation: [be prepared]; (2) should be persistent in preaching the gospel. Alternate translation: [be persistent] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### opportunely, inopportunely

Here Paul could be implying that it will be opportune sometimes and inopportune sometimes for: (1) Timothy's audience. Alternate translation: [when people are ready to hear and when people are not ready to hear] or [when people are receptive and when they are not]; (2) Timothy. Alternate translation: [when it is convenient for you and when it is not] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### with all patience and teaching

Here the words **patience** and **teaching** could: (1) describe two separate things. Alternate translation: [with all patience and with all teaching]; (2) refer to one thing described with two words connected by **and**. Alternate translation: [with all patient teaching] or [with teaching that is very patient] (See: **Hendiadys (p.155)**)

### with all patience and teaching

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **patience** and **teaching**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [and act very patiently, and teach as you do so] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:3

### For

Here the word **For** introduces a basis for the commands that Paul gave in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces a basis for a command, or you could leave **For** untranslated. Alternate translation: [Here is why I command those things:] or [I urge you to do those things because] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.128)**)

### there will be a time when

Alternate translation: [the time will come when] or [here is what will eventually happen:]

### they will not bear with

The pronoun **they** refers to people in general, with a special focus on people who claim to be believers. If this is not clear for your readers, you could refer to those people more directly. Alternate translation: [those who claim to be believers will not endure] or [some people will not endure] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.206)**)

### they will not bear with

Here the phrase **bear with** refers to listening to something charitably. Paul means that these people no longer be willing to listen to **the healthy teaching**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they will not listen patiently to] or [they will not accept] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

### the healthy teaching

Here Paul speaks as if **teaching** could be **healthy**. He means that this **teaching** is good and reliable in every way and has no defect or corruption. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the teaching that is like healthy food] or [the correct teaching] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### they will heap up for themselves teachers according to their own desires

Here the phrase **according to their own desires** could modify: (1) the phrase **heap up for themselves**. Alternate translation: [according to their own desires they will heap up for themselves teachers]; (2) the word **teachers**. Alternate translation: [they will heap up for themselves teachers who teach according to these people's own desires] (See: **Information Structure (p.171)**)

### they will heap up for themselves teachers

Paul speaks of how these people gather many **teachers** as if they were heaping these teachers up in a pile. Paul implies that these **teachers** teach many different things that are wrong. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they will gather many different teachers] or [they will listen to many different false teachers] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### itching {in} the ear

Here Paul speaks as if these people had an **ear** that was **itching**, and the only way to scratch the itch was to hear what they wanted to hear. He means that these people want to hear things that make them feel good about

themselves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [wanting to hear what they like] or [desiring to be told things that make them feel good about themselves] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### **in} the ear**

If it would not be natural in your language to speak as if a group of people had only one **ear**, you could use the plural form of that word in your translation. Alternate translation: [in their ears] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.121)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:4

### they will turn the ear away from the truth

Paul speaks about people no longer paying attention as if they were physically turning their ears away so that they could not hear. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they will no longer pay attention to the truth] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### the ear

If it would not be natural in your language to speak as if a group of people had only one **ear**, you could use the plural form of that word in your translation. Alternate translation: [their ears] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.121)**)

### the truth

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the true teaching] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### be turned away to

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was the teachers they gathered. Alternate translation: [their teachers will turn them away to] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### be turned away to

Here Paul speaks about people paying attention to **myths** as if someone were getting them to turn away in the wrong direction. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [be distracted by] or [start paying attention to] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### the myths

The word **myths** refers to a certain kind of story that is generally considered to be untrustworthy. This kind of story is often about what important people did a long time ago. Often, many people in a culture know these stories but do not consider them to be reliable historical narratives. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of story, you could use the name of something similar in your area or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [fictional narratives] or [traditional tales] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.225)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:5

### But you

Here the word **But** introduces how Timothy should behave in contrast to how the people Paul describes behave. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces that kind of contrast.

Alternate translation: [You, however] or [As for you, though] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.124)**)

### be sober

Here Paul speaks as if he wants Timothy to avoid getting drunk so that he is **sober**. While Paul did write that Christians should not get drunk (see Ephesians 5:18), here he primarily means that Timothy should control himself and be alert. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation:

[stay alert] or [be self-controlled] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### in all things

Alternate translation: [in every situation] or [in everything]

### Suffer hardship

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **hardship**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [When bad things are going to happen to you, be willing to experience them] or [Be willing to be hurt] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### the work of an evangelist

Here Paul is using the possessive form to describe **work** that **an evangelist** does. If this is not clear in your language, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the work that an evangelist does] (See: **Possession (p.202)**)

### Fulfill your service

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **service**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [Serve in all the ways that you should] or [Serve in every way that is required of you] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)



## 2 Timothy 4:6

### For

Here the word **For** introduces a reason why Timothy should do the things that Paul has commanded him to do in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces a reason or basis for a command, or you could leave **For** untranslated. Alternate translation: [I command those things because] or [Here is why I say those things:] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.128)**)

### I am already being poured out as an offering

Here Paul describes himself as if he were the wine that people in his culture would pour on a sacrifice before they offered it to God. He means that he is experiencing the final days of his life, and both these days and his death will honor God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I am nearing the end of my life, which is like being poured out as an offering] or [I honor God as I experience the last days of my life] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### I am already being poured out as an offering

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was God. Alternate translation: [God is already pouring me out as an offering] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### of my departure

Paul is referring to his death in a polite way by using the phrase **my departure**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [when I will pass away] or [of my death] (See: **Euphemism (p.142)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:7

### I have fought the good fight

Here Paul speaks about how he has persevered in believing in and obeying Jesus as if he had been a warrior fighting in a **good fight** or an athlete doing his best to win an event. He means that he has encountered opposition, pain, and problems, but he has persisted and persevered in believing in and obeying Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I have lived as if I were fighting a good fight] or [I have persevered, no matter how hard it was] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### the good fight

Here the phrase **the good fight** could indicate: (1) that the **fight** is right or just. Alternate translation: [the just fight] or [the correct fight]; (2) that someone is fighting well. Alternate translation: [the fight well] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### I have finished the race

Here Paul speaks of how he has served God as if it were a **race** that he has now **finished**. He means that he has served God well, and now his time of service is about to end, since he will soon die. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I have completed what God wanted me to do, just as a runner has finished the race] or [I have completed what I needed to do] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### I have kept the faith

Here Paul speaks of **the faith** as if it were a valuable object that he has **kept** safe. He means that he has preserved and protected **the faith**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I have guarded the faith] or [I have preserved the faith] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### I have kept the faith

Here the word **faith** could refer to: (1) the act of having **faith** in Jesus. Alternate translation: [I have kept the faith that I have]; (2) what Christians believe about Jesus when they have **faith** in him. Alternate translation: [I have kept what Christians believe]; (3) the act of being faithful. Alternate translation: [I have remained faithful] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### the faith

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **faith**, you could express the same idea in another way. Make sure that your translation fits with the option you chose in the previous note. Alternate translation: [the way that I believe in Jesus] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:8

### From now on

Here the word translated as **From now on** could introduce: (1) something that is true from that moment and into the future. Alternate translation: [Now and in the future] or [Henceforth]; (2) the last thing that Paul wants to say about how he has lived his life. Alternate translation: [Finally] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### the crown of righteousness is reserved

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was God. Alternate translation: [God is reserving the crown of righteousness] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### the crown of righteousness

Here Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **crown** that could be: (1) the reward for his **righteousness**. Alternate translation: [the crown given to the righteous] or [the crown that is received because of righteousness]; (2) **righteousness** itself. In this case, God rewards people by declaring them righteous. Alternate translation: [the crown that is righteousness] (See: **Possession (p.202)**)

### the crown of righteousness

Here Paul describes the reward that he expects to receive as if it were **the crown** that athletes in his culture received when they won an event. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [what God will give me to honor me, which is like a crown of righteousness,] or [what God will give me to honor me] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### on that day

Here Paul is referring to the exact moment when Jesus will return to this world, which will also be the end of the current time period. This will be the time when Jesus judges everyone. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. See how you expressed the similar phrase in [1:12](#). Alternate translation: [on that day when Jesus will return] or [at his second coming] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### and not only to me, but also to all the ones

Paul is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [and he will not give it to me only, but he will also give it to all the ones] (See: **Ellipsis (p.139)**)

### to all the ones having loved his appearing

Here the phrase **having loved his appearing** indicates that these people care about, long for, and rejoice at **his appearing**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [to all the ones looking forward to his appearing] or [to all the ones who care about his appearing] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

## his appearing

Here the phrase **his appearing** refers to when Jesus will come back to this world, which is when he will act as a **judge**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. See how you expressed this phrase in [4:1](#). Alternate translation: [his second coming] or [his return] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:9

### Strive to come & quickly

Alternate translation: [Come to me as soon as you can]

#### to come

In a context such as this, your language might say “go” instead of **come**. Alternate translation: [to go] (See: **Go and Come (p.153)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:10

### for

Here the word **for** introduces a reason why Paul wants Timothy to come to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces a reason or basis for a command, or you could leave **for** untranslated. Alternate translation: [which I request because] or [since] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship** (p.128))

### Demas & Crescens

The words **Demas** and **Crescens** are names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.158))

### the present age

Here the phrase **the present age** refers to the time period in which Paul and Timothy lived, the time period before Jesus comes back and God transforms everything. Here Paul implies that **Demas** loves what he can have and experience during this time period. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [what he has in the current time period] or [things that exist during this time before Jesus returns] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information** (p.113))

### has gone

In a context such as this, your language might say “come” instead of **gone**. Alternate translation: [has come] (See: **Go and Come** (p.153))

### Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia

Paul is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [and Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus has gone to Dalmatia] (See: **Ellipsis** (p.139))

