

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

v91

Colossians

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes - Colossians

Introduction to Colossians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Colossians

1. Letter Opening (1:1–12)
    - Greeting (1:1–2)
    - Prayer of Thanksgiving (1:3–8)
    - Prayer of Petition (1:9–12)
2. Teaching Section (1:13–2:23)
    - Christ and His Work (1:13–20)
    - Christ’s Work Applied to the Colossians (1:21–23)
    - Paul’s Ministry (1:24–2:5)
    - Effects of Christ’s Work (2:6–15)
    - Freedom in Christ (2:16–23)
3. Exhortation Section
    - Seek the Things Above (3:1–4)
    - Take off Vices, Put on Virtues (3:5–17)
    - Commands for the Household (3:18–4:1)
    - Prayer Request and Behavior towards Outsiders (4:2–6)

4. Letter Closing (4:7–18)
    - The Messengers (4:7–9)
    - Greetings from Friends (4:10–14)
    - Greetings and Instructions from Paul (4:15–17)
    - Greeting in Paul's Own Hand (4:18)

Who wrote the book of Colossians?

The author identifies himself as Paul the apostle. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee, and he persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire, telling people about Jesus. However, he had never met the Colossians in person (See: 2:1).

Paul wrote this letter while in prison (4:3; 4:18). Paul was imprisoned many times, and he does not say where he is. Many scholars think he is in Rome.

What is the book of Colossians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in city of Colossae, which is in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). When he heard from Epaphras about the believers in Colossae, he wrote to encourage them and to warn them against false teachers. These false teachers were telling people that they had to obey certain rules and know certain things to receive new life, and they boasted about their own power and experiences. Paul attacks this false teaching by showing the Colossians that Christ's work accomplishes everything that they need and gives them new life. When they are united to Christ, they do not need anything else, including this false teaching.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Colossians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Colossae" or "A Letter to the Christians in Colossae." (See: How to Translate Names)

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Who were the false teachers that Paul warns the Colossians against?

Most likely, these false teachers were not part of one specific group or belief system. They probably believed and practiced things from several different belief systems. Because of this, it is hard to describe exactly what they believed and taught. Based on what Paul says about them, they had certain rules about food and drink, the rituals of special days and behavior. They had what Paul calls a "philosophy," or a system of thinking about the world that they thought was sophisticated. It seems that they based at least some of these beliefs and rules on visions and marvelous experiences that probably included what they believed were encounters with angels. Paul argues that the people who hold to these views are not remaining faithful to Christ, and he wants the Colossians to focus on the work of Christ for them, which has accomplished everything this false teaching claims to do and more.

What does Paul mean when he uses language for "heaven"?

Paul speaks of heaven as "above," and he further defines it as the place where Christ is seated at God's right hand and where blessings are stored up for believers. Most likely, the spiritual powers are also in heaven. When Paul tells the Colossians to focus on what is "above" (3:1), that is not because heaven is good and earth is bad. Instead, it is because heaven is where Christ is, as he states in the same verse. The Colossians are supposed to focus on Christ and where he is.

What are the spiritual powers that Paul speaks about?

Paul speaks of thrones, dominions, governments, and authorities in 1:16, and he uses some of these words again in 2:10; 2:15. These words refer to people or things that have power and authority, and in the letter to the Colossians they probably refer more specifically to powerful spiritual beings. The "elemental principles" in 2:8; 2:20 probably refer to the same kind of beings in a generic way. Paul never specifically says that these spiritual powers are evil, but he does say that Christ's work frees the Colossians from them. Obeying these powers and focusing on them is thus opposed to the new life that Christ has given.

Who are all the people that Paul mentions in the letter?

Most of the people who are mentioned at the end of the letter are either with Paul or are people that Paul knows in or near the city of Colossae. Epaphras is mentioned

several times, since he is the one who first preached the good news to the Colossians and the one who told Paul about them. Tychicus and Onesimus are the ones who traveled from Paul to Colossae with the letter, and they are able to give more updates about Paul and the people with him.

Why does Paul mention other towns in this letter?

Paul mentions Laodicea and Hierapolis because they are towns nearby in the same valley. If a person stood in Colossae, he or she could see Laodicea at the edge of the valley. Paul mentions these three towns (Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis) because they were towns where Epaphras preached the good news, and Paul had never met any Christians in these places. Perhaps it is because of these similarities and because they were so close together that Paul wanted the Colossians and the Laodiceans to share their letters.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How does Paul identify Jesus as God?

Paul calls Jesus the "image" of God and the "firstborn" of all creation (1:15). Neither of these descriptions is meant to describe Jesus as the first or best thing God created; instead, they put him outside the creation. This is clear from the next verse, which identifies him as creator (1:16). If Jesus is not created, he is God. Being "before all things" and having "all things hold together" in him are statements that make the same affirmation (1:17).

Paul twice describes Jesus as having the "fullness" of God (1:19; 2:9). This does not mean that Jesus was particularly close with God or had God living inside him. Instead, it means that Jesus is everything that God is (the "fullness" of God).

Finally, Jesus is seated at God's right hand in heaven (3:1). This does not mean he is a powerful figure who obeys God. Instead, it means that he sits on the divine throne along with God, and he is God.

How does Paul identify Jesus as human?

Paul says that Jesus died in "the body of his flesh" (1:22). Additionally, when he states that Jesus is the "fullness" of God, this is true of him "bodily" (2:9). When

Paul says that Jesus has a “body,” this does not mean that Jesus simply used a body to look human. Instead, he means that Jesus is an embodied human like us.

What does Paul mean when he tells the Colossians they have died and come back to life?

Multiple times throughout the letter, Paul tells the Colossians that they have died and risen with Christ. This does not mean that the Colossians have physically died and then returned from the dead. This language also is not just a figure of speech that Paul does not really mean. Rather, he means that God included believers with Christ when he died and resurrected. While the Colossians had not yet physically died and been resurrected, they could already experience death to the world and its powers, and new life with its blessings, because of their union with Christ in his death and resurrection.

What does Paul mean when he talks about knowledge?

Paul uses knowledge language throughout his letter, including words such as “knowing,” “knowledge,” and “understanding.” Perhaps the false teachers promised “knowledge” of God and his will to those who listened to them, and Paul intended to show the Colossians that all the knowledge they needed could be found in Christ and his work. Whether this is true or not, Paul does clearly intend to tell the Colossians that growing in their knowledge of God is important and that this knowledge can be found in Christ. “Knowledge” refers to learning more about God, his will, and his work in the world, and “knowing” these things leads to new life and changed behavior.

What are the major issues in the text of the book of Colossians?

For the following verses, there are differences between some of the ancient manuscripts. The ULT text follows the reading that most scholars consider to be original and puts the other reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the language of wider communication in the region, translators may want to consider using the reading found in that version. If not, translators are advised to follow the reading in the ULT.

- “Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:2). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “Grace to you, and peace from God our Father.”

- “Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf” (1:7). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on your behalf.”
- “the Father, who has made you able to share the inheritance of the saints in the light” (1:12). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “the Father, who has made us able to share the inheritance of the saints in the light.”
- “in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (1:14). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.”
- “having forgiven us all of our trespasses” (2:13). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “having forgiven you all of your trespasses.”
- “When Christ, your life, is revealed” (3:4). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “When Christ, our life, is revealed.”
- “the wrath of God is coming” (3:6). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience.”
- “so that you might know the things concerning us” (4:8). Some ancient manuscripts have this: “so that he might know the things concerning you.”

(See: Textual Variants)

Colossians 1

Colossians 1 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

1. Letter Opening (1:1–12)
    - Greeting (1:1–2)
    - Prayer of Thanksgiving (1:3–8)
    - Prayer of Petition (1:9–12)
2. Teaching Section (1:13–2:23)
    - Christ and His Work (1:13–20)
    - Christ's Work Applied to the Colossians (1:21–23)
    - Paul's Ministry (1:24–2:5)

Paul begins this letter in 1:1–2 by giving his and Timothy's names, identifying the people to whom he is writing, and offering a greeting. This is the way people typically began letters at this time.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Mystery

Paul refers to a "mystery" for the first time in this chapter (1:26–27). This does not refer to some secret truth that is hard to understand and that only a few privileged individuals can learn about. Instead, it refers to God's plans that once were unknown but are now known to all his people. What is the content of this mystery? It is Christ himself, his work, and his union with believers.

Fullness

Paul refers to "filling" or "fullness" four times in this chapter. First, Paul prays that the Colossians are "filled" with the knowledge of God's will (1:9). Second, Jesus has

all the “fullness” of God (1:19). Third, Paul “fills up” in his flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ (1:24). Fourth, Paul makes the word of God “fully” known (1:25). It is possible that Paul uses “filling” and “fullness” so often because it was something that the false teachers promised. Paul wishes to show instead how “fullness” comes through the work of Christ and through his own work on their behalf. Christ has God’s fullness, and Paul works for Christ by “filling” the Colossians, who then are “filled” with the knowledge of God’s will.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Pronouns

Throughout this letter the pronouns “we,” “us,” “our,” and “ours” include the Colossian believers unless noted otherwise.

The pronouns “you,” “your,” and “yours” refer to the Colossian believers, so they are plural unless noted otherwise.

Images for Christian living

Paul uses many different images to describe Christian living. In this chapter, he uses the images of “walking” and “bearing fruit” (1:10). These images show that Paul wants the Colossians to think about the Christian life as a life that is directed towards a goal (either a destination, if one is walking, or fruit, if one is growing). (See: fruit, fruitful, unfruitful)

Light versus dark

Paul contrasts the “inheritance of the saints in the light” (1:12) with the “authority of the darkness” (1:12). The “light” describes what is good, desirable, and related to God’s favor. The “darkness” describes what is distant from God, opposed to him, and evil.

Head and body

In this chapter, Paul introduces an image that he will develop more fully in chapter 2: that of Christ as the head of the body, which is his church. This image identifies Christ as the source of life and direction for his church, just like the head is the source of life and direction for the body.

The lack of the afflictions of Christ

In 1:24, Paul speaks of "the lack of the afflictions of Christ," a lack that he fills up by his sufferings. This does not mean that Christ somehow failed in his mission and work, and Paul has to fill in the missing pieces. Instead, "lack" refers to something that Christ intentionally left for this followers to complete. He has called them to suffer, just as he himself did, to continue the mission of the church.

The "Christ-Hymn"

Many scholars think that 1:15–20 is an early Christian hymn that Paul has quoted to remind the Colossians of what they believe in common with other Christians. If this is true, it does not mean that this section says something different than what Paul thinks. Instead, Paul chose to quote it because he fully affirmed it. If it would be helpful for your readers, you could format these verses in a way that shows that they are from a hymn or poem.

Colossians 1:1

ULT	UST
Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother,	*{I,} Paul, {write this letter to you,} and Timothy our fellow believer {is with me}. God sent me to represent the Messiah Jesus, because that is what God chose to do.*

ULT Paul
UST I,} Paul, {write this letter to you … }
(Παῦλος)

In this culture, letter writers would give their own names first, referring to themselves in the third person. If that is confusing in your language, you could use the first person here. 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]

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT and Timothy our brother
UST and Timothy our fellow believer {is with me}
(καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφὸς)

This phrase does not mean that **Timothy** helped Paul write this letter. Paul was the author of this letter, as he shows by using the first person singular throughout the letter. What this does mean is that Timothy is with Paul and that Timothy is in agreement with what Paul writes. If it sounds in your language like Timothy is writing the letter with Paul, you could make Timothy's supporting role more clear. Alternate translation: [with the support of Timothy, our fellow believer]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Paul	I,} Paul, {write this letter to you … }
an apostle	God sent me to represent
of Christ	the Messiah
of Christ Jesus	the Messiah Jesus
of God	because that is what God chose to do
the will of God	because that is what God chose to do
Timothy	Timothy … is with me

Colossians 1:2

ULT	UST
to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ in Colossae. Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.	*{I send this letter} to you who are God's people and faithful fellow believers united to the Messiah, {who live} in {the city of} Colossae. {May} God our Father and the Lord Jesus the Messiah {continue to} be kind to you and make you peaceful.*

ULT **to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ in Colossae**
UST {I send this letter} to you who are God's people and faithful fellow believers united to the Messiah, {who live} in {the city of} Colossae
(τοῖς ἐν Κολοσσαῖς ἁγίοις, καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ)

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: [to you who live in the city of Colossae and who are God's people and faithful fellow believers who are united to the Messiah]

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ**
UST {I send this letter} to you who are God's people and faithful fellow believers united to … Messiah … the
(τοῖς & ἁγίοις, καὶ πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ)

The words **saints**, **faithful brothers**, and **in Christ** all describe people who are followers of Jesus. Paul is using all of these to describe one group of people. For example, he is not implying that **saints** and **faithful brothers in Christ** are two different groups. If it would be helpful in your language, you could join these words together in a different way. Alternate translation: [to God's faithful people, joined together as a family in Christ]

Support Reference: Doublet

> ULT **Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**
> UST {May} God our Father and the Lord Jesus the Messiah {continue to} be kind to you and make you peaceful
> (χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ)

After stating his name and the name of the person to whom he is writing, Paul adds a blessing for the Colossians. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: [May you experience kindness and peace within you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus the Messiah] or [I pray that grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus the Messiah will always be with you]

Support Reference: Blessings

> ULT **Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**
> UST {May} God our Father and the Lord Jesus the Messiah {continue to} be kind to you and make you peaceful
> (χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ)

The words **Grace** and **peace** are abstract nouns. Your language may have a particular way of expressing these concepts, such as with verbs or description words. If so, you could use them in your translation. Alternate translation: [We pray that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will treat you kindly and give you peaceful relationships]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **God our Father**
> UST God our Father
> (Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμῶν)

Here and throughout the chapter, **Father** is an important title for God. Alternate translation: [God, who is our Father,]

Support Reference: Translating Son and Father

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Colossae	the … {who live} in … { … city of} Colossae
to the saints	{I send this letter} to you who are God's people
faithful	faithful
Christ	united to … Messiah … the
in Christ	united to … Messiah … the
Grace	May … {continue to} be kind
peace	make you peaceful
God … Father	God … Father
the Lord	the Lord

ULT	UST
Jesus	Jesus
Christ	the Messiah

Colossians 1:3

ULT	UST
We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always praying for you,	*We pray for you very often. {When we do,} we thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus the Messiah,*

ULT **We give thanks … our**
UST {When we do,} we thank … our
(εὐχαριστοῦμεν & ἡμῶν)

The word **We** here does not include the Colossians, but the word **our** here does include the Colossians

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

ULT **always**
UST very often
(πάντοτε)

Here, **always** is an exaggeration that the Colossians understood to mean that Paul and Timothy prayed for them often. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that indicates frequency. Alternate translation: [consistently] or [frequently]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
to God, the Father	God, the Father
of … Lord	of … Lord
Jesus	Jesus
Christ	the Messiah
praying	We pray

Colossians 1:4

ULT	UST
having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints,	*{because} have learned that you trust in the Messiah Jesus and that you love all God's people.*

ULT **having heard of your faith**
UST {because} have learned that you trust
(ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **faith**, you could express the idea behind this abstract noun in another way. Alternate translation: [having heard that you are trusting]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the love that you have for all the saints**
UST that you love all God's people
(τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχετε εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **love**, you could express the same idea with a verbal form. Alternate translation: [how much you love all the saints]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
faith	that you trust
Christ	the Messiah
Jesus	Jesus
in Christ Jesus	in the Messiah Jesus
love	that you love
saints	God's people

Colossians 1:5

ULT	UST
because of the hope that is being reserved for you in the heavens, which you heard before in the word of truth, the gospel,	*{You do these things} because you are confidently waiting for everything that God is keeping for you in heaven. You first learned about all that God has for you when you heard the true message, {which is} the good news about the Messiah.*

ULT **the hope**
UST you are confidently waiting for
(τὴν ἐλπίδα)

Here, **hope** refers not only to the attitude of hopefulness but also to what the believer hopes for, that is, what God has promised to give to all believers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea by using a relative clause. Alternate translation: [what you hope for]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **that is being reserved for**
UST everything that God is keeping
(τὴν ἀποκειμένην)

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this with an active form, and you could state who did the action. Alternate translation: [that God is reserving for] or [that God has prepared for] or [that God has ready for]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **the word of truth**
UST the true message
(τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας)

Paul uses the possessive form to describe a **word** that is characterized by **truth**. This could refer to: (1) a message that is truth. Alternate translation: [the message that is true]; (2) a message concerning the truth. Alternate translation: [the message about the truth]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **the word**
> UST the … message
> (τῷ λόγῳ)

Here, **word** represents a message that is made up of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the announcement]

Support Reference: Metonymy

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
hope	you are confidently waiting for
heavens	heaven
gospel	which is … good news about the Messiah

Colossians 1:6

ULT	UST
which being present among you just as also in all the world, is bearing fruit and growing, just as also in you, from the day you heard {it} and learned about the grace of God in truth,	*Just as you heard and believed this good news {in Colossae}, increasing numbers of people in many places are also hearing and believing it. These people are living in a different way now, just as you have been living in a different way since you first learned {about it} and truly experienced how God acts kindly {toward us}.*

ULT **which being present among you**
UST Just as you heard and believed this good news {in Colossae}
(τοῦ παρόντος εἰς ὑμᾶς)

Here the good news is spoken of as though it were a person who could be **present** with the Colossians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [which was told to you in Colossae]

Support Reference: Personification

ULT **in all the world**
UST increasing numbers of people in many places are also hearing and believing it
(ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ)

Here, **in all the world** is a generalization referring to the part of the **world** that Paul and the Colossians knew about. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that **world** refers to the known world at that time. Alternate translation: [in every place that we know about]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **is bearing fruit and growing**
UST These people are living in a different way now
(ἐστὶν καρποφορούμενον καὶ αὐξανόμενον)

Paul speaks of the gospel as if it were a plant that could grow and produce fruit. He means that the gospel reaches more people and that it changes how people think and behave. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express Paul's meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is reaching more people so that they do what is pleasing to God]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **just as also in you**
UST just as you have been living in a different way
(καθὼς καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν)

Paul leaves out some of the words that a clause would need in many languages to be complete. If your language needs these words, you could supply them from the context. Alternate translation: [just as this good news has reached you so that you do what is pleasing to God] or [just as it has done among you]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **learned about the grace of God in truth**
UST truly experienced how God acts kindly {toward us}
(ἐπέγνωτε τὴν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ)

Here, **in truth** could describe: (1) the way in which the Colossians learned about the grace of God. Alternate translation: [accurately grasped how God acts kindly]; (2) the way God is gracious to the Colossians. Alternate translation: [learned about the true grace of God] or [understood how God truly acts kindly]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
world	increasing numbers of people in many places are also hearing and believing it
bearing fruit	These people are living in a different way now
day	since … first
learned about	experienced
grace	how God acts kindly {toward us}
of God	how God acts kindly {toward us}

Colossians 1:7

ULT	UST
just as you learned {it} from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf,	*This is what Epaphras told you {would happen}. He works with us for the Messiah, and we love him. He faithfully serves the Messiah as our representative.*

ULT **Epaphras**
UST Epaphras
(Ἐπαφρᾶ)

Epaphras is the name of a man. He is the one who preached the good news to the people in Colossae.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **our … our**
UST us … as our representative
(ἡμῶν & ἡμῶν)

Here, **our** does not include the Colossians.

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
beloved	and we love him
faithful	faithfully
a … servant	serves
of Christ	the Messiah

Colossians 1:8

ULT	UST
and the one having made known to us your love in the Spirit.	*He told us that you love {all God's people}, just as God's Spirit {has empowered you to do}.*

ULT **to us**
UST us
(ἡμῖν)

The word **us** here does not include the Colossians.

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

ULT **your love**
UST that you love {all God's people}
(τὴν ὑμῶν ἀγάπην)

Paul is primarily talking about the **love** that the Colossians are showing to other believers. Of course they also love God. If you must specify the object of their love, and people might think that the Colossians do not love God if he is not mentioned, then you could include both. Alternate translation: [that you love God and all his people]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **in the Spirit**
UST just as God's Spirit {has empowered you to do}
(ἐν Πνεύματι)

Alternate translation: [which is by the power of the Holy Spirit] or [which you do through the power of the Holy Spirit]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
love	that you love {all God's people}
the Spirit	God's Spirit

Colossians 1:9

ULT	UST
Because of this, from the day we heard this, we also have not stopped praying for you and asking that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,	*Because of everything that Epaphras told us, since the time when he first told us {about you}, we have joined him in consistently praying for you. {When we pray for you,} we ask God to show you everything that he wants you to do and {to make you} able to understand everything that God's Spirit {is teaching you}.*

ULT **we heard this, we … have not stopped**
UST he … told us {about you}, we … consistently
(ἡμεῖς & ἠκούσαμεν, οὐ παυόμεθα)

The word **we** here does not include the Colossians.

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

ULT **from the day we heard this**
UST since the time when he first told us {about you}
(ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν)

Alternate translation: [from the day Epaphras told us these things]

ULT **have not stopped**
UST consistently
(οὐ παυόμεθα)

Here, **have not stopped** is an exaggeration that the Colossians would have understood to mean that Paul and Timothy pray often for the Colossians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that indicates frequency. Alternate translation: [have been frequently] or [have made a habit of]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **have not stopped**
UST consistently
(οὐ παυόμεθα)

Paul uses a figure of speech that expresses a strong positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If this is confusing in your language, you could express the meaning positively. Alternate translation: [have kept] or [are continually]

Support Reference: Litotes

ULT **that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will**
UST to show you everything that he wants you to do
(ἵνα πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ)

Paul speaks of the Colossian believers as though they were containers that could **be filled** up. By speaking this way, he emphasizes that the Colossians should know God's **will** in every area of their lives. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this plainly. Alternate translation: [that God would enable you to understand fully what he wants you to do]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **you might be filled with**
UST to show you everything
(πληρωθῆτε)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in an active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [God would fill you with]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **you might be filled with the knowledge of his will**
UST to show you everything that he wants you to do
(πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ)

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind the words **knowledge** and **will**, you could express those ideas in another way, such as with verbs. Alternate translation: [you might fully know what he has planned for you]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding**
UST to show you everything that he wants you to do and {to make you} able to understand everything that God's Spirit {is teaching you}
(πληρωθῆτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ)

Here, **in all wisdom and spiritual understanding** identifies how the Colossians are **filled**. The phrase does not describe God's **will**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could move the phrase so that it appears immediately after **filled**. Alternate translation: [you might be filled in all wisdom and spiritual understanding with the knowledge of his will]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **in all wisdom and spiritual understanding**
UST and {to make you} able to understand everything that God's Spirit {is teaching you}
(ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ)

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **wisdom** and **understanding**, you could express the ideas with adjectives or verbs. If you use the following alternate translation, you may need to add a comma before it. Alternate translation: [which includes being spiritually very wise and intelligent]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **wisdom and spiritual understanding**
UST and {to make you} able to understand everything that God's Spirit {is teaching you}
(σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ)

Here, **wisdom and spiritual understanding** could refer to: (1) wisdom and understanding that comes from the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: [wisdom and understanding given by the Holy Spirit]; (2) wisdom and understanding in spiritual matters. Alternate translation: [wisdom and understanding about spiritual things]

ULT **wisdom and spiritual understanding**
UST and {to make you} able to understand everything that God's Spirit {is teaching you}
(σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ)

The words **wisdom** and **understanding** mean very similar things. The repetition is used to emphasize the breadth of spiritual wisdom. If your language does not use repetition in this way or has only one word for this concept, you could use just one word. Alternate translation: [spiritual comprehension] or [spiritual insight]

Support Reference: Doublet

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
day	since the time when … first
praying	have joined him in … praying
knowledge	to show you everything
of his will	that he wants you to do
wisdom	and {to make you}
understanding	able to understand everything that God's Spirit {is teaching you}
spiritual	able to understand everything that God's Spirit {is teaching you}

Colossians 1:10

ULT	UST
to walk worthily of the Lord in every pleasing {way}, bearing fruit in every good deed and growing in the knowledge of God,	*{We have been praying that you know what God wants} so that you can live in a way that honors the Lord and pleases him in every way. {When you live this way, you will be} doing every sort of good thing and continually knowing God better.*

ULT **to walk worthily of the Lord**
UST {We have been praying that you know what God wants} so that you can live in a way that honors the Lord
(περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως τοῦ Κυρίου)

The word **walk** is a figurative way to refer to behavior in life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [to behave in the way that the Lord expects you to behave]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in every pleasing {way}**
UST and pleases him in every way
(εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν)

If your language does not use abstract nouns, you could express the idea behind the phrase **pleasing {way}** with a verb. If you use the following alternate translation, you may need to add a comma before it. Alternate translation: [doing everything that pleases him]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **bearing fruit in every good deed**
UST {When you live this way, you will be} doing every sort of good thing
(ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες)

Paul is speaking of the Colossian believers as if they were trees or plants and of the things that they do as if it were their **fruit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a different figure or plainly. Alternate translation: [performing many good deeds]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **growing in the knowledge of God**
UST continually knowing God better
(αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ Θεοῦ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **knowledge**, you could express the idea with a verb. Alternate translation: [knowing God better and better]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
of the Lord	the Lord
good	good
bearing fruit	{When you live this way, you will be} doing
in the knowledge	knowing … better
of God	God

Colossians 1:11

ULT	UST
being strengthened with all power according to the power of his glory to all endurance and patience with joy,	*{As you live this way,} God will greatly strengthen you to be able to patiently endure in all situations, and to do so joyfully. God can strengthen you greatly because he is gloriously powerful.*

ULT **being strengthened**
UST {As you live this way,} God will greatly strengthen you to be able
(δυναμούμενοι)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea with an active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [God strengthening you]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **the power of his glory**
UST he is gloriously powerful
(τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ)

Paul uses the possessive form to describe **power** that is characterized by God's **glory**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could use an adjective such as "glorious" or "great" instead of the noun **glory**. Alternate translation: [his glorious power] or [his great power]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **to all endurance and patience with joy**
UST to patiently endure in all situations, and to do so joyfully
(εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν μετὰ χαρᾶς)

This is a purpose phrase. Paul is stating the purpose for which the Colossians have been **strengthened with all power**. In your translation, follow the conventions of your language for purpose phrases. Alternate translation: [so that you have all endurance and patience with joy]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

ULT **endurance and patience**
UST to patiently endure in all situations
(ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν)

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **patience** tells what kind of **endurance** the Colossians can have. If your language does not use this form, you could express the meaning differently. Alternate translation: [patient endurance.]

Support Reference: Hendiadys

ULT **all endurance and patience**
UST to patiently endure in all situations
(πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν)

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **endurance** and **patience**, you could express the ideas with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: [endure always and wait patiently]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **all endurance and patience with joy**
UST to patiently endure in all situations, and to do so joyfully
(πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν μετὰ χαρᾶς)

Here, **with joy** could describe: (1) the way that the Colossians are to have endurance and patience (2) the way that the Colossians are to give thanks in verse 12. Alternate translation: [all endurance and patience]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
power	powerful
of … glory	gloriously
endurance	to patiently endure in all situations
patience	to patiently endure in all situations
joy	and to do so joyfully

Colossians 1:12

ULT	UST
giving thanks to the Father, the one having made you able to share the inheritance of the saints in the light.	*{Then you will continually} thank {God our} Father, {because} he has made you worthy to take part in everything that he has to give to his people when they are with him.*

ULT giving thanks
UST {Then you will continually} thank
(εὐχαριστοῦντες)

Some Bible versions connect the phrase "with joy" at the end of verse 11 to the phrase at the beginning of verse 12, instead of connecting it to verse 11. Alternate translation: [with joy giving thanks]

ULT to the Father
UST {God our} Father
(τῷ Πατρὶ)

Father is an important title that describes the relationship between God and Jesus, and it also describes the relationship between God and believers, who are adopted children. Alternate translation: [God the Father]

Support Reference: Translating Son and Father

ULT having made you able
UST {because} he has made you worthy
(ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς)

Alternate translation: [who has qualified you]

ULT to share the inheritance of the saints
UST to take part in everything that he has to give to his people
(εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων)

This is a purpose clause. Paul is stating the purpose for which God made the Colossians **able**. In your translation, follow the conventions of your language for purpose clauses. Alternate translation (without a comma preceding): [so that you could share the inheritance of the saints]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

> ULT **to share the inheritance**
> UST to take part in everything that he has to give
> (εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου)

Paul is using the possessive form to describe a **share** that is characterized by **inheritance**. If your language does not use this form to express that meaning, you could use a verbal phrase like "receive your portion of" or "take part in." Alternate translation: [to take part in the inheritance]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **the inheritance of the saints**
> UST that he has to give to his people
> (τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων)

Paul uses the possessive form to indicate that the **inheritance** is for the **saints**. If your language does not use this form to express that meaning, you could use a descriptive phrase such as "that God is keeping for" or "that belongs to" instead. Alternate translation: [the inheritance that belongs to the saints]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **in the light**
> UST when they are with him
> (ἐν τῷ φωτί)