### Dalmatia

The word **Dalmatia** is the name of a Roman province on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. This area is now part of the countries Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. (See: **How to Translate Names** (p.158))

## 2 Timothy 4:11

### useful to me for service

Here Paul could be implying that Mark is **useful**: (1) in helping Paul minister to others, especially by preaching and teaching. Alternate translation: [useful to me in my ministry]; (2) in helping Paul to take care of his personal needs. Alternate translation: [he is useful in taking care of my needs] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### for service

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **service**, you could express the same idea in another way. Be sure that your translation fits with the option you chose in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [for ministering to others] or [in serving people] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:12

### But

Here the word **But** introduces the next thing that Paul wants to write about. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces the next idea, or you could leave **But** untranslated. Alternate translation: [Now] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.130)**)

### I sent

Here Paul could be using the past tense to indicate: (1) that he **sent Tychicus** when he sent this letter to Timothy in **Ephesus**. It may be that Tychicus is the one who carried this letter to Timothy at Ephesus. In this case, Paul had not yet **sent Tychicus** when he wrote this sentence. Consider what tense would be natural in your language for this situation. Alternate translation: [I am about to send] or [I am sending]; (2) that he **sent Tychicus to Ephesus** before he wrote this letter. Alternate translation: [I have sent] (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.173)**)



## 2 Timothy 4:13

### cloak

The term **cloak** refers to a heavy garment that was worn over other clothes. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of garment, you could use the name of something similar in your area or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [coat] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.225)**)

### Carpus

The word **Carpus** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

### coming

In a context such as this, your language might say “going” instead of **coming**. Alternate translation: [going] (See: **Go and Come (p.153)**)

### especially the parchments

Here the phrase **especially the parchments** could indicate: (1) that some of **the scrolls** are especially important to Paul. Alternate translation: [of which I especially want the parchments]; (2) that **the scrolls** that Paul wants are **the parchments**. Alternate translation: [that is, the parchments] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### the parchments

The word **parchments** refers to documents written on specially treated animal skins. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of writing material, you could use the name of something similar in your area or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [those made from animal skins] or [the ones written on leather] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.225)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:14

### Alexander the coppersmith

A **coppersmith** is a person who makes things out of copper and other metals. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of worker, you could use the name of something similar in your area or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [Alexander the metalworker] or [Alexander, who works with metals,] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.225)**)

### Alexander

The word **Alexander** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

### showed many evils to me

Here Paul means that Alexander did many evil things to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [acted in many evil ways toward me] or [did many evil things to me] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

### The Lord will repay him

Here Paul speaks of how the **Lord** will punish Alexander as if the **Lord** were repaying Alexander for his **works**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The Lord will judge him] or [The Lord will treat him] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:15

### whom you also guard yourself against, for he opposed our words very much

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these clauses, since the second clause gives the reason for the result that the first clause describes. Alternate translation: [whom, because he opposed our words very much, you also must guard yourself against] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 128)**)

### our words

Here, **words** represents the message that Paul and the people with him proclaimed using **words**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [our message] or [what we teach] (See: **Metonymy (p.187)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:16

### At my first defense

Here the phrase **first defense** refers to the first time that Paul was in court and had to defend himself against accusations. Paul implies that he already had appeared in court again or that he would have to do so again in the future. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of legal proceeding, you could use the name of something similar in your area or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [At the opening session of my trial] or [When I first appeared in court to answer the accusations against me] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.225)**)

### no one appeared with me

Here Paul means that **no one** went with Paul to the court to help him defend himself. They might have been able to help Paul by testifying that he had not done anything wrong, or they might have just sat in the court to show that they approved of Paul. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [no one went with me to testify on my behalf] or [no one was there to help me] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### all

Paul is using the adjective **all** as a noun to mean all the believers who were there with Paul. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this word with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [all the believers here] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.189)**)

### May it not be reckoned against them

Here Paul means that he does not want his fellow believers to be punished for not appearing with him in court. He uses this form as a way to ask God to forgive them for forsaking him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [May they not be punished for that] or [May they not be held responsible for that] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### May it not be reckoned against them

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who would do the action, it is clear from the context that it would be God. Alternate translation: [May God not count it against them] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:17

### But

Here the word **But** introduces what **the Lord** did in contrast to what the rest of the believers did (see 4:16). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces this kind of contrast, or you could leave **But** untranslated. Alternate translation: [In contrast,] (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.124)**)

### the Lord stood with me

Here Paul speaks as if **the Lord** had physically **stood** with him. He means that **the Lord** supported and helped him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable figure of speech or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the Lord was with me] or [the Lord helped me] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### through me the proclamation might be fulfilled

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I might fulfill the proclamation] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

### through me the proclamation might be fulfilled

Here Paul may mean that **the proclamation** was **fulfilled**: (1) because he was able to proclaim the good news in every place and way that God required of him. Alternate translation: [I might accomplish my task of proclamation] or [I might complete the proclamation that I was called to perform]; (2) because he proclaimed the entire gospel message. Alternate translation: [I could proclaim the full message] or [through me the complete proclamation might be made] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### the proclamation might be fulfilled

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **proclamation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the gospel might be fully proclaimed] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### all the Gentiles

Paul says **all** here as an overstatement for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [very many Gentiles] (See: **Hyperbole (p.162)**)

### I was rescued out of the mouth of the lion

Here Paul speaks as if he was about to be eaten by a **lion** when he was **rescued out of the mouth** of that lion. He means that he was protected from terrible danger, which was most likely the danger of being executed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea in simile form or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I was rescued from danger, as if I had been in the mouth of a lion] or [I was rescued from being executed] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### I was rescued

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it was God. Alternate translation: [God rescued me] (See: **Active or Passive (p.110)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:18

### To him {be} the glory

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **glory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [May people glorify him] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### forever {and} ever

Here the phrase **forever {and} ever** identifies an action that will never end, and it strongly emphasizes that it will never end. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable phrase that emphasizes that an action will never end. Alternate translation: [without ever ceasing] or [from now on and always] (See: **Idiom (p.169)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:19

### Greet

Here Paul asks Timothy to extend greetings for him to other people that both he and the Timothy know. See the chapter introduction for more information.

### of Onesiphorus

**Onesiphorus** is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in [1:16](#). (See: **How to Translate Names** (p. 158))

## 2 Timothy 4:20

### Erastus & Trophimus

The words **Erastus** and **Trophimus** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

### Miletus

The name **Miletus** is the name of a city on the western coast of what is now Turkey, south of Ephesus. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)



## 2 Timothy 4:21

### Strive to come

Alternate translation: [Do your best to come]

### before winter

Where Paul and Timothy lived, **winter** is the time of year when it is cold and travel is difficult. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a term for a season in which it would be difficult to travel, or you could translate winter with a general expression. Alternate translation: [before the rainy season] or [before the cold season] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.225)**)

### Eubulus greets you, and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and the brothers

Here Paul extends greetings from people who are with him and who know the person to whom he is writing, Timothy. See the chapter introduction for more information.

### Eubulus greets you, and Pudens and Linus and Claudia and the brothers

Paul is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and the brothers] (See: **Ellipsis (p.139)**)

### Eubulus & Pudens & Linus

The words **Eubulus**, **Pudens**, and **Linus** are the names of three men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

### Claudia

The word **Claudia** is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.158)**)

### the brothers

Here Paul refers to **the brothers** to include all the other believers who wanted to greet Timothy. Paul does not mean that **Eubulus**, **Pudens**, **Linus**, and **Claudia** are not **brothers**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make that idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [the other brothers] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.113)**)

### the brothers

Paul is using the term **brothers** to mean people who share the same faith. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the believers] (See: **Metaphor (p.181)**)

### the brothers

Although the term **brothers** is masculine, Paul is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. If you retain the metaphor in your translation, and if it would be helpful in your language, you could say “brothers and sisters” to indicate this. (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.230)**)

## 2 Timothy 4:22

### The Lord be} with your spirit

As was customary in his culture, Paul closes his letter with a blessing for Timothy. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: [May the Lord be with your spirit] or [I pray that the Lord will be with your spirit] (See: **Blessings (p.119)**)

### The Lord

Many ancient manuscripts read **The Lord**. The ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “The Lord Jesus Christ.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of the ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.220)**)

### be} with your spirit

Paul is using **spirit** to represent Timothy as a whole person. He may use this figure of speech to indicate that the **Lord** will be with Timothy in a spiritual way, not a physical way. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [be with you spiritually] (See: **Synecdoche (p.218)**)

### Grace {be} with you

As was customary in his culture, Paul closes his letter with a blessing for Timothy and the believers with him. He implies that the **Grace** is from God. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: [May you experience kindness from God within you] or [I pray that you will have grace from God] (See: **Blessings (p.119)**)

### Grace {be} with you

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: [May God act graciously toward you] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.108)**)

### you

Because Paul gives this blessing to Timothy and all the believers who are with him, this is the only place in the letter where **you** is plural. (See: **Forms of You (p.148)**)

### you

Many ancient manuscripts read **you**. The ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “you. Amen.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of the ULT. (See: **Textual Variants (p.220)**)



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Academy**

**Version 86**

# 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:** 2 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:7; 2 Timothy 1:8; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2 Timothy 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:18; 2 Timothy 2:1; 2 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 2:10; 2 Timothy 2:14; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 2:16; 2 Timothy 2:18; 2 Timothy 2:19; 2 Timothy 2:20; 2 Timothy 2:21; 2 Timothy 2:22; 2 Timothy 2:23; 2 Timothy 2:25; 2 Timothy 2:26; 2 Timothy 3:5; 2 Timothy 3:7; 2 Timothy 3:8; 2 Timothy 3:9; 2 Timothy 3:10; 2 Timothy 3:11; 2 Timothy 3:15; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 4:2; 2 Timothy 4:4; 2 Timothy 4:5; 2 Timothy 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:17; 2 Timothy 4:18; 2 Timothy 4:22

## 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:** 2 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:4; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:8; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2 Timothy 1:16; 2 Timothy 2:1; 2 Timothy 2:4; 2 Timothy 2:5; 2 Timothy 2:8; 2 Timothy 2:9; 2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 2:21; 2 Timothy 2:26; 2 Timothy 3:4; 2 Timothy 3:6; 2 Timothy 3:8; 2 Timothy 3:12; 2 Timothy 3:13; 2 Timothy 3:14; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:17; 2 Timothy 4:4; 2 Timothy 4:6; 2 Timothy 4:8; 2 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:17



## 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:** [2 Timothy 1:1](#); [2 Timothy 1:4](#); [2 Timothy 1:6](#); [2 Timothy 1:7](#); [2 Timothy 1:8](#); [2 Timothy 1:10](#); [2 Timothy 1:12](#); [2 Timothy 1:13](#); [2 Timothy 1:14](#); [2 Timothy 1:15](#); [2 Timothy 1:17](#); [2 Timothy 1:18](#); [2 Timothy 2:1](#); [2 Timothy 2:2](#); [2 Timothy 2:3](#); [2 Timothy 2:4](#); [2 Timothy 2:5](#); [2 Timothy 2:6](#); [2 Timothy 2:7](#); [2 Timothy 2:8](#); [2 Timothy 2:10](#); [2 Timothy 2:11](#); [2 Timothy 2:12](#); [2 Timothy 2:13](#); [2 Timothy 2:14](#); [2 Timothy 2:16](#); [2 Timothy 2:19](#); [2 Timothy 2:20](#); [2 Timothy 2:21](#); [2 Timothy 2:22](#); [2 Timothy 2:25](#); [2 Timothy 2:26](#); [2 Timothy 3:1](#); [2 Timothy 3:2](#); [2 Timothy 3:5](#); [2 Timothy 3:6](#); [2 Timothy 3:8](#); [2 Timothy 3:9](#); [2 Timothy 3:11](#); [2 Timothy 3:14](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#); [2 Timothy 4:1](#); [2 Timothy 4:2](#); [2 Timothy 4:7](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#); [2 Timothy 4:10](#); [2 Timothy 4:11](#); [2 Timothy 4:13](#); [2 Timothy 4:16](#); [2 Timothy 4:17](#); [2 Timothy 4:21](#)

# 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:** [2 Timothy 2 Chapter Introduction](#); [2 Timothy 2:4](#); [2 Timothy 2:20](#); [2 Timothy 2:21](#)

# 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:** [2 Timothy 1:2](#); [2 Timothy 1:16](#); [2 Timothy 1:18](#); [2 Timothy 4:22](#)



## 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:** [2 Timothy 3:8](#); [2 Timothy 4:3](#); [2 Timothy 4:4](#)

## 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:** [2 Timothy 1:17](#); [2 Timothy 2:16](#); [2 Timothy 2:23](#); [2 Timothy 2:24](#); [2 Timothy 3:10](#); [2 Timothy 3:13](#); [2 Timothy 3:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:5](#); [2 Timothy 4:17](#)

## Connect — Factual Conditions

### Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate factual conditions?*

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words, “if ... then.” Often, however, the word “then” is not stated.

### Factual Conditions

#### Description

A Factual Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true in the speaker’s mind. In English, a sentence containing a Factual Condition can use the words “even though,” “since,” or “this being the case” to indicate that it is a factual condition and not a hypothetical condition.

#### Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not state something as a condition if it is certain or true. Translators from these languages may misunderstand the original languages and think that the condition is uncertain. This would lead to mistakes in their translations. Even if the translators understand that the condition is certain or true, the readers may misunderstand it. In this case, it would be best to translate it as a statement of fact rather than as a conditional statement.

#### Examples From OBS and the Bible

“**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!” (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you keep changing your mind? **If Yahweh is God**, follow him. But if Baal is God, then follow him.” Yet the people did not answer him a word. (1 Kings 18:21 ULT)

This sentence has the same construction as a hypothetical condition. The condition is “if Yahweh is God.” If that is true, then the Israelites should worship Yahweh. But the prophet Elijah does not question whether or not Yahweh is God. In fact, he is so certain that Yahweh is God that later in the passage he pours water all over his sacrifice. He is confident that God is real and that he will burn even an offering that is completely wet. Over and over again, the prophets taught that Yahweh is God, so the people should worship him. The people did not worship Yahweh, however, even though He is God. By putting the statement or instruction into the form of a Factual Condition, Elijah is trying to get the Israelites to understand more clearly what they should do.

“A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If I**, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If I** am a master, where is the reverence for me?” says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

Yahweh has said that he is a father and a master to Israel, so even though this sounds like a hypothetical condition because it begins with “if,” it is not hypothetical. This verse begins with the proverb that a son honors his father. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh. The other proverb in the verse says that a servant honors his master. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh, so it seems that he is not their master. But Yahweh is the master. Yahweh uses the form of a hypothetical condition to demonstrate that the Israelites are wrong. The second part of the condition that should occur naturally is not happening, even though the conditional statement is true.

## Translation Strategies

If using the form of a hypothetical condition is confusing or would make the reader think that the speaker doubts what he is saying in the first part of the sentence, then use a statement instead. Words such as “since” or “you know that ...” or “it is true that ...” can be helpful to make the meaning clear.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

“**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!” (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

“**It is true that** Yahweh is God, so worship him!”

“A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?” says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

“A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **Since** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **Since** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?”

”

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 2:11](#)

## 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.

"

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 1:7](#); [2 Timothy 1:8](#); [2 Timothy 2:1](#); [2 Timothy 3:2](#); [2 Timothy 3:5](#); [2 Timothy 3:6](#); [2 Timothy 3:14](#); [2 Timothy 3:17](#); [2 Timothy 4:3](#); [2 Timothy 4:6](#); [2 Timothy 4:10](#); [2 Timothy 4:15](#)

## 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.

”

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 2:5](#); [2 Timothy 2:11](#); [2 Timothy 2:20](#); [2 Timothy 2:22](#); [2 Timothy 3:1](#); [2 Timothy 3:7](#); [2 Timothy 3:11](#); [2 Timothy 3:12](#); [2 Timothy 4:12](#)

# 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:

χωρίς 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 ἓν ἢ 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: [2 Timothy 2:5](#)



# Doublet

## Description

We are using the word “doublet” to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word “and.” Unlike [Hendiadys](#), in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

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

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

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

A very similar issue is the repetition of the same word or phrase for emphasis, usually with no other words between them. Because these figures of speech are so similar and have the same effect, we will treat them here together.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but only in certain situations, so a doublet might not make sense in their language in some verses. People might think that the verse is describing two ideas or actions, when it is only describing one. In this case, translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning expressed by the doublet.

## Examples From the Bible

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

The bolded words mean the same thing. Together they mean the people were spread out.

He attacked two men **more righteous** and **better** than himself. (1 Kings 2:32b ULT)

This means that they were “much more righteous” than he was.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

This means that they had decided to lie, which is another way of saying that they intended to deceive people.

... like of a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any defect—not even one.

Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, “**Master! Master!** We are perishing!” (Luke 8:24 ULT)

The repetition of “Master” means that the disciples called to Jesus urgently and continually.

## Translation Strategies

If a doublet would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, consider these strategies.

- (1) Translate only one of the words or phrases.
- (2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words or phrases and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”
- (3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

## Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate only one of the words.

You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

"You have decided to prepare **false** things to say."

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as "very" or "great" or "many."

He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

"He has one people **very spread out**."

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.

... like a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

- English can emphasize this with "any" and "at all."

"... like a lamb **without any blemish at all**."

Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, "**Master! Master!** We are perishing!" (Luke 8:24 ULT)

Then they approached {and} woke him up, **urgently shouting, "Master!**  
We are perishing!"

"

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 2:23](#); [2 Timothy 3:17](#)

# Ellipsis

## Description

An ellipsis<sup>[^1]</sup> occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

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

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will** sinners **stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

[^1]: English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (...) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

## Two Types of Ellipsis

A Relative Ellipsis happens when the reader has to supply the omitted word or words from the context. Usually the word is in the previous sentence, as in the example above.

An Absolute Ellipsis happens when the omitted word or words are not in the context, but the phrases are common enough in the language that the reader is expected to supply what is missing from this common usage or from the nature of the situation.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers who see incomplete sentences or phrases may not know that there is information missing that the writer expects them to fill in. Or readers may understand that there is information missing, but they may not know what information is missing because they do not know the original biblical language, culture, or situation as the original readers did. In this case, they may fill in the wrong information. Or readers may misunderstand the ellipsis if they do not use ellipsis in the same way in their language.

## Examples From the Bible

### Relative Ellipsis

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

The writer wants his words to be few and to make good poetry. The full sentence with the information filled in would be:

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

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

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Sentence Structure* ([UTA PDF](#))

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**walk** not as unwise but **walk** as wise,

## Absolute Ellipsis

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

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

“Lord, **I want you to heal me so** that I might receive my sight.”

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:4 ULT)

The writer assumes that the reader will recognize this common form of a blessing or wish, so he does not need to include the full sentence, which would be:

To Titus, a true son in our common faith. **May you receive** grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

## Translation Strategies

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

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

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinner in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinner will not stand in the assembly** of the righteous.

Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

Then when the man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, **I want you to heal me** that I might receive my sight.”