Here, **in the light** is the opposite of the "authority of the darkness" in the next verse (1:13) and refers to belonging to God and being part of his kingdom. The metaphor of light representing God, goodness, and heaven is very common in the Bible, and it would be useful to retain it if it communicates well. However, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [in the spiritual kingdom of God] or [in God's glorious presence]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
to the Father	{God our} Father
inheritance	that he has to give
of the saints	to his people

Colossians 1:13

ULT	UST
He rescued us from the authority of the darkness and transferred {us} to the kingdom of his beloved Son,	*God our Father has delivered us from the evil one, who used to control us, and he has given us to his Son, whom he loves, so that now we can obey his Son.*

> ULT **the authority of the darkness**
> UST the evil one, who used to control us
> (τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους)

Here, **darkness** is a metaphor for evil. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [the authority of evil powers]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **the authority of the darkness**
> UST the evil one, who used to control us
> (τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους)

Paul uses the possessive form here to describe an **authority** that is characterized by **darkness** (a metaphor for evil). If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could use a verb such as “rule” or “control” for the noun **authority**. Alternate translation: [the evil that ruled us]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **the authority of the darkness**
> UST the evil one, who used to control us
> (τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **authority**, you could express that idea in another way, such as with a verb. Alternate translation: [the dark things that controlled us]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **transferred {us}**
> UST he has given us
> (μετέστησεν)

Paul speaks about a change in who rules over believers as if they were moving from one location to another. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea plainly. Alternate translation: [made us subject instead]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **to the kingdom of his beloved Son**
> UST to his Son, whom he loves, so that now we can obey his Son
> (εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ)

Paul speaks of the people who belong to God's Son as if they were citizens of a **kingdom**. He means that they are members of a community that obeys God's Son Jesus and belongs to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent metaphor from your culture. Alternatively, you could express Paul's meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [so that his beloved Son reigns over us]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **of his beloved Son**
> UST to his Son, whom he loves
> (τοῦ Υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ)

Paul uses the possessive form to characterize the **Son** as **his beloved**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could express the idea behind **his beloved** with a relative clause. Alternate translation: [of the Son he loves]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **of his beloved Son**
> UST to his Son, whom he loves
> (τοῦ Υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ)

Son is an important title that describes the relationship between God the Father (who is mentioned in the previous verse (1:12)) and Jesus. Alternate translation: [of Jesus, God the Father's beloved Son]

Support Reference: Translating Son and Father

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
rescued	has delivered
authority	who used to control us
kingdom	so that now we can obey his Son
of … Son	to his Son
beloved	whom … loves

Colossians 1:14

ULT	UST
in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.	*Because we are united to his Son, God has set us free; {that is,} he has forgiven our sins.*

ULT **redemption**
UST God has set us free
(τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν)

Some later manuscripts add “through his blood” after **redemption**. Most likely, “through his blood” was accidentally added because of how similar this verse is to Ephesians 1:7, which does include “through his blood.” Most likely, you should not include “through his blood” in your translation.

Support Reference: Textual Variants

ULT **we have redemption**
UST God has set us free
(ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν)

Here the word **redemption** does not refer to a payment or to the act of redeeming. Instead, it refers to the result of the act of redeeming. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word such as “freedom” to express this idea. Alternate translation: [we have freedom]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins**
UST God has set us free; {that is,} he has forgiven our sins
(ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν)

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **redemption** and **forgiveness**, you could express the idea by using verbs. Alternate translation: [God has redeemed us; that is, he has forgiven our sins]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the forgiveness of sins**
UST {that is,} he has forgiven our sins
(τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν)

Paul uses the possessive form to indicate that the **forgiveness** concerns **sins**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could use a verb for **forgiveness** and make **sins** its object or complement. If you use the following alternate translation, you may need to replace the comma before it with a semicolon. Alternate translation: [that is, God has forgiven us for our sins]

Support Reference: Possession

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
redemption	God has set us free
forgiveness	{that is,} he has forgiven
of sins	our sins

Colossians 1:15

ULT	UST
He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.	*God's Son perfectly reveals who God is, even though no one can see God. The Son existed before God created anything, and he has first place over everything that God has created.*

ULT He is the image of the invisible God
UST God's Son perfectly reveals who God is, even though no one can see God
(ὅς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου)

Here, **image** does not mean a representation of something that is visible, like a photo or a reflection. Instead, **image** refers to how the Son perfectly reveals the Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could replace **image** with an expression that emphasizes how the Son reveals the Father. Alternate translation: [What the invisible God is like can be seen in his Son]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT of the invisible God
UST God … even though no one can see God
(τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου)

The word **invisible** does not mean that God the Father could be seen by people but hides himself. Instead, it means that human sight is unable to perceive God the Father, since he is not part of the created world. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase to clarify the idea. Alternate translation: [of God, whom humans are unable to see]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT the firstborn of all creation
UST The Son existed before God created anything, and he has first place over everything that God has created
(πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως)

The word **firstborn** does not refer to when Jesus was born. Instead, it refers to his position as the eternal Son of God the Father. In this sense, **firstborn** is a metaphor that means that he existed as God before God created anything and that he is most important. You could emphasize either or both of these ideas in your translation. Alternate translation: [God's Son, the most important one over all creation] or [God's Son, who existed as God before all creation]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **of all creation**
UST everything that God has created
(πάσης κτίσεως)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **creation**, you could express the idea by using a verb such as "create." Alternate translation: [of all that God created]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the image	perfectly reveals who … is
of the … God	God
the firstborn	The Son existed before God created anything, and he has first place over
of … creation	that God has created

Colossians 1:16

ULT	UST
For in him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible. Whether thrones or dominions or governments or authorities, all things have been created though him and for him.	*{You can know that the Son existed before anything else existed and has first place over everything} because the Father and the Son together created everything that exists. {This includes} everything in heaven and everything on earth, and everything that we can see and everything that we cannot see, {including the spiritual beings} such as thrones, dominions, rulers, and authorities. The Father and the Son together created everything, and everything exists to honor the Son.*

ULT **For in him all things were created**

UST {You can know that the Son existed before anything else existed and has first place over everything} because the Father and the Son together created everything that exists
(ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [For in him God created all things]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **in him all things were created**

UST the Father and the Son together created everything that exists
(ἐν αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα)

Paul here seems to speak as if God created everything inside the Son. This is a metaphor that describes the involvement of the Son when God created all things, which you could clarify by making both the Son and the Father the subjects of **created**. If your language can clearly indicate different types of agency, you could identify God the Father as the primary agent and God the Son as the secondary agent. Alternate translation: [God the Father created all things through the work of God the Son]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in the heavens and on the earth**
UST {This includes} everything in heaven and everything on earth
(ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς)

Paul refers to two opposite things, the **heavens** and the **earth**, as a way to include not only them but also everything else in what God and his Son created. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in every part of the universe]

Support Reference: Merism

ULT **the visible and the invisible**
UST and everything that we can see and everything that we cannot see
(τὰ ὁρατὰ καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα)

Paul refers to two opposite things, **the visible** and **the invisible**, as another way to refer to everything that God and his Son created. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [whether people can see them or not]

Support Reference: Merism

ULT **Whether thrones or dominions or governments or authorities**
UST {including the spiritual beings} such as thrones, dominions, rulers, and authorities
(εἴτε θρόνοι, εἴτε κυριότητες, εἴτε ἀρχαὶ, εἴτε ἐξουσίαι)

The words **thrones**, **dominions**, **governments**, and **authorities** here refer to different kinds of angels or other spiritual beings that are not specified as being good or evil. They are examples of what is **invisible**. It may be that the false teachers were teaching that these beings should be worshiped. But Paul is emphasizing here that God the Father created all of these spiritual beings through his Son, and so the Son is much greater than these. If it would be helpful in your language, you could: (1) identify that these are spiritual beings and translate as many of these names as you have different words for. Alternate translation: [Including all spiritual beings, which can be called thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities]; (2) use names from your culture that identify different classes of angels or spiritual beings. Alternate translation: [Whether angels or archangels or spirit rulers]; (3) summarize without using specific names. Alternate translation: [Including all types of powerful spiritual beings]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **all things have been created though him and for him**
> UST The Father and the Son together created everything, and everything exists to honor the Son
> (τὰ πάντα δι᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [through him and for him God created all things]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **have been created though him**
> UST The Father and the Son together created
> (δι᾽ αὐτοῦ & ἔκτισται)

The phrase **through him** shows God the Son's involvement in creating the world with the Father. Alternate translation: [God the Father created by working through the Son]

Support Reference: Translating Son and Father

> ULT **and for him**
> UST and everything exists to honor the Son
> (καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν)

Here, **for him** refers to the Son as the purpose or goal of all creation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that creation's purpose is to honor and glorify the Son. Alternate translation: [and everything exists to glorify him]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
were created	the Father … created
heavens	{This includes} everything in heaven
earth	everything on earth
thrones	{including the spiritual beings} such as thrones
dominions	dominions
governments	rulers
authorities	and authorities
have been created	The Father … created

Colossians 1:17

ULT	UST
And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.	*The Son existed before any of creation existed, and he sustains and connects all of it.*

ULT **he is before all things**
UST The Son existed before any of creation existed
(αὐτός ἐστιν πρὸ πάντων)

The word **before** refers to time, not location. It means that the Son did not come into being when God created everything, but rather he existed as God before anything was created. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that refers to prior time. Alternate translation: [before God created anything, the Son existed as God]

Support Reference: Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

ULT **in him all things hold together**
UST he sustains and connects all of it
(τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν)

Paul is speaking here as if all created things **hold together** because they are **in** the Son. By speaking in this way, Paul means that everything that God created continues to exist because the Son actively works to preserve everything. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [he controls everything so that it works the way it should] or [he is the one who makes sure everything has its proper place]

Support Reference: Metaphor

Colossians 1:18

ULT	UST
And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead, so that he himself might become first among all things.	*In regard to the church, {that is, all believers,} he rules over it as people's heads rule over their bodies. He made it possible for the church to begin {when he was} the first person to live again after dying{, never to die again}. Because of these things about him, he is greater and more important than anything and anybody else.*

ULT **he is the head of the body, the church**
UST In regard to the church, {that is, all believers,} he rules over it as people's heads rule over their bodies
(αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος, τῆς ἐκκλησίας)

Paul speaks of Jesus' position over the **church** as if he were the **head** on the human **body**. As the head rules and directs the body, so Jesus rules and directs the church. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or express the idea with a simile or in plain language. Alternate translation: [he rules and directs the church]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the beginning**
UST made it possible for the church to begin
(ἡ ἀρχή)

The word **beginning** could refer to: (1) the origin of something; here, the origin of the church. Alternate translation: [the origin of the church] or [the one who started the church]; (2) a position of power or authority. Alternate translation: [the ruler] or [the one with authority]

ULT **the firstborn from among the dead**
UST when he was} the first person to live again after dying{, never to die again}
(πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν)

Paul describes Jesus' resurrection **from among the dead** as if someone gave birth to him as her first child. This figure helps us to see that this new life was not like his old life, because he can never die again. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [the first one to come back to new life] or [the first person to permanently rise from the dead]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the dead**
UST when he was} the first person to live again after dying{, never to die again}
(τῶν νεκρῶν)

Paul is using the adjective **dead** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: [the dead people]

Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

ULT **so that he himself might become first among all things**
UST Because of these things about him, he is greater and more important than anything and anybody else
(ἵνα γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων)

This clause could identify: (1) the result of Jesus starting the church and coming back from the dead. Alternate translation: [with the result that he is first among all things]; (2) the purpose of Jesus starting the church and coming back from the dead. Alternate translation: [in order that he might be first among all things]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **he himself might become first among all things**
UST he is greater and more important than anything and anybody else
(γένηται ἐν πᾶσιν αὐτὸς πρωτεύων)

Paul here describes Jesus as if he were **first** to do or be something. This does not refer to time or sequence, but rather it refers to importance. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable expression or plainly. Alternate translation: [he himself might become the most important person in all creation] or [he himself might be greater than everything and anybody else]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
church	In regard to the church, {that is, all believers … }
the firstborn	when he was} the first person to live again after dying{, never to die again}

Colossians 1:19

ULT	UST
For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell,	*{The Son rules over everything} because the Son is fully God, just as the Father gladly willed him to be.*

ULT **For**
UST {The Son rules over everything} because
(ὅτι)

The word **For** provides a reason for previous statements. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify for which statements this verse gives a reason. These statements could be: (1) everything in the previous verse, including the Son's headship over the church, his founding of the church, his resurrection, and his status as most important. Alternate translation: [He is all these things because]; (2) why the Son is first among all things. Alternate translation: [He is first among all things because]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell**
UST the Son is fully God, just as the Father gladly willed him to be
(ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι)

The verb **was pleased** implies a personal subject, which must be God the Father. By using the phrase **all the fullness**, Paul is speaking of everything that God the Father is, either by ellipsis or metonymy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this explicit. Alternate translation: [God the Father was pleased to make all of his fullness dwell in the Son] or [all the fullness of God the Father was pleased to dwell in the Son]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell**
UST the Son is fully God, just as the Father gladly willed him to be
(ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι)

Paul speaks of the Son as though he were a house in which God's **fullness** could **dwell**. This does not mean that God lives inside of the Son or that the Son is part of God. This means that the Son has all the divinity of God. It means that the Son is fully God just as the Father is fully God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state it more plainly. Alternate translation: [the Son is fully God in every way]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **all the fullness**
> UST is fully God
> (πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα)

In the context, **fullness** stands for the fullness of divinity, or everything that characterizes God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make it clear that **fullness** refers to the **fullness** of God. Alternate translation: [the full divinity of God]

Support Reference: Metonymy

Colossians 1:20

ULT	UST
and to reconcile through him all things to himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross, through him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens.	*{God the Father} also {gladly chose to work} through the Son to reconcile to himself everything {and every person that he created} in the whole universe. {God did this} through his Son when his Son died on the cross, which made everything peaceful between God and his creation.*

ULT **to reconcile**
UST to work … to reconcile
(ἀποκαταλλάξαι)

This verse continues the sentence from the previous verse, so **to reconcile** continues the same verb from there, "was pleased," along with its implied subject, God the Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could repeat that subject and verb here. Alternate translation: [God the Father was pleased to reconcile]

ULT **all things**
UST everything {and every person that he created}
(τὰ πάντα)

The implication is that **all things** includes everything that God created, including people. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [all things and all people]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **having made peace**
UST which made everything peaceful between God and his creation
(εἰρηνοποιήσας)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **peace**, you could express this idea in another way. Alternate translation: [having made things right]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the blood of his cross**
UST when his Son died on the cross
(τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ)