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

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

"

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 2:20](#); [2 Timothy 3:9](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#); [2 Timothy 4:10](#); [2 Timothy 4:21](#)

# 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:** [2 Timothy 4:6](#)

# Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

## Description

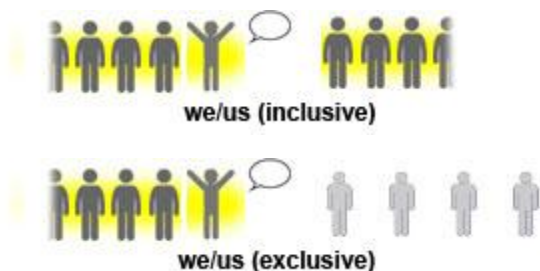
Some languages have more than one form of "we": an inclusive form that means "I and you" and an exclusive form that means "I and someone else but not you." The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also 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:** [Introduction to 2 Timothy](#); [2 Timothy 1:2](#)

## 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:** [2 Timothy 1:1](#); [2 Timothy 1:2](#)

## 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](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](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:** [2 Timothy 4:22](#)

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [Introduction to 2 Timothy](#); [2 Timothy 1:3](#)

## 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:** [2 Timothy 2:6](#); [2 Timothy 2:24](#); [2 Timothy 3:2](#); [2 Timothy 3:17](#)



## 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:** [2 Timothy 4:9](#); [2 Timothy 4:10](#); [2 Timothy 4:13](#)

# Hendiadys

## Description

In a hendiadys, a speaker uses two words that mean different things and that are connected with “and.” These two words work together to express a single idea. Usually one of the words is the primary idea and the other word further describes the primary one.

... his own **kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

Though “kingdom” and “glory” are both nouns, “glory” actually tells what kind of kingdom it is: it is a **kingdom of glory** or **a glorious kingdom**.

Two phrases connected by “and” can also be a hendiadys when they refer to a single person, thing, or event.

while we look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

Titus 2:13 contains two hendiadyses. “The blessed hope” and “appearing of the glory” refer to the same thing and serve to strengthen the idea that the return of Jesus Christ is greatly anticipated and wonderful. Also, “our great God” and “Savior Jesus Christ” refer to one person, not two.

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Often a hendiadys contains an abstract noun. Some languages may not have a noun with the same meaning.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that the second word is further describing the first one.
- Many languages do not use the hendiadys, so people may not understand that only one person or thing is meant, not two.

## Examples From the Bible

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

“A mouth” and “wisdom” are nouns, but in this figure of speech “wisdom” describes what comes from the mouth.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

“Willing” and “obedient” are adjectives, but “willing” describes “obedient.”

## Translation Strategies

If the hendiadys would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

- (1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.
- (2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.
- (3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.
- (4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the

This page answers the question: *What is hendiadys and how can I translate phrases that have it?*

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

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Parts of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

other.

(5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Substitute the describing noun with an adjective that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

For I will give you **wise words** ...

Walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own glorious kingdom**.

(2) Substitute the describing noun with a phrase that means the same thing.

For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** ... (Luke 21:15a ULT)

for I will give you **words of wisdom**.

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)

You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own kingdom of glory**.

(3) Substitute the describing adjective with an adverb that means the same thing.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

If you are **willingly obedient** ...

(4) Substitute other parts of speech that mean the same thing and show that one word or phrase describes the other.

If you are willing and obedient ... (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)

The adjective "obedient" can be substituted with the verb "obey."

if you **obey willingly** ...

(4) and (5) If it is unclear that only one thing is meant, change the phrase so that this is clear.

We look forward to receiving **the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**. (Titus 2:13b ULT)

The noun "glory" can be changed to the adjective "glorious" to make it clear that Jesus' appearing is what we hope for. Also, "Jesus Christ" can be moved to the front of the phrase and "great God and Savior" put into a relative clause that describes the one person, Jesus Christ.

We look forward to receiving **what we are longing for, the blessed and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, who is our great God and Savior**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Doublet* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 1:10](#); [2 Timothy 3:13](#); [2 Timothy 4:2](#)

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

The footnote would look like:

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

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

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

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

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write “Saul” where the source text has “Saul” and “Paul” where the source text has “Paul.”

a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)

a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

<sup>[1]</sup> This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

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

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

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

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

It came about in Iconium that **Paul**<sup>1</sup> and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

<sup>[1]</sup> 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 2 Timothy](#); [2 Timothy 1:5](#); [2 Timothy 1:15](#); [2 Timothy 1:16](#); [2 Timothy 2:17](#); [2 Timothy 3:8](#); [2 Timothy 4:10](#); [2 Timothy 4:13](#); [2 Timothy 4:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:19](#); [2 Timothy 4:20](#); [2 Timothy 4:21](#)

# Hyperbole

## Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.

The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.

The speaker means this as a **hyperbole** if he wants to say that it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount or frequency of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy about it.

This page answers the question: *What are hyperboles? What are generalizations? How can I translate them?*

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

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

## Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

They will not leave **stone upon stone in you**. (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians**. (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

## Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame**, but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words**. (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” it does not necessarily mean **exactly** “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never.” It simply means “most,” “most of the time,” “hardly any,” or “rarely.”

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.

If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

## Examples From the Bible

### Examples of Hyperbole

If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed ... (Mark 9:43a ULT)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should **do whatever extreme things** we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

### Examples of Generalization

Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

**A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches**. (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

## Caution

- Do not assume that something is an exaggeration just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”

Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

## Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
- (4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and **a great number of troops**.

- (2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

**The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame.** (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)

**In general**, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame

When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do**, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

- (3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

**Almost all** the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. or:

**Many** of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)

The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

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**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 1:15](#); [2 Timothy 2:10](#); [2 Timothy 3:9](#); [2 Timothy 4:17](#)

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

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**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 2:5](#)



## 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:** [2 Timothy 1:3](#); [2 Timothy 1:9](#); [2 Timothy 2:8](#); [2 Timothy 2:15](#); [2 Timothy 2:19](#); [2 Timothy 2:22](#); [2 Timothy 3:1](#); [2 Timothy 4:3](#); [2 Timothy 4:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:18](#)

## 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:** [2 Timothy 1:18](#); [2 Timothy 4:3](#)

# Irregular Use of Tenses

## Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate tenses that are unexpected?*

Normally, languages indicate when an event happens by marking it as past, present, or future (or some subset of those categories) through using different verb tenses. But sometimes speakers use those verb tenses in other ways to draw special attention to what they are saying. This article will discuss three ways that this happens in the Bible.

## Past For Future

In the Bible, sometimes the past tense is used to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is a figure of speech that is used in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is sometimes called the “predictive past” or “prophetic perfect.”

Therefore my people have gone into captivity for lack of understanding; their honored leaders go hungry, and their common people have nothing to drink. (Isaiah 5:13 ULT)

In the example above, the people of Israel had not yet gone into captivity, but God spoke of their going into captivity as if it had already happened because he had decided that they certainly would go into captivity.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Speakers of languages that do not use the past tense in prophecy to refer to future events may think that these are events that have already happened.

## Examples From the Bible

Now Jericho was tightly closed because of the sons of Israel. No one went out and no one came in. Yahweh said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho and its king and its powerful soldiers into your hand.” (Joshua 6:1-2 ULT)

For to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given; and the rule will be on his shoulder. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

In the examples above, God spoke of things that would happen in the future as if they had already happened.

But even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them, saying, “Look! The Lord came with thousands and thousands of his holy ones.” (Jude 1:14 ULT)

Enoch was speaking of something that would happen far in the future, but he used the past tense when he said, “the Lord came.”

## Present For Past

In the Bible, sometimes the present tense is used to refer to events that happened in the past. This is a figure of speech that makes these events more vivid or prominent for the reader. The effect can be to draw the reader into the story because these events are told as though they are happening now. The reader, however, knows that the events happened in the past. This is sometimes called the “historical present.”

Now the mother-in-law of Simon was lying down, being sick with a fever, and immediately they speak to him concerning her. (Mark 1:30 ULT)

In the example above, Mark had been narrating events that happened in the past, using the past tense. But when he came to the part about the disciples speaking to Jesus about Simon's mother-in-law, he changed from past tense to present tense.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Speakers of languages that do not use the present tense to refer to past events may think that these events are happening now or that the Bible translation makes no sense.

## Examples From the Bible

And Simon and the ones with him searched for him 37 and found him and say to him, "Everyone is seeking you." 38 And he says to them, "Let us go elsewhere, (Mark 1:36-38 ULT)

As in the above example, the historical present is often used to make direct speech stand out from the narrative.

And he enters into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbaths, having entered into the synagogue, he began to teach. (Mark 1:21 ULT)

As in the above example, the historical present sometimes serves to set the scene for a new set of events. By using the historical present in this way, the writer draws the reader into the scene, and then relates the events using the past tense.

## Present For Future

In the Bible, sometimes the present tense is used for a future event. Usually, this is to communicate that the event will happen very soon. Also, like the predictive past, this can communicate that the event is sure to happen or that the speaker is fully committed to making the event happen. This is sometimes called the "imminent future."

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night I am going out in the midst of Egypt, (Exodus 11:4 ULT)

In the example above, Yahweh uses the present tense for something that he will do soon.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Speakers of languages that do not use the present tense to refer to future events may think that these events are happening at the time of speaking or writing or that the Bible translation is confusing or wrong.

## Examples From the Bible

For behold me, raising up the Chaldeans, that fierce and impetuous nation... (Habakkuk 1:6 ULT)

Therefore, remember from where you have fallen and repent and do the first works. But if not, I am coming to you and I will remove your lampstand from its place—if you do not repent. (Revelation 2:5 ULT)

In the examples above, God speaks of a future event as though he is doing it in the present. This is a way of emphasizing the certainty of the event.

Therefore my people have gone into captivity for lack of understanding; their honored leaders go hungry, and their common people have nothing to drink. (Isaiah 5:13 ULT)

In the example above, the present tense continues the sense of the predictive past, communicating future events that are sure to happen.

## Translation Strategies

If the tense that is used in the Literal Translation would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

- (1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.
- (2) Use the past tense to refer to past events.
- (3) Use the tense that your language commonly uses to communicate the time of the event.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.

For to us a child **has been born**, to us a son **has been given**. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

For to us a child **will be born**, to us a son **will be given**.

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, **I have delivered** Jericho and its king and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, **I will deliver** Jericho and its king and its powerful soldiers into your hand."

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night **I am going out** in the midst of Egypt, (Exodus 11:4 ULT)

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night **I will go out** in the midst of Egypt,

- (2) Use the past tense to refer to past events.

And Simon and the ones with him searched for him and found him and **say** to him, "Everyone is seeking you." And he **says** to them, "Let us go elsewhere, (Mark 1:36-38 ULT)

And Simon and the ones with him searched for him and found him and **said** to him, "Everyone is seeking you." And he **said** to them, "Let us go elsewhere,

And he **enters** into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbaths, having entered into the synagogue, he began to teach. (Mark 1:21 ULT)

And he **entered** into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbaths, having entered into the synagogue, he began to teach.

- (3) Use the tense that your language commonly uses to communicate the time of the event.

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, **I have delivered** Jericho and its king and its powerful soldiers into your hand." (Joshua 6:2 ULT)

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, **I am delivering** Jericho and its king and its powerful soldiers into your hand."

Or:

Yahweh said to Joshua, "See, **I am about to deliver** Jericho and its king and its powerful soldiers into your hand."

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night **I am going out** in the midst of Egypt, (Exodus 11:4 ULT)

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night **I will be going out** in the midst of Egypt,

Or:

And Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh: 'About the middle of the night **I shall certainly go out** in the midst of Egypt,

"

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 2:19](#); [2 Timothy 4:12](#)



# Kinship

## Description

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

Kinship terms refer to those words used to describe people related to one another in familial relationships. These terms vary widely in their specificity from language to language. They range from the (Western) nuclear or immediate family (father-son, husband-wife) out to broad clan relationships in other cultures.

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Depending on the language translators may need to use specific terms to designate the accurate kinship relationship. In some languages a different term may be used based on siblings' birth order. In others, the side of the family (father's or mother's), age, marital status, etc. may determine the term used. Different terms may be used based on the gender of the speaker and/or addressee. Translators may need to make sure they know the exact relationship between two related people in the Bible to find the correct term. Sometimes these terms are difficult even for native speakers to remember and translators may need to seek community help in finding the correct term. Another complicating issue is that the Bible may not give enough information about the relationship for translators to determine the correct term in the language being translated into. In this case, translators will have to use a more general term or simply pick a satisfactory term based on the limited information available.

Sometimes terms that seem like kinship terms are used for people who are not necessarily related. For instance, an older person may refer to a younger man or woman as "my son" or "my daughter."

## Examples from the Bible

Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Where is Abel **your brother**?" He said, "I do not know. Am I **my brother's** keeper?" (Genesis 4:9 ULT)

Abel was Cain's younger brother.

Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock and said to them, "I see **your father's** attitude toward me has changed, but the God of my father has been with me." (Genesis 31:4-5 ULT)

Jacob is referring here to his father-in-law. In some languages there may be a specific term for a man's father-in-law, however, in this case it is better to retain the form **your father** as Jacob may be using it to distance himself from Laban.

And Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro **his father-in-law**, the priest of Midian. (Exodus 3:1a ULT)

Unlike the previous instance, if your language has a term for a man's father-in-law this is a good place to use it.

And **his sister** stationed herself at a distance to know what would be done to him. (Exodus 2:4 ULT)

From context we know that this was Miriam, Moses's older sister. In some languages this may require a specific term. In others, the term for older sister may be only used when the younger sibling is addressing and/or referring to his or her sister.

Then she and **her daughters-in-law** arose to return from the fields of Moab (Ruth 1:6a ULT)

Ruth & Orpah are Naomi's daughters-in-law.

Then she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has turned back to her people and to her gods.” (Ruth 1:15 ULT)

Orpah had been the wife of Ruth’s husband’s brother. This may be a different term in your language than if she had been Ruth’s husband’s sister.

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Will you not listen to me, **my daughter**?” (Ruth 2:8a ULT)

Boaz is not Ruth’s father; he is simply using the term to address a younger woman.

And behold, **your relative** Elizabeth—she also has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren. (Luke 1:36 ULT)

While the KJV translated this as **cousin**, the term simply means a related woman.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Find out the exact relationship specified and translate using the term your language uses.
- (2) If the text does not specify the relationship as clearly as your language would, either:
  - (a) settle on a more general term.
  - (b) use a specific term if required by your language, choosing the one that is most likely to be correct.

## Translation Strategies Applied

This is not an issue in English, so the following illustrations draw on other languages.

In Korean, there are several terms for brother and sister; the use of them depends on the speaker’s (or referent’s) sex and birth order. Examples are from the Korean Living Bible, found on [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)

Genesis 30:1 Rachel is jealous of her “eonni,” which is the term a woman uses for her older sister.

Genesis 34:31 Simeon and Levi refer to Dinah as “nui,” a general term for sister.

Genesis 37:16 Joseph refers to his brothers as “hyeong,” which is the term a man uses for his older brother(s).

Genesis 45:12 Joseph refers to Benjamin as “dongsaeng,” which roughly means sibling, usually younger.

In Russian, in-law terms are complex. For instance, “nevěstka” is the term for a brother’s (or brother-in-law’s) wife; a woman uses the same term for her daughter-in-law but her husband would call the same daughter-in-law “snoxá.” Examples from the Russian Synodal Version.

Genesis 38:25 Tamar sends a message to her father-in-law, Judah. The term used is “svekor.” This is used for a woman’s husband’s father.

Exodus 3:1 Moses is watching his father-in-law’s herd. The term used is “test’.” This is used for a man’s wife’s father.

”

Referenced in: [2 Timothy 1:5](#)

# Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit

## Description

Some languages have ways of saying things that are natural for them but sound strange when translated into Other Languages. One of the reasons for this is that some languages say things explicitly that some Other Languages would leave as implicit information.

This page answers the question: *What can I do if some of the explicit information seems confusing, unnatural, or unnecessary in our language?*

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

*Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information* ([UTA PDF](#))

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

If you translate all of the explicit information from the source language into the explicit information in the target language, it could sound foreign, unnatural, or perhaps even unintelligent if the target language would not make that information explicit. Instead, it is best to leave that kind of information implicit in the target language.

## Examples from the Bible

**And** Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower **to burn it with fire**. (Judges 9:52 ESV)

In Biblical Hebrew, it is normal to start most sentences with a conjunction such as “and” to show the connection between sentences. In English, it is not natural to do so, it is quite tiresome for the English reader, and it gives the impression that the author is uneducated. In English, it is best to leave the idea of connection between sentences implicit in most cases and not translate the conjunction explicitly.

In Biblical Hebrew, it is normal to say that something was burned with fire. In English, the idea of fire is included in the action of burning, and so it is unnatural to state both ideas explicitly. It is enough to say that something was burned and leave the idea of fire implicit.

But the centurion **answered and said**, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof” (Matthew 8:8a ULT)

In the biblical languages, it was normal to introduce direct speech with two verbs of speaking. One verb indicated the action, and the other introduced the words of the speaker. English speakers do not do this, so it is very unnatural and confusing to use two verbs. For the English speaker, the idea of speaking is included in the idea of answering. Using two verbs in English implies two separate speeches, rather than just one. So in English, it is better to use only one verb of speaking.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) If the explicit information of the source language sounds natural in the target language, then translate it as explicit information.
- (2) If the explicit information does not sound natural in the target language or seems unnecessary or confusing, leave the explicit information implicit. Only do this if the reader can understand this information from the context. You can test this by asking the reader a question about the passage.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If the explicit information of the source language sounds natural in the target language, then translate it as explicit information.

- There would be no change to the text using this strategy, so no examples are given here.

(2) If the explicit information does not sound natural in the target language or seems unnecessary or confusing, make the explicit information implicit. Only do this if the reader can understand this information from the context. You can test this by asking the reader a question about the passage.

**And** Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it and drew near to the door of the tower **to burn it with fire**. (Judges 9:52 ESV)

Abimelech came to the tower and fought against it, and he approached the door of the tower **to burn it**. (Or) ... **to set it on fire**.

In English, it is clear that the action of this verse follows the action of the previous verse without the use of the connector “and” at the beginning, so it was omitted. Also, the words “with fire” were left out, because this information is communicated implicitly by the word “burn.” An alternative translation for “to burn it” is “to set it on fire.” It is not natural in English to use both “burn” and “fire,” so the English translator should choose only one of them. You can test if the readers understood the implicit information by asking, “How would the door burn?” If they knew it was by fire, then they have understood the implicit information. Or, if you chose the second option, you could ask, “What happens to a door that is set on fire?” If the readers answer, “It burns,” then they have understood the implicit information.

But the centurion **answered and said**, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof” (Matthew 8:8a ULT)

The centurion **answered**, “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof”

In English, the information that the centurion responded by speaking is included in the verb “answered,” so the verb “said” can be left implicit. You can test if the readers understood the implicit information by asking, “How did the centurion answer?” If they knew it was by speaking, then they have understood the implicit information.

**He opened his mouth** and taught them, saying, (Matthew 5:2 ULT)

**He began to** teach them, saying, (Or) He taught them, saying,

In English, it would be very strange to include the information that Jesus opened his mouth when he spoke. That information is included in the verbs “taught” and “saying,” so that phrase can be omitted and that information left implicit. However, “he opened his mouth” is an idiom that indicates the beginning of a speech, so that information may be included, or it may also be left implicit.