Paul uses the possessive form to describe **blood** characterized by **his cross**, which is the location where the blood was shed. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could make the relationship between the two words clearer with a short phrase such as “shed on.” Alternate translation: [the blood shed on his cross.]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **the blood of his cross**
UST when his Son died on the cross
(τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ)

Here, **blood** stands for the death of Christ on the cross. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word that stands for death or express the idea in plain language. Alternate translation: [his death on the cross]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **all things to himself … whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens**
UST to himself everything {and every person that he created} in the whole universe
(τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτόν & εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς)

The last part of this verse (**whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens**) describes **all things**, found near the beginning of the verse. If your language does not separate a description from the thing it describes, you could move the description next to **all things**. Alternate translation: [all things, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens, to himself]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens**
UST in the whole universe
(εἴτε τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, εἴτε τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς)

Paul refers to the **things on the earth** and the **things in the heavens** to include them and everything in between, that is, everything in all of creation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [everything in the whole creation]

Support Reference: Merism

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
to reconcile	to work … to reconcile

ULT	UST
having made peace	which made everything peaceful between God and his creation
of … cross	on the cross
earth	in the whole universe
heavens	in the whole universe

Colossians 1:21

ULT	UST
At one time you also were alienated and enemies in thought, in evil deeds.	*Before {you believed in the Messiah}, you did not want to be close {to God}, and you were hostile {to him} because everything you thought and did was evil.*

ULT At one time
UST Before {you believed in the Messiah}
(ποτε)

The phrase **At one time** does not refer to one specific instance in time when the Colossians were alienated from God. Instead, it refers to all the time before they believed in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify what **time** Paul is referring to. Alternate translation: [During the time before you believed]

Support Reference: Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

ULT were alienated
UST did not want to be close {to God}
(ὄντας ἀπηλλοτριωμένους)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could describe the Colossians' state with an active form. Alternate translation: [did not want a relationship with God] or [were people who did not want to be near God]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT alienated and enemies
UST did not want to be close {to God}, and you were hostile {to him}
(ἀπηλλοτριωμένους, καὶ ἐχθροὺς)

Paul assumes that the Colossians will know from whom they were **alienated** and with whom they were **enemies**: God. If your language would include this implied information, you could include a reference to "God" in this sentence. Alternate translation: [alienated from God and were his enemies]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **in thought, in evil deeds**
> UST because everything you thought and did was evil
> (τῇ διανοίᾳ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις τοῖς πονηροῖς)

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **thought** and **deeds**, you could express the ideas with relative clauses. Alternate translation: [in what you thought, in what you did that was evil]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
enemies	you were hostile {to him}
in thought	because everything you thought
evil	was evil

Colossians 1:22

ULT	UST
But now you have been reconciled by the body of his flesh through death to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,	*But {that has all changed} now {that you believe in Jesus!} God the Father has repaired the relationship between himself and you {by working} through his Son when his Son became human and died. {God the Father repaired the relationship} so that you can dwell with him as people who are completely free from sin.*

ULT **But**
UST But {that has all changed}
(δὲ)

The word **But** here introduces a strong contrast from the previous sentence. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a strong contrast from what was just said. Alternate translation: [Instead of that,]

Support Reference: Connect — Contrast Relationship

ULT **now**
UST now {that you believe in Jesus … }
(νυνὶ)

The word **now** does not refer to the moment at which Paul writes this letter or the moment at which it is read to the Colossians. Instead, it refers to the time since they believed, including the present moment. This follows as a sequence to the previous verse, which referred to the time when they had not yet believed. If the meaning of **now** would be misunderstood your language, you could add a phrase such as “that you have believed.” Alternate translation: [now that you have faith in Jesus,]

Support Reference: Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

ULT **by the body of his flesh**
UST {by working} through his Son when his Son became human
(ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ)

Paul uses the phrase **the body of his flesh** to refer to Jesus and everything that he did while in a human body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [by Jesus in his physical body]

Support Reference: Metonymy

> ULT **the body of his flesh**
> UST {by working} through his Son when his Son became human
> (τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ)

Paul describes Jesus' **body** that is characterized by **flesh**. This refers to Jesus' body during his earthly life, not his glorified body after the resurrection. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an expression that makes this idea clear. Alternate translation: [his physical body] or [his body before the resurrection]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **through death**
> UST and died
> (διὰ τοῦ θανάτου)

Paul has not stated whose **death** this is. This **death** is not that of the Colossians but that of Jesus on the cross. If your language would state who died, you could add a possessive word to clarify. Alternate translation: [through his death] or [through Jesus' death]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **to present you**
> UST {God the Father repaired the relationship} so that you
> (παραστῆσαι ὑμᾶς)

Here, **to present you** gives the purpose for which God reconciled the Colossians by the death of his Son. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a purpose phrase such as "so that" or "in order to." Alternate translation: [so that he might present you]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

> ULT **to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him**
> UST {God the Father repaired the relationship} so that you can dwell with him as people who are completely free from sin
> (παραστῆσαι ὑμᾶς ἁγίους, καὶ ἀμώμους, καὶ ἀνεγκλήτους, κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ)

Paul is describing the Colossians as though Jesus had brought them to stand before God the Father, by which he means that Jesus has made them acceptable to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea in plain language. Alternate translation: [to make you acceptable before him, holy and blameless and above reproach]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **holy and blameless and above reproach**
UST as people who are completely free from sin
(ἁγίους, καὶ ἀμώμους, καὶ ἀνεγκλήτους)

These words, **holy**, **blameless**, and **above reproach**, mean basically the same thing here. The repetition is used to emphasize the completeness of what the Son did to take away the Colossians' sin. After trusting in Jesus, they are now completely morally pure. If your language does not use repetition in this way or you do not have three words that mean this, you could use fewer words and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [completely pure] or [without any sin at all]

Support Reference: Doublet

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
you have been reconciled	God the Father has repaired the relationship between himself and you
holy	as people who are completely free from sin
blameless	as people who are completely free from sin
above reproach	as people who are completely free from sin

Colossians 1:23

ULT	UST
if indeed you continue in the faith, founded and firm and not being moved from the hope of the gospel that you heard, the one having been proclaimed to every creature {that is} under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a servant.	*{This is all true about you} as long as you continue confidently to believe {in the Messiah}, and as long as you do not give up confidently hoping {for God to do what he has promised} in the good news that you heard and that people all over the world have heard. I, Paul, serve God {by proclaiming to people} this same good news.*

ULT **if indeed you continue**
UST {This is all true about you} as long as you continue
(εἴ γε ἐπιμένετε)

Paul explains that the Colossians need to continue in their faith for what he said in the previous verse to be true about them. In other words, in order for them to be reconciled to God, blameless and without reproach, they need to continue in the faith. However, he does not think that this is a hypothetical situation or something that is likely not true. Instead, Paul thinks that they are continuing in their faith, and he uses this statement with **if** to encourage them to keep doing so. If your language does not use **if** in this context, you could rephrase the condition into a circumstance or an assumption. Alternate translation: [provided that you continue] or [presuming that you continue]

Support Reference: Connect — Factual Conditions

ULT **in the faith**
UST to believe {in the Messiah}
(τῇ πίστει)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **faith**, you could express the idea behind this abstract noun in another way. Alternate translation: [to trust God] or [to believe God's message]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **founded and firm**
> UST confidently
> (τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἑδραῖοι)

The words **founded** and **firm** mean basically the same thing. The words **not being moved** repeat the idea again in a negative way. The repetition is used to emphasize that it is important for the Colossians to continue strong in their faith. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could use one word for this idea and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [very firm] or [like a rock]

Support Reference: Doublet

> ULT **founded and firm and not being moved from**
> UST confidently … and as long as you do not give up
> (τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἑδραῖοι, καὶ μὴ μετακινούμενοι ἀπὸ)

Paul speaks of the Colossians as if they were a building that was **founded** and sits on a **firm** foundation so that it cannot be **moved** from its place, which means that they have good basis for their faith and will keep believing in all situations. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with an equivalent metaphor in your culture or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [holding onto it and grasping it tightly and not letting go of]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **the hope of the gospel**
> UST confidently hoping {for God to do what he has promised} in the good news
> (τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου)

Paul uses to possessive to explain that **hope** comes from the **gospel**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could express the idea by using a phrase such as “that comes from” or “gained from.” Alternate translation: [the hope that comes from the gospel] or [how you hope, which you gained from the gospel]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **the hope of the gospel**
> UST confidently hoping {for God to do what he has promised} in the good news
> (τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **hope**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [expecting God to fulfill the gospel] or [waiting for God to complete the good news]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **the one having been proclaimed to every creature {that is} under heaven**
> UST and that people all over the world have heard
> (τοῦ κηρυχθέντος ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form. You could: (1) change **proclaimed** to "heard" and make **every creature** the subject. Alternate translation: [which every creature that is under heaven has heard]; (2) specify that "fellow believers" is the subject of **proclaimed**. Alternate translation: [which fellow believers have proclaimed to every creature that is under heaven]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **to every creature {that is} under heaven**
> UST people all over the world
> (ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν)

To emphasize how far the good news has spread, Paul uses an exaggeration that the Colossians would have understood. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or qualify the claim. Alternate translation: [to people in many different places] or [to people in every place we know about]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

> ULT **{that is} under heaven**
> UST people all over the world
> (τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν)

In Paul's culture, **under heaven** refers to the visible part of creation that humans regularly interact with. It excludes spiritual beings, the stars, and anything else in **heaven**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate **under heaven** with a comparable expression. Alternate translation: [that is on the earth]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **of which I, Paul, became a servant**
> UST I, Paul, serve God {by proclaiming to people} this same good news
> (οὗ ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ Παῦλος διάκονος)

Here, **Paul** speaks as if the good news were a person of whom he could become **a servant**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could explain that Paul is **a servant** of God, but his task from God is to proclaim the good news. Alternate translation: [which I, Paul, proclaim as God has commanded me, his servant, to do]

Support Reference: Personification

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
in the faith	to believe {in the Messiah}
founded	confidently
hope	confidently hoping {for God to do what he has promised}
of the gospel	in the good news
having been proclaimed	and that … have heard
creature	people all over the world
heaven	people all over the world
Paul	I, Paul, serve God {by proclaiming to people}
a servant	I, Paul, serve God {by proclaiming to people}

Colossians 1:24

ULT	UST
Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I fill up in my flesh the lack of the afflictions of Christ for the sake of his body, which is the church,	*At the present time I suffer cheerfully {because it is} for your benefit. I am suffering physically to complete {my part of} the suffering that the Messiah began on behalf of {his people,} the church, which is like the Messiah's own body.*

ULT **Now**
UST At the present time
(νῦν)

The word **Now** indicates that Paul wishes to tell the Colossians how he is currently serving the gospel. It does not indicate a change of topic, as it sometimes does in English. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a longer phrase to express this idea. Alternate translation: [While I write this letter,]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **in my sufferings for you**
UST suffer … {because it is} for your benefit
(ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν)

Alternate translation: [while I suffer for your sake]

ULT **I fill up in my flesh the lack of the afflictions of Christ**
UST I am suffering physically to complete {my part of} the suffering that the Messiah began
(ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου)

Paul speaks of his **flesh** as if it were a container that could **fill up** with **afflictions**. By this, he means that his bodily sufferings function to satisfy a specific purpose, which here is to finish what **Christ** started with his **afflictions**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [with my bodily suffering, I finish what the Messiah started when he suffered. I do this]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the lack of the afflictions of Christ**
UST I am suffering … to complete {my part of} the suffering that the Messiah began
(τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ)

Paul assumes that his readers will understand that he is not saying that there is a **lack** in Christ's **afflictions** because those **afflictions** did not succeed in doing what they were supposed to do. Instead, the **lack** refers to what Christ wished for his disciples to do as his servants. The **lack**, then, is something that Christ intentionally did not accomplish, because he wanted Paul to do it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could rephrase **lack** so that it is clearer that Christ intentionally left something for Paul to do. Alternate translation: [the afflictions that Christ has called me to suffer to complete his work]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **the lack of the afflictions of Christ**
UST I am suffering … to complete {my part of} the suffering that the Messiah began
(τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ)

Paul uses two possessive forms to speak about the **lack** that characterizes the **afflictions** that **Christ** suffered. If your language would not use possessive forms to express that idea, you could express the idea with a relative clause or two clauses. Alternate translation: [what Christ, when he suffered, left for me to suffer]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **his body, which is the church**
UST {his people,} the church, which is like the Messiah's own body
(τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὅ ἐστιν ἡ ἐκκλησία)

Paul speaks of the **church** as if it were Christ's **body**, and he provides the explanation of what **body** means. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to the **church** first and then identify it as his **body**. Alternate translation: [the church, which is his body]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
I rejoice	I … cheerfully
sufferings	suffer
of the afflictions	{ … of} the suffering
of Christ	that the Messiah began
church	{his people,} the church

Colossians 1:25

ULT	UST
of which I became a servant according to the stewardship of God, the one having been given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,	*God called me to serve his church, and he appointed me {specifically} to carry out his plan that concerns you. {My part of this plan is} to proclaim {to you non-Jews} the full message from God.*

ULT **of which I became a servant**
UST God called me to serve his church
(ἧς ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ διάκονος)

If your language would specify who called Paul to be **a servant** of the church, you could rephrase this clause so that God is the subject and Paul is the object. Alternate translation: [God appointed me to be a servant of the church]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **the stewardship**
UST plan
(τὴν οἰκονομίαν)

The word **stewardship** refers to managing a household or, more generally, to directing any group or process. If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **stewardship**, you could replace the word with a descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: [authoritative oversight] or [superintending authority]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the stewardship of God**
UST his plan
(τὴν οἰκονομίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ)

Paul uses the possessive form to describe a **stewardship** that could: (1) come from God. Alternate translation: [the stewardship from God]; (2) belong to God and be **given** to Paul. Alternate translation: [God's own stewardship] or [God's own oversight]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **the one having been given to me**
UST and he appointed me {specifically} to carry out
(τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [that God gave to me] or [that he gave me]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **the word of God**
> UST the … message from God
> (τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ)

Paul uses the possessive form to describe **the word** that is: (1) from God. Alternate translation: [the word that came from God]; (2) about God. Alternate translation: [the word about God]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **the word of God**
> UST the … message from God
> (τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ)

Here, **word** represents a message that is made up of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the message from God] or [God's message]

Support Reference: Metonymy

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a servant	to serve
stewardship	plan
of God	his
to fulfill	My part of this plan is} to proclaim {to you non-Jews} … full
word of God	message from God