Next we recommend you learn about:

*When to Keep Information Implicit* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 1:15](#); [2 Timothy 3:1](#)

# 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 2 Timothy](#); [2 Timothy 1 Chapter Introduction](#); [2 Timothy 1:1](#); [2 Timothy 1:2](#); [2 Timothy 1:4](#); [2 Timothy 1:6](#); [2 Timothy 1:9](#); [2 Timothy 1:10](#); [2 Timothy 1:12](#); [2 Timothy 1:13](#); [2 Timothy 1:14](#); [2 Timothy 1:15](#); [2 Timothy 1:18](#); [2 Timothy 2:1](#); [2 Timothy 2:2](#); [2 Timothy 2:3](#); [2 Timothy 2:4](#); [2 Timothy 2:5](#); [2 Timothy 2:6](#); [2 Timothy 2:8](#); [2 Timothy 2:9](#); [2 Timothy 2:10](#); [2 Timothy 2:11](#); [2 Timothy 2:14](#); [2 Timothy 2:15](#); [2 Timothy 2:16](#); [2 Timothy 2:18](#); [2 Timothy 2:19](#); [2 Timothy 2:22](#); [2 Timothy 2:23](#); [2 Timothy 2:24](#); [2 Timothy 2:25](#); [2 Timothy 2:26](#); [2 Timothy 3 Chapter Introduction](#); [2 Timothy 3:4](#); [2 Timothy 3:5](#); [2 Timothy 3:6](#); [2 Timothy 3:7](#); [2 Timothy 3:9](#); [2 Timothy 3:10](#); [2 Timothy 3:12](#); [2 Timothy 3:13](#); [2 Timothy 3:14](#); [2 Timothy 3:15](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#); [2 Timothy 4 Chapter Introduction](#); [2 Timothy 4:2](#); [2 Timothy 4:3](#); [2 Timothy 4:4](#); [2 Timothy 4:5](#); [2 Timothy 4:6](#); [2 Timothy 4:7](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#); [2 Timothy 4:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:17](#); [2 Timothy 4:21](#)

# Metonymy

## Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A metonym is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something that it is associated with.

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

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

*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:** [2 Timothy 1:4](#); [2 Timothy 1:9](#); [2 Timothy 1:13](#); [2 Timothy 1:16](#); [2 Timothy 2:9](#); [2 Timothy 2:11](#); [2 Timothy 2:15](#); [2 Timothy 2:17](#); [2 Timothy 2:22](#); [2 Timothy 4:2](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#); [2 Timothy 4:15](#)

## 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:** [2 Timothy 2:8](#); [2 Timothy 2:10](#); [2 Timothy 2:24](#); [2 Timothy 3:3](#); [2 Timothy 3:5](#); [2 Timothy 3:6](#); [2 Timothy 3:8](#); [2 Timothy 3:9](#); [2 Timothy 3:13](#); [2 Timothy 4:1](#); [2 Timothy 4:16](#)

## Oath Formulas

An oath is a solemn promise that someone makes to another person to do something or to solemnly testify that something is true. The oath includes the idea that a bad thing will happen if the person making the oath does not do the thing promised or if what the person says is not true.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate oath formulas into my language?*

## Description

There are two types of oath in the Bible. We can call the first type a "Promise" oath, and the second type a "Truth" oath.

### Promise Oath

In this type of oath, the person saying it is promising to do something. As a guarantee that the person taking the oath will do what he promises, the person calls on God to witness the oath and to punish him severely if he does not do the thing promised. A complete Promise oath has four parts, but some of them are often left unspoken and only implied: 1. Calling on God to witness the oath and judge the person making it 2. Making the promise (may be implied as the opposite of the violation) 3. Telling what would be a violation of the oath (may be implied as the opposite of the promise) 4. Saying what punishment God would do if the person violates the oath (often implied)

### Truth Oath

In this type of oath, the person saying it is affirming that what he is saying is true, and he guarantees that it is true by naming the life of God. Sometimes the person will not name God directly but will instead name something holy that is associated with God, such as the temple. In some situations, a person might name a revered person, such as a king. The implication is that if the person's statement proves to be false, that person will lose any relationship to God or to the revered person. These oaths have three parts, but the third part is implied and not stated: 1. Naming something holy, usually the life of God or of someone who is revered. 2. Making the statement. 3. Implied: The speaker and hearers of the oath understand that the speaker forfeits his relationship to God or to the revered person if his statement is false.

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

People in some cultures may not be familiar with the practice of taking oaths, and so they may not understand what the people in the Bible are doing. In many languages, people would not take an oath the way that people did in the Bible, and so they might not recognize that the person is taking an oath. In the Old Testament, people often did not speak one or more parts of the oath, leaving those parts implied. The part that was most often left unspoken was the part that would tell what would happen if they break the oath. People believed that spoken words have power, and that speaking the part about punishment might cause the punishment to happen, so they often left that part to be understood silently. Because of these things, people might think that the person in the Bible is not making a real oath or they may not understand what the verse is talking about at all.

## Examples From the Bible

### Promise Oath

"I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.' (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

In the verse above, Abram describes a symbolic action (raising his hand to Yahweh) to signal that he is taking an oath and calling on Yahweh as witness and judge. He says what would violate his oath (thus promising to do the opposite). Then he leaves out the part that would describe how Yahweh would punish him if he fails to do what he is promising.

May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

Ruth calls on Yahweh and includes the part about Yahweh punishing her, says what the violation would be (thus promising to do the opposite), but does not say what the punishment would be.

And Saul said, "Thus may God do and thus may he add, for dying you will die, Jonathan." (1 Samuel 14:44 ULT)

Saul takes an oath that Jonathan will die, but does not specifically say whom God would punish, what the punishment would be, or what the person would do that would violate the oath and bring about God's punishment.

## Truth Oath

But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step!" (1 Samuel 20:3)

Here David uses a truth oath to convince Jonathan that Saul does indeed want to kill David. David says this because Jonathan had been trying to assure David that he had nothing to fear from Saul. But Jonathan knows that David holds both Yahweh's and Jonathan's life as sacred, and so this oath convinces Jonathan that David truly believes what he is saying.

The life of your soul, my lord, I {am} the woman having stationed herself with you in this {place} to pray to Yahweh. (1 Samuel 1:26 ULT)

Hannah is speaking to the priest Eli. She demonstrates that she holds the priest's life as sacred by swearing by it that what she is saying is true.

And Elijah said, "The life of Yahweh of armies, before whom I stand, that I will appear before him today." (1 Kings 18:15 ULT)

Elijah uses this oath to convince Obadiah to announce his arrival to Ahab. Obadiah knows that Elijah would never break his relationship to Yahweh.

## Combination oath

The life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here. (Genesis 42:15)

Joseph is speaking to his brothers as an Egyptian official, and so he swears by the life of Pharaoh rather than by the life of the God of the Hebrews. Joseph combines the two types of oaths here by using a conditional "if" statement (part 3 of the "Promise" oath). He leaves unstated the "then" part of the oath which would be either a punishment from Pharaoh (as with a Promise oath) or a breaking of relationship with Pharaoh (as with a "Truth" oath) if this conditional statement proves true.

## Translation Strategies

If people who speak your language would recognize the oath as it is in the ULT, consider translating it in its current form. If not, consider using the following strategies.



- (1) Add in the missing parts so that people recognize it as an oath.
- (2) If oaths are unfamiliar, add a short explanation of what an oath is.
- (3) Put the oath into a form that would be natural in your language.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) Add in the missing parts so that people recognize it as an oath.

"I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.' (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

"I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, **and ask him to punish me severely** if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.'

And Saul said, "Thus may God do and thus may he add, for dying you will die, Jonathan." (1 Samuel 14:44 ULT)

And Saul said, "May God **punish me severely** and may he add **even more punishment if I do not kill you**, for dying you will die, Jonathan."

But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

But indeed, **I swear by** Yahweh's life and **by** the life of yourself that **it is true that** between me and death is like a step!

The life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here. (Genesis 42:15)

**I swear by** the life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here, **may Pharaoh punish me severely**.

- (2) If oaths are unfamiliar, add a short explanation of what an oath is.

May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

**Then Ruth called on Yahweh to enforce her promise:** "May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you."

But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

**Then David made a statement to Jonathan to convince him that he truly believed that he was in danger:** "But indeed, **I forfeit my relationship to** Yahweh and **to you** yourself **if it is not true** that between me and death is like a step!"

- (3) Put the oath into a form that would be natural in your language.

"I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.' (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

**"I solemnly swear before** Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, **that I will not take** from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or from anything that {belongs} to you, **so help me God**, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.'

May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

May Yahweh **strike me dead right where I stand** if death separates between me and between you.

But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

But indeed, **before** Yahweh and **before you** yourself, **I swear** that between me and death is like a step!

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**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 2:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:1](#)

# Order of Events

## Description

In the Bible, events are not always told in the order in which they occurred. Sometimes the author wanted to discuss something that happened at an earlier time than the event that he just talked about. This can be confusing to the reader.

This page answers the question: *Why are some events not listed in the order they happened, and how do I translate them?*

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

[Writing Styles \(UTA PDF\)](#)

[Verbs \(UTA PDF\)](#)

## Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers might think that the events happened in the order that they are told. It is important to help them understand the correct order of events.

## Examples From the Bible

He even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

This could sound like John baptized Jesus after John was locked up in prison, but John baptized Jesus before John was locked up in prison.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed after them. But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

This could sound like Joshua gave the order not to shout after the army had already started their march, but he had given that order before they started marching.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

This sounds like a person must first open the scroll and then break its seals, but the seals that lock the scroll must be broken before the scroll can be unrolled.

## Translation Strategies

- (1) If your language uses phrases or time words to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using one of them.
- (2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that. (See the section on "Aspect" of [Verbs](#).)
- (3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occurred, consider reordering the events so they are in that order. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6). (See [Verse Bridges](#).)

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

- (1) If your language uses phrases, time words or tenses to show that an event happened before the one just mentioned, consider using one of them.

20 he even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

20 But then Herod ... had John locked up in prison. 21 **Before John was put in prison**, while all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized.

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to open the scroll **after** breaking its seals?

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that.

Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets 10 But Joshua **had commanded** the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout."