Colossians 1:26

ULT	UST
the mystery that had been hidden from the ages and from the generations, but now having been revealed to his saints,	*God kept this message a secret, concealing it from people for a long time. But now he has made the message known to his people.*

ULT **the mystery that had been hidden**
UST God kept this message a secret, concealing it
(τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [the mystery that God had hidden]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **the mystery**
UST God kept this message a secret
(τὸ μυστήριον)

Paul calls "the word of God," from 1:25, **the mystery**. This does not mean that it is hard to understand, but rather, it had not yet been revealed. Now, however, Paul says that it "has been revealed." If your language would not use **mystery** to refer to something that has been revealed, you could replace **mystery** with a short descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: [the concealed message]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **that had been hidden from the ages and from the generations**
UST concealing it from people for a long time
(τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν)

This clause does not mean that the **ages** and the **generations** were unable to understand the "mystery." Instead, **from the ages** and **from the generations** refer to the time during which the mystery was hidden. Those from whom the mystery was hidden are not expressed explicitly, but it is clear that they are those who were alive during those times. If your language would express explicitly those from whom the mystery was hidden, you could insert it into the sentence. Alternate translation: [that has been hidden from the people who lived during the ages and in the generations]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **from the ages and from the generations**
UST from people for a long time
(ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν γενεῶν)

These phrases speak about the passage of time. The word **ages** refers to periods of time that are marked off by specific boundaries (often major events), while the word **generations** refers to time periods marked off by human birth and death. The **mystery** has been **hidden** during all these time periods up until the present time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use equivalent expressions or short phrases. Alternate translation: [during all time periods, while people were born and died]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **now**
UST now
(νῦν)

The word **now** does not refer to the time during which Paul wrote this letter. Instead, it contrasts with the **ages** and **generations** and refers to the time or "age" after the work of Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could further identify what time **now** refers to. Alternate translation: [now that Jesus has come, it]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **having been revealed**
UST he has made the message known
(ἐφανερώθη)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [God has revealed it]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
mystery	God kept this message a secret
ages	for a long time
generations	from people
to … saints	to … people

Colossians 1:27

ULT	UST
to whom God desired to make known what {is} the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.	*God has been wanting to tell his people this very glorious message that was secret, which applies to non-Jews {as well as to Jews}. The secret is that the Messiah is united to you {non-Jews}, which means that you can confidently expect to become glorious beings like the Messiah.*

> ULT **the riches of the glory of this mystery**
> UST this very glorious message that was secret
> (τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου)

Paul emphasizes the scope of **the glory** by speaking as if it had wealth or **riches**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable statement or express the idea with an adverb such as “very” or an adjective such as “abundant.” Alternate translation: [the abundant glory of this mystery]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **the riches of the glory of this mystery**
> UST this very glorious message that was secret
> (τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου)

Paul uses the possessive form to connect **riches** to **glory**, which then characterizes the **mystery**. If your language would not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could translate both **riches** and **glory** as adjectives or adverbs describing the **mystery**. Alternate translation: [this richly glorious mystery]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **the riches of the glory of this mystery**
> UST this very glorious message that was secret
> (τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τοῦ μυστηρίου τούτου)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind the word **glory**, you could express that idea in another way, such as with a description word. Alternate translation: [this richly glorious mystery] or [this abundantly wonderful mystery]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **among the Gentiles**
UST which applies to non-Jews {as well as to Jews}
(ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν)

This phrase could refer to: (1) how the mystery applies to all people, including **Gentiles**. Alternate translation: [that applies to every person, including the Gentiles]; (2) where God makes the mystery known. Alternate translation: [to the Gentiles]

ULT **Christ in you**
UST that the Messiah is united to you {non-Jews}
(Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν)

Paul speaks of the believers as if they were containers in which **Christ** is present. The expression means basically the same thing as "you in Christ." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the same translation you have used for being "in Christ." Alternate translation: [your union with Christ]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the hope of glory**
UST which means that you can confidently expect to become glorious beings like the Messiah
(ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης)

Paul speaks of a **hope** that relates to **glory**. This could refer to: (1) hoping for, or expecting, glory. Alternate translation: [the expectation of becoming glorious]; (2) a hope that is glorious. Alternate translation: [the glorious hope]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **the hope of glory**
UST which means that you can confidently expect to become glorious beings like the Messiah
(ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς δόξης)

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind the words **hope** and **glory**, you could express those ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [with whom we can expect to share his glorious life] or [who makes us confidently hope for living with him in heaven]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
God	God
to make known	to tell

ULT	UST
of the glory	glorious
of … mystery	message that was secret
Gentiles	which applies to non-Jews {as well as to Jews}
Christ	that the Messiah
hope	which means that you can confidently expect
of glory	to become glorious beings like the Messiah

Colossians 1:28

ULT	UST
We proclaim him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom so that we may present every man complete in Christ.	*{This is the Messiah} whom we announce {to everyone}. {When we talk about him,} we warn and teach each person as wisely as we can. {We do these things} so that each of these people may become spiritually mature in each person's union with the Messiah.*

ULT **We proclaim … we may present**
UST we announce {to everyone} … may become
(ἡμεῖς καταγγέλλομεν & παραστήσωμεν)

The pronoun **We** in this verse does not include the Colossians.

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

ULT **every man … every man … every man**
UST teach each person … each of these people
(πάντα ἄνθρωπον)

Here, **every man** refers to every person whom Paul has told about Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [every man whom we talk to … each of them … each of them]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **man … man … man**
UST teach each person … each of these people
(ἄνθρωπον)

Here the word **man** does not refer to only male people but to any human being. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a term that refers to humans in general. Alternate translation: [human]

Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

> ULT **all wisdom**
> UST as wisely as we can
> (πάσῃ σοφίᾳ)

Here Paul exaggerates when he says that he uses **all wisdom**, by which he means that he uses all of the wisdom that he possesses. He does not mean that he possesses all the wisdom that exists. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this more plainly. Alternate translation: [all of the wisdom that we have] or [all of the wisdom that God has given us]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

> ULT **so that we may present**
> UST {We do these things} so that … may become
> (ἵνα παραστήσωμεν)

Paul here explains the goal or purpose for which he and those with him "admonish" and "teach" people. In your translation, use a phrase that designates goal or purpose. Alternate translation: [in order that we may present]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

> ULT **we may present every man complete in Christ**
> UST each of these people may become spiritually mature in each person's union with the Messiah
> (παραστήσωμεν πάντα ἄνθρωπον τέλειον ἐν Χριστῷ)

In this context, when Paul says that he intends to **present** people, he does not say to whom or where he will **present** them. If your language would include this information, you could explain what the situation is. Paul could be referring to: (1) when people appear before God on the judgment day. Alternate translation: [we may present every man complete in Christ to God the Father on the judgment day]; (2) when people worship God. Alternate translation: [we may present every man complete in Christ when they come before God in worship]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **complete**
UST spiritually mature
(τέλειον)

The implication is that the word **complete** in this context means that a person is what he or she is supposed to be and is able to do what he or she is called to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that has this meaning, such as “perfect” or “excellent,” or you could translate **complete** with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [fit for what God has called him to be]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
proclaim	announce {to everyone}
admonishing	{When we talk about him,} we warn
wisdom	as wisely as we can
complete	spiritually mature
Christ	in each person’s union with the Messiah
in Christ	in each person’s union with the Messiah

Colossians 1:29

ULT	UST
For this also I labor, striving according to his working, the one working in me in power.	*I work hard in all that I do in order to accomplish that goal. {I can do this} because the Messiah is powerfully enabling me to do it.*

> **ULT I labor, striving**
> **UST** I work hard in all that I do
> (κοπιῶ, ἀγωνιζόμενος)

The words **labor** and **striving** mean very similar things. The repetition emphasizes how hard Paul works. If your language does not use repetition in this way or has only one word for this concept, you could use just one word and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [work hard] or [labor greatly]

Support Reference: Doublet

> **ULT according to his working, the one working**
> **UST** {I can do this} because the Messiah is … enabling … to do it
> (κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἐνεργουμένην)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **working**, you could express the idea with a verb. Alternate translation: [according to how God works, who works]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> **ULT in power**
> **UST** powerfully
> (ἐν δυνάμει)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **power**, you could express the idea with an adjective or adverb. Alternate translation: [in powerful ways]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
I labor	I work

Colossians 2

Colossians 2 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

1. Teaching Section (1:13–2:23)
    - Paul's Ministry (1:24–2:5)
    - Effects of Christ's Work (2:6–15)
    - Freedom in Christ (2:16–23)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Philosophy

Paul speaks of "philosophy" in 2:8. He is not referring to all attempts by humans to understand the world around them. Instead, he makes it clear that he is referring to thinking that is "empty" and full of "deceit," that comes from traditions of humans and the "elemental principles." All this "philosophy" is bad because it is not "according to Christ." The "philosophy" that Paul attacks, then, is any attempt to make sense of the world that does not do so in line with Christ and his work.

Fullness

Just as in the last chapter, "fullness" is an important idea that Paul refers to in 2:9–10. Again, Christ has the divine "fullness," and he "fills" the Colossians. No other source of "fullness" is needed.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Head and body

As in the last chapter, Christ is called the "head," both of powerful rulers (2:10) and of his church 2:19. Paul uses this language to identify Christ as: (1) the supreme ruler, just as the head rules over the body, and (2) the source of life for the church, just as a body is dead without its head. Paul also identifies the church as the body of

Christ in 2:19. Here, his point is that the church cannot survive and grow without being connected to Christ, just as a body does not live or grow without a head. Finally, Paul refers to a "body" in 2:17, but here the metaphor is different. The word "body" refers to any object that can cast a shadow (not primarily to an organic, human body) and here the "body" (the object) is Christ, who casts a shadow, which is identified as old covenant regulations.

Circumcision and baptism

In 2:11–13, Paul uses the old covenant sign of circumcision to refer to removing the "the body of flesh," and he uses the new covenant sign of baptism to refer to "being buried" with Christ. He uses these two signs to show how Christians are united with Christ, freed from sin, and given new life.

Flesh

In Colossians, Paul uses "flesh" to refer to human, embodied existence in the world before the resurrection and before God creates the new heavens and earth. He uses "flesh" neutrally to refer to physical presence in 2:1; 2:5. In many other places, however, he uses "flesh" to refer to the weakness and sinfulness of humans as they live in ways that fit with this broken world (2:11, 13, 18, 23). Often, "flesh" in these situations is translated with something like "sinful nature." However, it is perhaps better to emphasize both weakness and sinfulness, and the term "nature" can be confusing. For examples of some ways to translate "flesh," see the UST and notes in this chapter.

The false teaching

In this chapter, Paul gives some information about what the false teachers are saying and doing. However, it is not enough to give us a full picture of who they were and what they taught. What is clear is that they spoke about extraordinary experiences, were interested in spiritual beings, and gave commands about behavior that at least sometimes were related to Old Testament law. If possible, keep your translation as vague as Paul's own description of the false teachers.

Colossians 2:1

ULT	UST
For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and the ones at Laodicea and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh	*{I write these things} because I want to inform you about how hard I am working. {I work hard} for you, for the fellow-believers who live in {the city of} Laodicea, and for all fellow-believers who have not met me in person.*

ULT **For**
UST {I write these things} because
(γὰρ)

The word **For** introduces the reason why Paul told them in 1:29 about how hard he works. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the transition more explicit. Alternate translation: [I tell you about my hard work because]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **how great a struggle I have for you**
UST how hard I am working. {I work hard} for you
(ἡλίκον ἀγῶνα ἔχω ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν)

Here, the word **struggle** is directly related to the word "striving" in 1:29. Just as in that verse, it is usually used for striving to win a contest, whether athletic, legal, or military. Paul uses the word here to indicate how much he cares for the Colossians and how hard he works for their benefit. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [how much care I have in your behalf]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **how great a struggle I have**
UST how hard I am working
(ἡλίκον ἀγῶνα ἔχω)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **struggle**, you could express the idea behind this abstract noun by combining it with the verb **have** and using a verb such as "struggle." Alternate translation: [how much I struggle]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **for you and the ones at Laodicea and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh**
> UST {I work hard} for you, for the fellow-believers who live in {the city of} Laodicea, and for all fellow-believers who have not met me in person
> (ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, καὶ τῶν ἐν Λαοδικίᾳ, καὶ ὅσοι οὐχ ἑόρακαν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐν σαρκί)

This list includes the Colossians and the Laodiceans among those who have not seen Paul's **face in the flesh**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of the list and include **you** and **the ones at Laodicea** among those who **have not seen** Paul's face. Alternate translation: [for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, including you and those at Laodicea]

Support Reference: Information Structure

> ULT **for you**
> UST {I work hard} for you
> (ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν)

Paul implies that he has a great **struggle** in order to help **you** and the believers in other places. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [in order to help you]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **the ones**
> UST for the fellow-believers
> (τῶν)

Paul implies that these are believers, not just anyone who lives in **Laodicea**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this idea more explicit. Alternate translation: [the believers]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **have not seen my face in the flesh**
> UST who have not met me in person
> (οὐχ ἑόρακαν τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ἐν σαρκί)

In Paul's culture, seeing a **face in the flesh** refers to meeting someone in person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or express the idea in plain language. Alternate translation: [I have not visited] or [have not seen me]

Support Reference: Idiom

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
to know	to inform … about

Colossians 2:2

ULT	UST
so that their hearts might be encouraged, having been brought together in love and into all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, into knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ,	*{I work this hard} in order to encourage all of you {who have not met me} so that you unite yourselves together with love for each other. {I want you} to completely and confidently understand the secret that God had previously kept hidden. {This secret is about} the Messiah.*

ULT **so that**
UST {I work this hard} in order to
(ἵνα)

Here, **so that** marks the encouragement of the believers as the goal or purpose of Paul's struggle. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that this is the purpose. If it would be helpful, you could start a new sentence here and repeat some of the previous verse. Alternate translation: [The reason that I struggle so much is so that] or [I do this in order that]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

ULT **their**
UST all of you {who have not met me}
(αὐτῶν)

Paul here switches from the second person to the third person because he wishes to include everyone he has not met in person, including the Colossians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could: (1) use the second person from the previous verse but make it clear that this includes everyone Paul has not met in person. Alternate translation: [your hearts and their]; (2) retain the third person here and reverse the list in the previous verse as suggested by the note there.

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **their hearts might be encouraged, having been brought together**
UST encourage all of you {who have not met me} so that you unite yourselves together
(παρακληθῶσιν αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν, συμβιβασθέντες)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express these verbs in their active forms, with Paul as the subject of the "encouraging" and God as the subject of the "bringing together." Alternate translation: [I might encourage their hearts, with God bringing them together]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **their hearts**
> UST all of you {who have not met me}
> (αἱ καρδίαι αὐτῶν)

When Paul refers to **their hearts**, the Colossians would have understood him to mean the entire person. Paul uses **hearts** because his culture identified **hearts** as the body part where people experienced encouragement. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that identifies the location where people experience encouragement in your culture, or you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [they]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

> ULT **all the riches of the full assurance**
> UST completely and confidently
> (πᾶν πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας)

Paul here speaks as if **full assurance** could be characterized as having **all the riches**. He uses this metaphor to describe **the full assurance** as complete and valuable. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [all the benefits of having complete assurance] or [all the blessings of the full assurance]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **of the full assurance of understanding**
> UST and confidently understand
> (τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως)

Paul uses the possessive form to speak of **understanding** that is the source of **full assurance**. If your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could use a relative clause to translate **of understanding**. (From the rest of the verse, it is clear that what is understood is **the mystery of God**.) Alternate translation: [of the full assurance that comes from understanding] or [of understanding the truth that brings full assurance]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **into all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, into knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ**
UST {I want you} to completely and confidently understand the secret that God had previously kept hidden. {This secret is about} the Messiah
(εἰς πᾶν πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως; εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ)

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **full assurance**, **understanding**, and **knowledge**, you could express the ideas with verbs. Alternate translation: [into all the riches that come from being confident that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ] or [having all the riches that come when they completely trust God because they understand, that is, they know the mystery of God, Christ]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **of understanding, into knowledge**
UST understand
(τῆς συνέσεως; εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν)

The words **understanding** and **knowledge** mean basically the same thing. Paul uses both words to emphasize the breadth of spiritual knowledge about which he speaks. If your language does not use repetition in this way or has only one word for this concept, you could use just one word or translate **understanding** with an adjective such as "full" or "true." Alternate translation: [of true knowledge] or [of full knowledge]

Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **knowledge of the mystery**
UST understand the secret
(ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ μυστηρίου)

Paul uses the possessive form to speak of **knowledge** about the **mystery**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate **knowledge** with a verb such as "knowing" or use different prepositions, such as "about." Alternate translation: [knowing about the mystery]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **of the mystery of God**
UST the secret that God had previously kept hidden
(τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ)

Paul here uses the possessive form to speak about **the mystery** that comes from **God**. Only **God** can reveal the content of this **mystery**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could express the idea by using a relative clause. Alternate translation: [of the mystery that God reveals] or [of the mystery known by God]

Support Reference: Possession

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
might be encouraged	encourage
love	love for each other
of understanding	understand
knowledge	understand
of the mystery	the secret
of God	that God had previously kept hidden
Christ	{This secret is about} the Messiah

Colossians 2:3

ULT	UST
in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.	*The Messiah is the one who knows all of God's wonderful, wise plan.*

> ULT **all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden**
> UST is the one who knows all of God's wonderful, wise plan
> (εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι)

If your language does not use this form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [God has hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **in whom all the treasures … are hidden**
> UST The Messiah is the one who knows all of God's wonderful, wise plan
> (ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ & ἀπόκρυφοι)

Paul here speaks of the Messiah as if he were a container that could "hide" **treasures**. He speaks this way to emphasize the value of what Christians receive from God when they are united to the Messiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [from whom all the blessings … can be received]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden**
> UST is the one who knows all of God's wonderful, wise plan
> (εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι)

Paul uses the possessive form to explain what the **treasures** are: **wisdom** and **knowledge**. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could clarify that **wisdom** and **knowledge** are the **treasures**. Alternate translation: [are hidden all the treasures, which are wisdom and knowledge,] or [are all God's wisdom and knowledge, which are like a treasure that has been hidden]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **of wisdom and knowledge**
> UST of God's wonderful, wise plan
> (τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως)

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **wisdom** and **knowledge**, you could express the ideas behind these abstract nouns with adjectives such as "wise" and "knowledgeable." Alternate translation: [of wise and knowledgeable thinking]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **of wisdom and knowledge**
> UST of God's wonderful, wise plan
> (τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως)

The words **wisdom** and **knowledge** mean very similar things. The repetition is used to emphasize the breadth of spiritual wisdom. If your language does not use repetition in this way or has only one word for this concept, you could use just one word or translate **wisdom** as an adjective such as "wise." Alternate translation: [of wisdom] or [of knowledge] or [of wise knowledge]

Support Reference: Doublet

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
of wisdom	of God's wonderful, wise plan
knowledge	of God's wonderful, wise plan

Colossians 2:4

ULT	UST
I say this so that no one might deceive you with persuasive speech.	*I am telling you about this secret in order that no person who argues persuasively will be able to convince you to believe what is not true.*

ULT **this**
UST this secret
(τοῦτο)

The word **this** refers to what Paul has said in 2:2–3 about the Messiah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could summarize what Paul has said instead of using **this**. Alternate translation: [these things about the Messiah]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **no one might deceive you**
UST no person … will be able to convince you to believe what is not true
(μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς παραλογίζηται)

Alternate translation: [people cannot deceive you] or [no one will mislead you]

ULT **persuasive speech**
UST who argues persuasively
(πιθανολογίᾳ)

The implication is that the arguments to which the phrase **persuasive speech** refers appear plausible. The phrase itself does not suggest that the arguments are true or false, but the context here suggests that the arguments are false even though they sound believable. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or a short phrase that expresses this idea. Alternate translation: [plausible arguments] or [fine-sounding arguments]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 2:5

ULT	UST
For even if I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, rejoicing and seeing your good order and the strength of your faith in Christ.	*{You can know that those who argue persuasively are wrong} because I care about you and think about you, even though I am not with you in person. I am very happy to see that you are behaving properly and that you firmly believe in the Messiah.*

ULT **For**
UST {You can know that those who argue persuasively are wrong} because
(γὰρ)

The word **For** introduces further support for why the Colossians should not be "deceived" (2:4). Even if Paul is physically absent, he is thinking about them and caring for them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could specify what the word **For** is supporting. Alternate translation: [Do not let yourselves be deceived, because]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **even if**
UST even though
(εἰ & καὶ)

Paul speaks as if being **absent** were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language would not use a conditional statement for something that is a current fact, you could translate these words as an affirmation. Alternate translation: [while] or [although]

Support Reference: Connect — Factual Conditions

ULT **I am absent in the flesh**
UST I … you … am not with … in person
(τῇ σαρκὶ ἄπειμι)

In Paul's culture, being **absent in the flesh** is a figurative way to speak about not being present in person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or translate the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [I am not there with you] or [I am not present with you]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **yet**
> (ἀλλὰ)

The word **yet** introduces a contrast with **absent in the flesh**. While the Colossians might expect that, since Paul is **absent in the flesh**, he is also absent "in the spirit," Paul says the opposite: he is with them **in the spirit**. Use a word that indicates contrast or contraexpectation in your language. Alternate translation: [despite this] or [you may be sure]

Support Reference: Connect — Contrast Relationship

> ULT **I am with you in the spirit**
> UST care about … and think about you … I … you
> (τῷ πνεύματι σὺν ὑμῖν εἰμι)

In Paul's culture, being with someone **in the spirit** is a figurative way to speak of thinking about and caring about that person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor or plainly. Alternate translation: [I am still connected to you] or [it is as though I were present]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **in the spirit**
> UST care about … and think about you … I … you
> (τῷ πνεύματι)

Here, **the spirit** could refer to: (1) Paul's spirit, which would be the part of him that rejoices over the Colossians from a distance. Alternate translation: [in my spirit]; (2) the Holy Spirit, which connects Paul with the Colossians, even though they are not physically together. Alternate translation: [in God's Spirit] or [by the power of God's Spirit]

> ULT **rejoicing and seeing**
> UST I am very happy to see
> (χαίρων καὶ βλέπων)

Here, **rejoicing and seeing** are what Paul does while he is with them **in the spirit**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the relationship between the ideas more explicit. Alternate translation: (adding a period after "spirit") [When I think about you, I rejoice and see]

Support Reference: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

> ULT **rejoicing and seeing**
> UST I am very happy to see
> (χαίρων καὶ βλέπων)

Paul here expresses a single idea with the two words **rejoicing** and **seeing**. He means that he "rejoices" when he "sees." If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea by translating **rejoicing** as an adverb or prepositional phrase. Alternate translation: [joyfully seeing] or [delighting to witness]

Support Reference: Hendiadys

> ULT **your good order**
> UST that you are behaving properly
> (ὑμῶν τὴν τάξιν)

Paul assumes that his readers will understand that the phrase **good order** refers to behavior that properly fits into a larger pattern or arrangement. In the context, that larger pattern is what God expects of his people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable term or translate the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [the fact that you behave according to God's standards]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **the strength of your faith**
> UST that you firmly believe
> (τὸ στερέωμα τῆς & πίστεως ὑμῶν)

Paul uses the possessive form to describe the Colossians' **faith** as something that has **strength**. If your language does not use the possessive form to express this idea, you could express the idea by translating **strength** with an adjective such as "strong." Alternate translation: [your strong faith]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **the strength of your faith**
> UST that you firmly believe
> (τὸ στερέωμα τῆς & πίστεως ὑμῶν)

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind the words **strength** and **faith**, you could express the ideas behind these abstract nouns in another way. Alternate translation: [how strongly you believe] or [the fact that you firmly believe]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
in the spirit	care about … and think about you … I … you

ULT	UST
rejoicing	I am very happy to see
Christ	the Messiah
in Christ	in the Messiah
of … faith	believe

Colossians 2:6

ULT	UST
Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him,	*Now {that I have told you the truth about the good news}, I want you to behave in a way that fits with how God has united you to the Messiah. You should keep behaving as you did when you accepted the Messiah Jesus the Lord.*

ULT **Therefore**
UST Now {that I have told you the truth about the good news}
(οὖν)

The word **Therefore** draws an inference or conclusion from what Paul has said in 2:1–5, particularly what he has said about Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could specify more explicitly what Paul is basing his inference on. Alternate translation: [Since these things about the Messiah are true]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in him**
UST I want you to behave in a way that fits with how God has united you to the Messiah. You should keep behaving as you did when you accepted the Messiah Jesus the Lord
(ὡς & παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Κύριον, ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε)

Paul here draws a comparison between the way in which the Colossians **received** the Messiah and the way in which he wishes them to behave now. If your language would put the comparison second, you could reverse the two clauses. Alternate translation: [walk in Christ Jesus the Lord just as you received him]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **you received Christ**
UST you accepted the Messiah
(παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν)

Paul says that the Colossians **received Christ** as if they had welcomed him into their homes or received him as a gift. What this means is that they believed in Jesus and the teachings about him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that refers to coming to believe in Jesus, or you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [you first believed in Christ]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **walk in him**
> UST I want you to behave in a way that fits with how God has united you to the Messiah
> (ἐν αὐτῷ περιπατεῖτε)

In Paul's culture, to **walk** is a common metaphor for how people live their lives, and the words **in him** refer to being united to Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different verb that refers to behavior in life and connect it with how you have translated "in Christ" elsewhere. Alternate translation: [act as those who are united to the Messiah] or [conduct yourselves as those who are in union with him]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
you received	you accepted
Christ	the Messiah
Christ Jesus	the Messiah Jesus
Lord	Lord

Colossians 2:7

ULT	UST
being rooted and built up in him and confirmed in the faith just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.	*{Behaving in this way includes} staying firmly united to him, just as a plant's roots hold it firmly in place. {It also includes} depending completely on him, just as a house stands on its foundation. {It also includes} confidently trusting the Messiah, just as Epaphras taught you, and giving thanks more and more.*

ULT **being rooted … built up … confirmed … abounding**
UST {Behaving in this way includes} staying firmly united … just as a plant's roots hold it firmly in place … depending completely … just as a house stands on its foundation … confidently … and … more and more
(ἐρριζωμένοι & ἐποικοδομούμενοι & βεβαιούμενοι & περισσεύοντες)

Paul uses these four verbs to give examples of how the Colossians should "walk in" the Messiah (2:6). If it would be helpful in your language, you could add a phrase that makes this relationship clear. Alternate translation: (starting a new sentence) [Walking in him entails being rooted … built up … confirmed … abounding]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **being rooted … built up … confirmed**
UST {Behaving in this way includes} staying firmly united … just as a plant's roots hold it firmly in place … depending completely … just as a house stands on its foundation … confidently
(ἐρριζωμένοι & ἐποικοδομούμενοι & βεβαιούμενοι)

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could translate all three of these words in their active forms with the Colossians as the subject. Alternate translation: [rooting yourselves … building yourselves up … having confidence]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **being rooted … in him**
> UST {Behaving in this way includes} staying firmly united to him, just as a plant's roots hold it firmly in place … on him
> (ἐρριζωμένοι & ἐν αὐτῷ)

Paul wants the Colossians to be united so closely to Christ that he speaks of this union as if the Colossians were a plant with roots growing into Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [being closely connected with … in him] or [being more dependent on … in him]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **and built up in him**
> UST to him … {It also includes} depending completely on him, just as a house stands on its foundation
> (καὶ ἐποικοδομούμενοι ἐν αὐτῷ)

Paul wants the Colossians to base everything they think and do on Christ as if they were a house built on Christ, who is the foundation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [in him, and basing everything you think and do on him,] or [in Christ, and believing more and more firmly in him,]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **confirmed in the faith**
> UST confidently trusting the Messiah
> (βεβαιούμενοι τῇ πίστει)

The word **confirmed** refers to something being sure or valid. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [sure about the faith] or [strong in your faith]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **in the faith**
> UST trusting the Messiah
> (τῇ πίστει)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **faith**, you could express the idea in a different way, such as with a relative clause. Alternate translation: [in what you believe]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **you were taught**
> UST Epaphras taught you
> (ἐδιδάχθητε)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate this verb: (1) in its active form with Epaphras as the subject (we know he was their teacher from 1:7). See the UST. (2) with a verb such as "learned." Alternate translation: [you learned]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **abounding in thanksgiving**
> UST and giving thanks more and more
> (περισσεύοντες ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ)

If your language does not use an abstract for the idea behind **thanksgiving**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [being very thankful]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
confirmed	confidently
in the faith	trusting the Messiah
abounding	and … more and more

Colossians 2:8

ULT	UST
Beware lest someone will be the one taking you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elemental teaching of the world, and not according to Christ.	*Be on the alert so that no one who tries to lead you away from the truth will succeed. Anyone who tries to lead you away will use human thinking that is meaningless and deceptive. {Such a false message comes} from what older generations teach younger generations and from what humans normally think about the world, not from the Messiah.*