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occur, consider reordering the events. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6).

8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

8,10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout." Then just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets...

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

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

Next we recommend you learn about:

*Background Information* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Connecting Words and Phrases* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Introduction of a New Event* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Verse Bridges* ([UTA PDF](#))

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 2:8](#); [2 Timothy 2:26](#)

# 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:** [2 Timothy 1:5](#); [2 Timothy 3:6](#)

# Poetry

## Description

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

This page answers the question: *What is poetry and how do I translate it into my language?*

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

*Figures of Speech* ([UTA PDF](#))

*Writing Styles* ([UTA PDF](#))

## In poetry we commonly find:

- many figures of speech such as [Apostrophe](#)
- arrangements of clauses into particular patterns such as:
  - parallel lines (See [Parallelism](#))
  - acrostics (beginning lines with successive letters of the alphabet)
  - chiasms (in which the first line relates to the last line, the second to the next-to-last line, etc.):

You should not give what is holy to the dogs,  
and should not throw your pearls in front of the pigs.  
Otherwise they will trample them under their feet,  
and having turned, they might tear you to pieces. (Matt 7:6 ULT)

- repetition of some or all of a line:

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. (Psalm 148:2-3 ULT)

- lines of similar length:

Listen to my call to you,  
Yahweh; think about my groanings.  
Listen to the sound of my call, my King and my God,  
for it is to you that I pray. (Psalm 5:1-2 ULT)

- the same sound used at the end or at the beginning of two or more lines:

"Twinkle, twinkle little **star**. How I wonder what you **are**." (from an English rhyme)

- the same sound repeated many times:

"Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater" (from an English rhyme)

- The same root word used as both a verb and as a noun:

Your old men will **dream dreams** (Joel 2:28 ULT)

Yahweh,...**light lightning** and scatter them (Psalm 144:5-6 ULT)

We also find:

- old words and expressions
- dramatic imagery
- different use of grammar — including:
  - incomplete sentences
  - lack of connective words

## Some places to look for poetry in your language

Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games

Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors

Prayers, blessings, and curses

Old legends

## Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as much as poetry does. Popular speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

## Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language, you may need to write it without the poetry.
- Different languages use different poetic devices. A poetic device that conveys elegance or emotion in a biblical language may be confusing or misunderstood in another language.
- In some languages, using poetry for a particular part of the Bible would make it much more powerful.

## Examples From the Bible

The Bible uses poetry for songs, teaching, and prophecy. Almost all of the books of the Old Testament have poetry in them and many of the books are completely made up of poetry.

... for you saw my affliction; you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7b ULT)

This example of [Parallelism](#) has two lines that mean the same thing.

Yahweh, judge the nations; vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High. (Psalm 7:8 ULT)

This example of parallelism shows the contrast between what David wants God to do to him and what he wants God to do to the unrighteous nations. (See [Parallelism](#).)

Keep your servant also from arrogant sins; let them not rule over me. (Psalm 19:13a ULT)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See [Personification](#).)

Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good,  
for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.  
  
Oh, give thanks to the God of gods,



for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords,

for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.

(Psalm 136:1-3 ULT)

This example repeats the phrases “give thanks” and “his covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

## Translation Strategies

If the style of poetry that is used in the source text would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other ways of translating it.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry.
- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.
- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

If you use poetry it may be more beautiful.

If you use ordinary speech it may be more clear.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of mockers. But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 ULT)

The following are examples of how people might translate Psalm 1:1-2.

- (1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry. (The style in this example has words that sound similar at the end of each line.)

“Happy is the person not encouraged **to sin**, Disrespect for God he will not **begin**, To those who laugh at God he is **no kin**. God is his constant **delight**, He does what God says **is right**, He thinks of it all day **and night**.”

- (2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people nor stop along the road to speak with sinners nor join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather, he takes great joy in Yahweh’s law, and he meditates on it day and night.

- (3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or join with those who do not respect God. Instead, they love to obey Yahweh’s law, and they think about it all the time.

Next we recommend you learn about:

[Symbolic Language \(UTA PDF\)](#)

# Possession

## Description

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word “**of**,” by using **an apostrophe and the letter “s”**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my grandfather **'s** house
- **his** house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
- 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.

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](#))

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:** [2 Timothy 1:1](#); [2 Timothy 1:8](#); [2 Timothy 1:12](#); [2 Timothy 2:8](#); [2 Timothy 2:9](#); [2 Timothy 2:15](#); [2 Timothy 3:17](#); [2 Timothy 4:5](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#)

## 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:** [2 Timothy 1:11](#); [2 Timothy 1:12](#); [2 Timothy 2:10](#); [2 Timothy 2:16](#); [2 Timothy 2:26](#); [2 Timothy 4:3](#)

## 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:** [2 Timothy 2:19](#)

# 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:** [2 Timothy 2:11](#)

# 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 lightning 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:** [2 Timothy 2:9](#); [2 Timothy 2:17](#)

# 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: [2 Timothy 1:6](#)

# 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:** [2 Timothy 4:22](#)

## 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.

<sup>10</sup> See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> <sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> 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."] <sup>[2]</sup>

<sup>[2]</sup> Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

### Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

- (1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.
- (2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." <sup>16</sup> [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.

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man." <sup>16</sup> [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.

<sup>14</sup> He called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. <sup>15</sup> There is nothing from outside the man that can defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are the things that defile the man. <sup>16</sup> If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." [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 2 Timothy](#); [2 Timothy 1:11](#); [2 Timothy 2:3](#); [2 Timothy 2:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:1](#); [2 Timothy 4:22](#)

## Third-Person Imperatives

### Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate third-person imperatives into my language?*

The languages of the Bible have verb forms that can give commands, instructions or other directive speech in the third person. In other words, these directives address “he,” “she,” “it,” or “they” rather than “you.”

### Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

Many languages, including English, do not have these verb forms and so they must communicate this kind of directive speech in other ways. In English, we normally represent these third-person imperatives by putting “let” before the subject or verb. This is actually one of the translation strategies, since English does not have third-person imperatives.

### Examples From the Bible

■ **Let your kingdom come, let your will be done** as in heaven also on earth. (Matthew 6:9 ULT)

In this prayer, Jesus uses two third-person imperatives. The first one tells God’s kingdom to come, and the second one tells God’s will to be done. Of course, a kingdom and a will cannot hear Jesus, so Jesus is using these verb forms to communicate to God that Jesus desires that these things happen.

■ **Let no one deceive himself.** If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, **let him become a “fool,”** that he may become wise. (1 Corinthians 3:18 ULT)

In this verse, Paul uses third-person imperatives to give a warning and an instruction. It may be that using this third-person form was more polite than if he had used second-person imperatives.

■ But because of immorality, **let each man have** his own wife, and **let each woman have** her own husband. (1 Corinthians 7:2 ULT)

Here again Paul uses two third-person imperatives to instruct the Corinthian church. Since he had just recommended a celibate life in the previous verse, these imperatives have the sense of giving advice rather than command.

■ Then God said, “**Let there be light.**” And there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

The Biblical Hebrew verb form used here is equivalent to the third-person imperative in Greek. Here, God commands in the third person that light come into existence, so it does.

■ **...let him do to me** just as {is} good in his eyes. (2 Samuel 15:26 ULT)

David uses the third-person form to express his willingness for God to do to him whatever God wants to do.

### Translation Strategies

If your language has third-person imperative forms and would use them in the way that the biblical languages do, then please use them. If not, then consider these strategies.

- (1) Use a form that your language has that indicates that this is the will or wish of the speaker.
- (2) If appropriate, use a second-person imperative.
- (3) Use an explicit reference to the function of the imperative.

## Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a form that your language has that indicates that this is the will or wish of the speaker.

Let your kingdom come, let your will be done as in heaven also on earth. (Matthew 6:9 ULT)

(Since English does not have third-person imperatives, it follows this strategy and uses “let” to indicate that this is the will or wish of the speaker.)

May your kingdom come, may your will be done as in heaven also on earth.

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a “fool,” that he may become wise. (1 Corinthians 3:18 ULT)

(Since English does not have third-person imperatives, it follows this strategy and uses “let” to indicate that this is the will or wish of the speaker.)

No one should deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, he should become a “fool,” that he may become wise.

...let him do to me just as {is} good in his eyes. (2 Samuel 15:26 ULT)

(Since English does not have third-person imperatives, it follows this strategy and uses “let” to indicate that this is the will or wish of the speaker.)

...he may do to me just as {is} good in his eyes. (2 Samuel 15:26 ULT)

(2) If appropriate, use a second-person imperative.

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a “fool,” that he may become wise. (1 Corinthians 3:18 ULT)

Do not deceive yourselves. If you think you are wise in this age, then become a “fool,” that you may become wise.

Then God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Then God said, “Light, come into being.” And there was light.

...let him do to me just as {is} good in his eyes. (2 Samuel 15:26 ULT)

...Yahweh, do to me just as {is} good in your eyes.

(3) Use an explicit reference to the function of the imperative.

Let your kingdom come, let your will be done as in heaven also on earth. (Matthew 6:9 ULT)

We pray that your kingdom come, we pray that your will be done as in heaven also on earth.

Then God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Then God said, “I command light to be.” And there was light.

But because of immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. (1 Corinthians 7:2 ULT)

But because of immorality, I advise each man to have his own wife, and I advise each woman to have her own husband.

...let him do to me just as {is} good in his eyes. (2 Samuel 15:26 ULT)

...he has my permission to do to me just as {is} good in his eyes.

See also [Imperatives – Other Uses](#)

"

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 2:19](#)



## 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:** [2 Timothy 1:11](#); [2 Timothy 2:5](#); [2 Timothy 2:17](#); [2 Timothy 4:4](#); [2 Timothy 4:13](#); [2 Timothy 4:14](#); [2 Timothy 4:16](#); [2 Timothy 4:21](#)

## Translating Son and Father

Door43 supports Bible translations that represent these concepts when they refer to God.

### Biblical Witness

**“Father” and “Son” are names that God calls himself in the Bible.**

The Bible shows that God called Jesus his Son:

After he was baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water, and ... a voice came out of the heavens saying, **“This is my beloved Son.** I am very pleased with him.” (Matthew 3:16-17 ULT)

The Bible shows that Jesus called God his Father:

Jesus ... said, “I praise you **Father**, Lord of heaven and earth ... no one knows the **Son** except the **Father**, and no one knows the **Father** except the **Son.**” (Matthew 11:25a, 27b ULT) (See also: John 6:26-57)

Christians have found that “Father” and “Son” are the ideas that most essentially describe the eternal relationship of the First and Second Persons of the Trinity to each other. The Bible indeed refers to them in various ways, but no other terms reflect the eternal love and intimacy between these Persons, nor the interdependent eternal relationship between them.

Jesus referred to God in the following terms:

Baptize them into **the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19b ULT)

The intimate, loving relationship between the Father and the Son is eternal, just as they are eternal. The Father **loves** the Son. (See John 3:35-36; 5:19-20 ULT)

**I love** the Father, and just as the Father commanded me, thus I do. (John 14:31 ULT)

**No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son.** (Luke 10:22b ULT)

The terms “Father” and “Son” also communicate that the Father and the Son are of the same essence; they are both eternal God.

Jesus said, “Father, ... glorify your Son so that the Son will glorify you ... I glorified you on the earth ... Now Father, glorify me ... with the glory that **I had with you before the world was made.**” (John 17:1, 4a, 5 ULT)

But in these last days, {God the Father} has spoken to us through a Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things. Through him, he also made the universe. He is the brightness of God’s glory and **the very exact representation of his being.** He holds everything together by the word of his power. (Hebrews 1:2-3a ULT)

Jesus said to him, “I have been with you for so long and you still do not know me, Philip? **Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.** How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (John 14:9 ULT)

This page answers the question: *Why are these concepts important in referring to God?*

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

Create Faithful Translations ([UTA PDF](#))

Son of God and God the Father ([UTA PDF](#))

## Human Relationships

**Human fathers and sons are not perfect, but the Bible still uses those terms for the Father and Son, who are perfect.**

Just as today, human father-son relationships during Bible times were never as loving or perfect as the relationship between Jesus and his Father. But this does not mean that the translator should avoid the concepts of father and son. The Scriptures use these terms to refer to God, the perfect Father and Son, as well as to sinful human fathers and sons. In referring to God as Father and Son, choose words in your language that are widely used to refer to a human “father” and “son.” In this way you will communicate that God the Father and God the Son are of the same divine essence (they are both God), just as a human father and son are of the same human essence (they are both human and share the same human characteristics).

## Translation Strategies

- (1) Think through all the possibilities within your language to translate the words “son” and “father.” Determine which words in your language best represent the divine “Son” and “Father.”
- (2) If your language has more than one word for “son,” use the word that has the closest meaning to “only son” (or “first son” if necessary).
- (3) If your language has more than one word for “father,” use the word that has the closest meaning to “birth father,” rather than “adoptive father.”

(See *God the Father and Son of God* pages in [unfoldingWord® Translation Words](#) for help translating “Father” and “Son.”)

”

**Referenced in:** [2 Timothy 1:2](#)

## 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:** [2 Timothy 2:2](#); [2 Timothy 2:21](#); [2 Timothy 3:2](#); [2 Timothy 3:8](#); [2 Timothy 3:13](#); [2 Timothy 3:17](#); [2 Timothy 4:21](#)



# **unfoldingWord® Translation Words**

**Version 86**



# faith

## Definition:

In general, the term "faith" refers to a belief, trust or confidence in someone or something.

- To "have faith" in someone is to believe that what he says and does is true and trustworthy.
- To "have faith in Jesus" means to believe all of God's teachings about Jesus. It especially means that people trust in Jesus and his sacrifice to cleanse them from their sin and to rescue them from the punishment they deserve because of their sin.
- True faith or belief in Jesus will cause a person to produce good spiritual fruits or behaviors because the Holy Spirit is living in him.
- Sometimes "faith" refers generally to all the teachings about Jesus, as in the expression "the truths of the faith."
- In contexts such as "keep the faith" or "abandon the faith," the term "faith" refers to the state or condition of believing all the teachings about Jesus.

## Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, "faith" can be translated as "belief" or "conviction" or "confidence" or "trust."
- For some languages these terms will be translated using forms of the verb "believe." (See: [abstractnouns](#))
- The expression "keep the faith" could be translated by "keep believing in Jesus" or "continue to believe in Jesus."
- The sentence "they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith" could be translated by "they must keep believing all the true things about Jesus that they have been taught."
- The expression "my true son in the faith" could be translated by something like "who is like a son to me because I taught him to believe in Jesus" or "my true spiritual son, who believes in Jesus."

(See also: [believe](#), [faithful](#))

## Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:7
- Acts 6:7
- Galatians 2:20-21
- James 2:20

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **5:6** When Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham's **faith** by saying, "Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a sacrifice to me."
- **31:7** Then he (Jesus) said to Peter, "You man of little **faith**, why did you doubt?"
- **32:16** Jesus said to her, "Your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace."
- **38:9** Then Jesus said to Peter, "Satan wants to have all of you, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your **faith** will not fail."

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0529, H0530, G16800, G36400, G41020, G60660

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**Referenced in:** [Introduction to 2 Timothy](#)

## love, beloved

### Definition:

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

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on the good of others even when it does not benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do. God himself is love and is the source of true love.

- Jesus showed this kind of love by sacrificing his life in order to rescue us from sin and death. He also taught his followers to love others sacrificially.
- When people love others with this kind of love, they act in ways that show they are thinking of what will cause the others to thrive. This kind of love especially includes forgiving others.
- In the ULT, the word "love" refers to this kind of sacrificial love, unless a Translation Note indicates a different meaning.

Another word in the New Testament refers to brotherly love, or love for a friend or family member.

- This term refers to natural human love between friends or relatives.
- The term can also be used in such contexts as, "They love to sit in the most important seats at a banquet." This means that they "like very much" or "greatly desire" to do that.

The word "love" can also refer to romantic love between a man and a woman.

### Translation Suggestions:

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

(See also: [covenant](#), death, [sacrifice](#), [save](#), [sin](#))

### Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 13:7
- 1 John 3:2
- 1 Thessalonians 4:10
- Galatians 5:23
- Genesis 29:18
- Isaiah 56:6

- Jeremiah 2:2
- John 3:16
- Matthew 10:37
- Nehemiah 9:32-34
- Philippians 1:9
- Song of Songs 1:2

## Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:2** The law expert replied that God's law says, "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And **love** your neighbor as yourself."
- **33:8** "The thorny ground is a person who hears God's word, but, as time passes, the cares, riches, and pleasures of life choke out his **love** for God."
- **36:5** As Peter was talking, a bright cloud came down on top of them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son whom I **love**."
- **39:10** "Everyone who **loves** the truth listens to me."
- **47:1** She (Lydia) **loved** and worshiped God.
- **48:1** When God created the world, everything was perfect. There was no sin. Adam and Eve **loved** each other, and they **loved** God.
- **49:3** He (Jesus) taught that you need to **love** other people the same way you love yourself.
- **49:4** He (Jesus) also taught that you need to **love** God more than you **love** anything else, including your wealth.
- **49:7** Jesus taught that God **loves** sinners very much.
- **49:9** But God **loved** everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with God forever.
- **49:13** God **loves** you and wants you to believe in Jesus so he can have a close relationship with you.

## Word Data:

- Strong's: H0157, H0158, H0159, H0160, H2245, H2617, H2836, H3039, H4261, H5689, H5690, H5691, H7355, H7356, H7453, H7474, G00250, G00260, G53600, G53610, G53620, G53630, G53650, G53670, G53680, G53690, G53770, G53810, G53820, G53830, G53880

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Referenced in: [Introduction to 2 Timothy](#)

# 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  
David J Forbes  
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  
Esther Trew  
Esther Zirk  
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  
Gerald L. Naughton  
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  
Jacqueline Bartley  
James Giddens  
James Pedersen  
James Pohlig  
James Roe  
Janet O'Herron  
Janice Connor  
Jaqueline Rotruck  
Jeanette Friesen  
Jeff Graf  
Jeff Kennedy  
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  
Joey Howell  
John Anderson  
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John Luton

John Pace  
John P Tornifolio  
Jolene Valeu  
Jon Haahr  
Joseph Fithian  
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  
Kristin Butts Page  
Kristin Rinne  
Kwesi Opoku-debrah  
Langston Spell  
Larry Sallee  
Lawrence Lipe  
Lee Sipe  
Leonard Smith  
Lester Harper  
Lia Hadley  
Linda Buckman  
Linda Dale Barton  
Linda Havemeier  
Linda Homer  
Linda Lee Sebastien  
Linn Peterson  
Liz Dakota



Lloyd Box  
Luis Keelin  
Madeline Kilmore  
Maggie D Paul  
Marc Nelson  
Mardi Welo  
Margo Hoffman  
Marilyn Cook  
Marjean Swann  
Marjorie Francis  
Mark Albertini  
Mark Chapman  
Mark Thomas  
Marselene Norton  
Mary Jane Davis  
Mary Jean Stout  
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Mary Scarborough  
Megan Kidwell  
Melissa Roe  
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Meseret Abraham-Zemedede  
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Michael Connor  
Michael Francis  
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Mike Tisdell  
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Monique Greer  
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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  
Richard Stevens  
Rick Keaton  
Robby Little  
Robert W Johnson  
Robert Hunt, Freely-Given.org  
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  
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Theresa Baker  
Thomas Jopling  
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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, Freely-Given.org  
 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)