ULT **Beware lest someone will be the one taking you captive**
UST Be on the alert so that no one who tries to lead you away from the truth will succeed
(βλέπετε, μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν)

Paul uses this clause to warn the Colossians against any person who wishes to take them captive. If your language does not use this form, you could simplify or restructure the clause so that it does not include both **someone** and **the one**. Alternate translation: [Beware lest anyone take you captive] or [Make sure that no one takes you captive]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the one taking you captive**
UST who tries to lead you away from the truth
(ὑμᾶς & ὁ συλαγωγῶν)

Paul speaks of those who are trying to deceive the Colossians as if they were capturing the Colossians as prisoners. He uses this language to portray the false teachers as enemies who do not care about the Colossians but only want to use them for their own benefit. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea in plain language. Alternate translation: [the one who convinces you to believe a lie]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **philosophy and empty deceit**
UST human thinking that is meaningless and deceptive
(τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης)

The words **philosophy** and **empty deceit** work together to express one idea: that human **philosophy** is **empty** of useful content and deceitful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea in one phrase. Alternate translation: [empty, deceitful philosophy]

Support Reference: Hendiadys

ULT **philosophy and empty deceit**
UST human thinking that is meaningless and deceptive
(τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης)

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **philosophy** and **deceit**, you could express these ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [the empty and false way that godless people understand the world]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **empty deceit**
UST that is meaningless and deceptive
(κενῆς ἀπάτης)

Paul speaks of deceitful **philosophy** as if it were a container that had nothing in it. He means that the deceitful **philosophy** has nothing important or meaningful to contribute. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea in plain language. Alternate translation: [valueless deceit] or [deceit with no content]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the tradition of men**
UST what older generations teach younger generations
(τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων)

The **tradition of men** refers to the ways in which humans behave that they learned from their families and pass on to their children. If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea of **tradition**, you could a phrase that refers to traditions that are passed on from parents to children. Alternate translation: [customary human thinking and behavior]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **of men**
UST what older generations teach younger generations
(τῶν ἀνθρώπων)

Although the word **men** is masculine, Paul is using it to refer to anyone, whether man or woman. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a phrase that makes this clear. Alternate translation: [of people] or [of humans]

Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
deceit	that is meaningless and deceptive
tradition	what older generations teach younger generations

ULT	UST
of the world	about the world
Christ	the Messiah

Colossians 2:9

ULT	UST
For in him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form,	*{I mention the Messiah} because he, a human, is fully God.*

ULT **For**
UST {I mention the Messiah} because
(ὅτι)

The word **For** introduces the reason why the Colossians need to watch out for any teaching that is "not according to Christ" (2:8): Christ is God and only he provides access to God. Use a connector that makes this clear in your language. Alternate translation: [You must beware of any teaching that ignores Christ, because]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **in him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form**
UST he, a human, is fully God
(ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς Θεότητος σωματικῶς)

Paul speaks as if Jesus were a place in which complete divinity (**fullness of deity**) lives (**dwells**). This metaphor indicates that Jesus, who is human (**in bodily form**), is truly and fully God. If this metaphor does not indicate Jesus' full divinity and full humanity in your language, you could express this idea with a metaphor that does indicate this or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [he is both fully God and fully man]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **all the fullness of deity**
UST is fully God
(πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς Θεότητος)

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **fullness** and **deity**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [everything that it means to be God] or [everything that belongs fully to God]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
of deity	is fully God

Colossians 2:10

ULT	UST
and you are filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority,	*In addition, you have everything you need since God has united you to the Messiah, who rules over {the spiritual beings, including} every ruler and every authority.*

ULT **and**
UST In addition
(καὶ)

The word **and** introduces another reason why the Colossians need to watch out for anyone who provides teaching that is "not according to Christ" (2:8): not only is Christ fully God (2:9), but he provides the way in which the Colossians are filled with everything they need. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this link more explicit. Alternate translation: [and furthermore,]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **you are filled in him**
UST you have everything you need since God has united you to the Messiah
(ἐστὲ ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι)

Paul speaks as if people were containers that are filled when they are united to Christ, which means that people receive everything they need, including salvation, in their union with Christ. The word **filled** is very similar to the word Paul used in 2:9 for "fullness." If your language uses similar words in these two sentences, you could use a word like the one you used in 2:9. If not, you could express this idea in another way, use a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [you lack nothing because of your union with the Messiah] or [there is nothing lacking in the way in which God has caused you to live by being joined closely to him]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **you are filled**
UST you have everything you need
(ἐστὲ & πεπληρωμένοι)

If in your language does not use this passive form, you could translate this verb in the active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [God has filled you]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **the head of all rule and authority**
> UST rules over {the spiritual beings, including} every ruler and every authority
> (ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας)

The expression **head of** here refers to supremacy and authority over something or somebody. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly with another noun, such as “sovereign” or “ruler,” or a verb, such as “rule.” Alternate translation: [the sovereign over all rule and authority] or [the one who rules over all rule and authority]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **of all rule and authority**
> UST {the spiritual beings, including} every ruler and every authority
> (πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας)

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the abstract nouns **rule** and **authority** in other ways. These words could refer to: (1) powerful spiritual beings, as in 1:16. Alternate translation: [of all spirit beings who govern and rule]; (2) anyone or anything with power and authority. Alternate translation: [over anyone who rules and commands others]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **of all rule and authority**
> UST {the spiritual beings, including} every ruler and every authority
> (πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας)

The terms **rule** and **authority** mean similar things. Paul is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [over anyone who governs others]

Support Reference: Doublet

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
of … rule	{the spiritual beings, including} every ruler and every authority
authority	{the spiritual beings, including} every ruler and every authority

Colossians 2:11

ULT	UST
in whom you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in the removal of the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ,	*When God united you to the Messiah, it was as if God the Father had circumcised you. I do not mean that a human physically cut flesh off you. {Rather, instead of cutting off flesh,} God removed your weak and sinful parts. {God} circumcised {you in this way} through what the Messiah accomplished.*

ULT **you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands in the removal of the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ**
UST When God united you to the Messiah, it was as if God the Father had circumcised you. I do not mean that a human physically cut flesh off you. {Rather, instead of cutting off flesh,} God removed your weak and sinful parts. {God} circumcised {you in this way} through what the Messiah accomplished
(καὶ περιετμήθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ, ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός, ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ)

Paul uses **circumcision** as an image to describe what happens to believers when they are united to the Messiah. In the metaphor, the **circumcision** is completed **without hands**, which means that God accomplishes it. What is "removed" or cut off is the **body of flesh**, which refers to the broken and sinful parts of the person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with the language of analogy or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [you were also marked off by God as his own when he took away your body of flesh by the work of the Messiah]

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

ULT **in whom you were also circumcised**
UST When God united you to the Messiah, it was as if God the Father had circumcised you
(ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετμήθητε)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate this verb in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [in whom God also circumcised you]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **in the removal of the body of flesh**
UST {Rather, instead of cutting off flesh,} God removed your weak and sinful parts
(ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῆς σαρκός)

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **removal**, you could express the idea with a verb such as "remove." Alternate translation: [when he removed the body of flesh]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **in the circumcision of Christ**
UST {God} circumcised {you in this way} through what the Messiah accomplished
(ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ)

Paul uses the possessive form to connect **circumcision** with **Christ**. This does not refer to when Christ himself was circumcised or how he himself circumcises believers. Instead, the possessive form connects the extended metaphor of circumcision with Christ's work: the circumcision that Paul speaks about is accomplished in what Christ has done. If your language does not use this form to express that idea, you could make the relationship between **circumcision** and **Christ** more explicit. Alternate translation: [in the circumcision accomplished by Christ] or [in the circumcision caused by Christ]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **of Christ**
UST through what the Messiah accomplished
(τοῦ Χριστοῦ)

Here Paul uses the word **Christ** to refer primarily to what **Christ** has accomplished. If your language does not use a person's name to identify something that they have done, you could clarify that Paul is speaking of the "work" **of Christ**. Alternate translation: [that comes from what Christ did] or [that Christ's work accomplished]

Support Reference: Metonymy

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
you were … circumcised	it was as if God the Father had circumcised you
with a circumcision	cut flesh off you
circumcision	God} circumcised {you in this way}
of Christ	through what the Messiah accomplished

Colossians 2:12

ULT	UST
having been buried with him in baptism and in whom you were raised up through faith in the power of God, the one having raised him from the dead.	*{Here is another way to understand what God has done for you:} when they baptized you, it was as if {you died and} people buried you {because God the Father included you} when {the Messiah died and} people buried him. And it was as if God the Father brought you back to life {because he included you} when he brought the Messiah back to life. {This happened} because you believed that God the Father works powerfully, particularly when he brought the Messiah back to life.*

ULT **having been buried with him in baptism**
UST {Here is another way to understand what God has done for you:} when they baptized you, it was as if {you died and} people buried you {because God the Father included you} when {the Messiah died and} people buried him
(συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτισμῷ)

Paul here uses a metaphor that connects **baptism** to "burial" to further explain what happens to believers when they are united to Christ. This metaphor expresses how, when they are baptized, believers are united to Christ in his (death and) burial and are no longer who they once were. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with the language of analogy, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [having been united with the Messiah in his burial when you were baptized] or [having been baptized in him, as if you were buried with him,]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **having been buried with**
UST Here is another way to understand what God has done for you … it was as if {you died and} people buried you
(συνταφέντες)

Paul refers only to being **buried**, but he also implies "dying." If **buried** would not include the idea of "dying" in your language, you could include "dying" in your translation. Alternate translation: [having died and been buried with]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT **having been buried with him**
UST Here is another way to understand what God has done for you … it was as if {you died and} people buried you {because God the Father included you} when {the Messiah died and} people buried him
(συνταφέντες αὐτῷ)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate this phrase in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [God burying you with him]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **in whom you were raised up**
UST it was as if God the Father brought you back to life {because he included you} when he brought the Messiah back to life
(ἐν ᾧ & συνηγέρθητε)

Paul here explains that believers are not only united to Christ in his burial but also in his resurrection. It is by being united to him in his resurrection that believers receive new life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this idea plainly. Alternate translation: [in union with the Messiah, in his resurrection you received new life]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **you were raised up**
UST it was as if God the Father brought you back to life
(συνηγέρθητε)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate the idea in its active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [God raised you up]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **you were raised up … the one having raised him from the dead**
UST it was as if God the Father brought you back to life … particularly when he brought the Messiah back to life
(συνηγέρθητε & τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν)

Paul uses the words **raised up** and **raised him from the dead** to refer to someone who had died and then came back to life. If your language does not use these words to describe coming back to life, use a comparable idiom or a short phrase. Alternate translation: [you were restored to life … who restored him to life]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **through faith in the power of God**
UST {This happened} because you believed that God the Father works powerfully
(διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ Θεοῦ)

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **faith** and **power**, you could express the ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [because you trusted in the powerful God] or [because you believe in the powerful working of God]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the dead**
UST back to life
(νεκρῶν)

Paul is using the adjective **dead** as a noun in order to describe a group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with a noun phrase. Alternate translation: [among the dead people] or [the dead ones]

Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
having been buried with	Here is another way to understand what God has done for you … it was as if {you died and} people buried you
baptism	when they baptized you
faith	you believed
of God	God the Father

Colossians 2:13

ULT	UST
And you, being dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all of our trespasses,	*You used to be spiritually dead, because you {often} sinned against God and because you were non-Jews {and not part of God's people}. But God the Father brought you back to life spiritually {because he included you} when he brought the Messiah back to life. {This means that} he has forgiven us for all the wrong things we have done against him.*

ULT **you, being dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together**
UST You used to be spiritually dead, because you {often} sinned against God and because you were non-Jews {and not part of God's people}. But God the Father brought you back to life spiritually
(ὑμᾶς νεκροὺς ὄντας ἐν τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν, συνεζωοποίησεν ὑμᾶς)

Paul begins the sentence with **you**, and then he restates **you** when he identifies what God has done for **you**. If your language would not restate **you** or use this structure, you could separate the two uses of **you** into separate sentences. Alternate translation: [you were dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. Then, he made you alive together]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **being dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh**
UST used to be spiritually dead, because you {often} sinned against God and because you were non-Jews {and not part of God's people}
(νεκροὺς ὄντας ἐν τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν)

This clause does not refer to the current situation of the Colossians, but rather it describes their situation before God acted to make them alive, as expressed in the rest of the verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that this clause describes a time before **he made you alive**. Alternate translation: [who used to be dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh]

Support Reference: Connect — Background Information

ULT **you, being dead**
UST You used to be spiritually dead
(ὑμᾶς νεκροὺς ὄντας)

Paul speaks of people who are without Christ as if they were dead. By this he means that those who lack any relationship with God and are not united to Christ are spiritually dead. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that Paul speaks of spiritual death or express the idea with a simile, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [you, being like dead people] or [you, being totally separated from God]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **being dead in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh**
UST used to be spiritually dead, because you {often} sinned against God and because you were non-Jews {and not part of God's people}
(νεκροὺς ὄντας ἐν τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν)

When Paul speaks of someone **being dead in** something, this identifies both why and in what state the person is dead. In other words, the Colossians were **dead** because of their **trespasses** and because of their **uncircumcision**, and these things also characterized them while they were dead. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a phrase like "because of," or you could translate **trespasses** and **uncircumcision** as descriptors of **dead**. Alternate translation: [being dead because of your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh] or [being dead, that is, trespassing God's commands and being uncircumcised in your flesh]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in the trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh**
UST because you {often} sinned against God and because you were non-Jews {and not part of God's people}
(ἐν τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν)

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **trespasses** and **uncircumcision**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [because you transgressed God's commands and were uncircumcised in your flesh]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the uncircumcision of your flesh**
UST you were non-Jews {and not part of God's people}
(τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν)

Here Paul uses the possessive form to describe **flesh** that has not been "circumcised." If your language does not express this idea with the possessive form, you could translate **uncircumcision** as an adjective. Alternate translation: [your uncircumcised flesh]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **he made you alive together with him**
UST But God the Father brought you back to life spiritually {because he included you} when he brought the Messiah back to life
(συνεζωοποίησεν ὑμᾶς σὺν αὐτῷ)

Paul speaks of God's work in restoring people to himself as if he brought these people back to life physically. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that Paul speaks of spiritual life or express the idea with a simile or plainly. Alternate translation: [he did something like making you alive together with him] or [he restored you to proper relationship with him]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **he made you alive together with him**
UST But God the Father brought you back to life spiritually {because he included you} when he brought the Messiah back to life
(συνεζωοποίησεν ὑμᾶς σὺν αὐτῷ)

The word **he** refers to God the Father, while the word translated **him** refers to God the Son. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify the antecedent of one or both of these pronouns. Alternate translation: [God made you alive together with the Messiah]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
trespasses	you {often} sinned against God
uncircumcision	you were non-Jews {and not part of God's people}
of … trespasses	wrong things we have done against him

Colossians 2:14

ULT	UST
having canceled the written record of the decrees against us, which were opposed to us, and he has taken {it} out from our midst, having nailed it to the cross;	*It was as if God had an official list of the debts we owe{, which are our sins}. {When he forgave us,} he wiped out that list of sins that counted against us, and he prevented it from coming between us and him. God accomplished this when {the Messiah died on the cross, as surely as if} he had nailed the list to the cross.*

ULT **having canceled the written record of the decrees against us, which were opposed to us, and he has taken {it} out from our midst, having nailed it to the cross**
UST It was as if God had an official list of the debts we owe{, which are our sins}. {When he forgave us,} he wiped out that list of sins that counted against us, and he prevented it from coming between us and him. God accomplished this when {the Messiah died on the cross, as surely as if} he had nailed the list to the cross
(ἐξαλείψας τὸ καθ’ ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον τοῖς δόγμασιν, ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν, καὶ αὐτὸ ἦρκεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου, προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ)

Paul speaks of the way God forgives our sins as if God **canceled** debts that we owed him. In the metaphor, God has crossed out or erased the **written record** of those debts and thus removed any impact these debts have on our relationship to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [having taken away the guilt from our sins, he has kept those sins from impacting our relationship with him, having nailed them to the cross]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **against us, which were opposed to us**
UST we owe … that counted against us
(καθ’ ἡμῶν & ὃ ἦν ὑπεναντίον ἡμῖν)

The phrases **against us** and **opposed to us** might be considered redundant in your language. If this is the case, you could combine the two phrases into one. Alternate translation: [which were opposed to us]

Support Reference: Doublet

> ULT **he has taken {it} out from our midst**
> UST he prevented it from coming between us and him
> (αὐτὸ ἦρκεν ἐκ τοῦ μέσου)

Paul speaks as if the **written record** was within the community of believers, and God takes it away. What he means by this is that the **written record** of our sins no longer affects our relationship with God and each other. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [he has kept it from affecting our relationship with him and others]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **having nailed it to the cross**
> UST God accomplished this when {the Messiah died on the cross, as surely as if} he had nailed the list to the cross
> (προσηλώσας αὐτὸ τῷ σταυρῷ)

Paul speaks as if God had nailed the "written record" to the cross. He means that Christ's death on the cross "canceled" the "written record" as surely as if it had been nailed to the cross and died with Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea using a simile, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [destroying it through the Messiah's death on the cross] or [having taken it out of the way through Christ's death]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
of the decrees	official
to the cross	to the cross

Colossians 2:15

ULT	UST
having stripped the rulers and the authorities, he made a public spectacle of {them}, having triumphed over them in it.	*Moreover, God defeated the spiritual beings that rule the world, and he publicly showed {that he defeated them}, just as if he had paraded them around as prisoners. {God did this when the Messiah died} on the cross.*

ULT **having stripped … he made a public spectacle of {them}, having triumphed over**
UST Moreover, God defeated … and he publicly showed {that he defeated them}, just as if he had paraded … around as prisoners
(ἀπεκδυσάμενος & ἐδειγμάτισεν ἐν παρρησίᾳ, θριαμβεύσας)

Paul speaks of God's victory over powerful spiritual beings in terms that fit with what a conqueror often did to his prisoners in Paul's culture. He would make a **public spectacle** or example of them, "stripping" them of their clothes and forcing them to parade behind him in his "triumph." If it would be helpful in your language, you could express these ideas with a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [having defeated … he showed everyone that he had conquered]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the rulers and the authorities**
UST the spiritual beings that rule the world
(τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας)

Just as in 1:16 and 2:10, the **rulers** and **authorities** could refer to: (1) powerful spiritual beings that rule this world. Alternate translation: [the spiritual powers, including those known as rulers and authorities]; (2) anybody or anything that rules and has authority. Alternate translation: [those who rule with authority]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **in it**
UST {God did this when the Messiah died} on the cross
(ἐν αὐτῷ)

Alternate translation: [by the cross] or [through the cross]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
rulers	the spiritual beings that rule the world
authorities	the spiritual beings that rule the world

Colossians 2:16

ULT	UST
Therefore, do not let anyone judge you in food or in drink or in regard to a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths,	*Because of these things {that God has done for you}, do not worry about what other people say you should do. {They may have opinions} about what to eat and what to drink. {They may have opinions about} what special days to observe, including days for worshipping God, days for celebrating when there is a new moon, or days for resting.*

ULT **Therefore**
UST Because of these things {that God has done for you}
(οὖν)

The word **Therefore** draws an inference or conclusion from what Paul has already said, which can be found in 2:9–15: in the work of Christ, the Colossians have received new life and the powers that rule this world have been defeated. Because of these things that have happened, the Colossians should not allow others to judge them in how they behave. Paul is continuing the warning against false teachers that he started in 2:8. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to these ideas more explicitly or use a comparable transition word or phrase. Alternate translation: [In light of all these things] or [Given the Messiah's sufficient work on your behalf]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **do not let anyone judge you**
UST do not worry about what other people say you should do
(μὴ & τις ὑμᾶς κρινέτω)

This phrase translates a third-person imperative. If your language has third-person imperatives, you could use one here. If your language does not have third-person imperatives, you could use a comparable phrase or express the idea with a second-person imperative. Alternate translation: [you should not allow anyone to judge you] or [do not permit anyone to judge you]

Support Reference: Third-Person Imperatives

ULT **in food or in drink or in regard to a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths**
UST {They may have opinions} about what to eat and what to drink. {They may have opinions about} what special days to observe, including days for worshipping God, days for celebrating when there is a new moon, or days for resting
(ἐν βρώσει, καὶ ἐν πόσει, ἢ ἐν μέρει ἑορτῆς, ἢ νουμηνίας, ἢ Σαββάτων)

This list of areas in which someone might judge the Colossians refers to parts of the law of Moses. Some of these areas were also important for other religions in Paul's culture. If Paul's list of things in which someone could **judge** the Colossians would be misunderstood in your translation, you could clarify that these areas are covered by the law of Moses and sometimes by the traditions of other religions as well. Alternate translation: [for how you behave in relationship to the law of Moses and other religious traditions, including in the areas of food and drink and festivals and new moons and Sabbaths]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **a new moon**
UST days for celebrating when there is a new moon
(νουμηνίας)

The word **new moon** refers to a festival or celebration that would take place when it was the time of the new moon. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or translate the idea with a longer phrase. Alternate translation: [a new moon celebration]

Support Reference: Metonymy

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
do … let … judge	do … worry about what … say you should do
a festival	including days for worshipping God
a new moon	days for celebrating when there is a new moon
Sabbaths	days for resting

Colossians 2:17

ULT	UST
which are a shadow of the things coming, but the body {is} of Christ.	*{God used} these things {to} point to what he had planned for the future, which is the coming of the Messiah himself.*

ULT **which are a shadow of the things coming, but the body {is} of Christ**
UST {God used} these things {to} point to what he had planned for the future, which is the coming of the Messiah himself
(ἅ ἐστιν σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων, τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ)

A **shadow** shows the shape and outline of a **body**, but it is not the **body** itself. In a similar way, the things listed in the previous verse show the shape and outline of the **things coming**, but the **body** that casts this **shadow** is **Christ**. He is the substance of the **things coming**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [which are a foretaste of the things coming, but the full experience is of Christ] or [which hint at the things that were to come, but Christ is the one who came]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **a shadow of the things coming**
UST {to} point to what he had planned for the future
(σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων)

Paul here uses the possession form to show that the **shadow** is cast by the **things coming**. If your language would not use the possessive form to express this idea, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [a shadow cast by the things coming]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **of the things coming**
UST what he had planned for the future
(τῶν μελλόντων)

The **things coming** primarily refers to things that will happen or be experienced in the future. They can be connected with both the first and the second coming of Christ, which is why the **body** is of Christ in this verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that **coming** refers to what Christ has blessed believers with at his first coming and what he will bless them with at his second coming. Alternate translation: [blessings that Christ brings]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **the body {is} of Christ**
UST which is the coming of the Messiah himself
(τὸ δὲ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ)

Paul uses the possessive form to identify **Christ** as the **body** that casts the "shadow." If your language would not use the possessive form to express this idea, you could express the idea with a simple "being" verb. Alternate translation: [the body is Christ]

Support Reference: Possession

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{is} of Christ	which is the coming of the Messiah himself

Colossians 2:18

ULT	UST
Let no one delighting in false humility and worship of the angels deprive you of your prize, standing on things he has seen, becoming puffed up without cause by the mind of his flesh	*{You will meet some people} who enjoy pretending to be humble and worshipping angels and who love to talk about {amazing} things that they have seen. They act like they are great—although without good reason, because they think only in human ways. Do not listen to these people who are trying to take away what God has ready to give to you.*

ULT **no one … he has seen … his**
UST {amazing} things that they have seen … only in human ways … not … to these people
(μηδεὶς & ἑόρακεν & αὐτοῦ)

The words **no one**, **he**, and **his** do not refer to one male person. Instead, they refer in a generic way to anyone, male or female, who acts in these ways. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words with a comparable generic phrase in your language or make them plural. Alternate translation: [no one … they have seen … their]

Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **Let no one … deprive you of your prize**
UST Do not listen to these people who are trying to take away what God has ready to give to you
(μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβευέτω)

This phrase translates a third-person imperative. If your language has third-person imperatives, you could use one here. If your language does not, you could use a comparable phrase or express the idea with a second-person imperative. Alternate translation: [Do not allow anyone … deprive you of your prize] or [Be on your guard against anyone … so that he does not deprive you of your prize]

Support Reference: Third-Person Imperatives

ULT **Let no one … deprive you of your prize**
UST Do not listen to these people who are trying to take away what God has ready to give to you
(μηδεὶς ὑμᾶς καταβραβευέτω)

Paul refers to the false teachers as if they were judges or umpires at a contest who could decide against the Colossians, thus keeping them from receiving the prize for winning the contest. This metaphor fits with the "judging" language in 2:16. These two verses together suggest that the Colossians are tempted to choose the false teachers as their judges instead of Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [Let no one … act instead of Christ as your judge]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **false humility**
UST pretending to be humble
(ταπεινοφροσύνῃ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **humility**, you could express the idea in another way, such as with a verb. Alternate translation: [humbling themselves falsely]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **worship of the angels**
UST worshipping angels
(θρησκείᾳ τῶν ἀγγέλων)

Paul uses the possessive form to describe the act of worshiping angels, not the worship that angels present to God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify with a phrase such as "presented to." Alternate translation: [worship presented to the angels]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **standing on**
UST and who love to talk about
(ἐμβατεύων)

Paul speaks as if the false teachers were **standing on things** they have seen. This metaphor means that they talk about what they have seen and base teachings on it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate **standing** with a verb that expresses this idea plainly. Alternate translation: [constantly talking about] or [basing his teaching on]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **things he has seen**
> UST {amazing} things that they have seen
> (ἃ ἑόρακεν)

In the context of angel worship, **things he has seen** refers to visions and dreams that reveal powerful beings, heaven, the future, or other secrets. If these implications would not be understood in your language, you could use a word or phrase that refers to these kinds of visions or dreams or use a phrase to express the idea. Alternate translation: [things he has seen in visions] or [secrets revealed to him in visions]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **becoming puffed up without cause by the mind of his flesh**
> UST They act like they are great—although without good reason, because they think only in human ways
> (εἰκῇ φυσιούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate the phrase in its active form. Alternate translation: [the mind of his flesh puffing him up without cause]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **becoming puffed up**
> UST They act like they are great
> (φυσιούμενος)

Paul describes people who boast as if they had made themselves larger by filling themselves with air. He means that they think of themselves as more important than they really are. If **becoming puffed up** would not mean “becoming prideful” in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [becoming self-important]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **by the mind of his flesh**
> UST because they think only in human ways
> (ὑπὸ τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **mind**, you could express this idea by using a verb such as “think.” Alternate translation: [by how he thinks in fleshly ways]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the mind of his flesh**
UST they think only in human ways
(τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ)

Paul uses the possessive form to speak of a **mind** that belongs to the **flesh**. This phrase refers to thinking that is characterized by the flesh in its weakness and sinfulness. If your language does not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could express the idea by translating **flesh** as an adjective. Alternate translation: [his fleshly mind] or [his unspiritual mind]

Support Reference: Possession

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
worship	worshipping
of the angels	angels
without cause	although without good reason
mind	they think

Colossians 2:19

ULT	UST
and not holding fast to the head, from which the whole body, being supplied and held together through the joints and ligaments, grows with the growth from God.	*{These people} are not remaining loyal to the Messiah. It is he who leads the church, just like people's heads lead their bodies. The head directs how the whole body, each and every part, receives what it needs and how it works together. In this way the body grows. Just like that, the Messiah directs the church so that it grows as God wants it to grow.*

ULT **not holding fast to the head**
UST {These people} are not remaining loyal to the Messiah. It is he who leads the church, just like people's heads lead their bodies
(οὐ κρατῶν τὴν κεφαλήν)

Paul describes the false teachers as if they had let go of the **head**, which is Christ. This means that they have stopped treating Christ as the source and authority behind their teaching. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or translate the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [not staying connected to the head] or [ceasing to depend on Christ, who is the head]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **to the head, from which the whole body, being supplied and held together through the joints and ligaments, grows with the growth from God**
UST the Messiah. It is he who leads the church, just like people's heads lead their bodies. The head directs how the whole body, each and every part, receives what it needs and how it works together. In this way the body grows. Just like that, the Messiah directs the church so that it grows as God wants it to grow
(τὴν κεφαλήν, ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἁφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον, αὔξει τὴν αὔξησιν τοῦ Θεοῦ)

In this verse Paul uses an extended metaphor in which Christ is the **head** of the **body**, which is his church, which has **joints** and **ligaments**, and which **grows**. Paul uses this metaphor to describe how Christ leads, directs, nourishes, and unifies his church to help it become what he wants it to be. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea using the language of analogy, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [to the Messiah, from whom the whole church receives nourishment and leadership and in whom the church is united as it grows with the growth from God]

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

ULT **from which the whole body, being supplied and held together through the joints and ligaments**
UST The head directs how the whole body, each and every part, receives what it needs and how it works together … Just like that, the Messiah directs the church
(ἐξ οὗ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα διὰ τῶν ἁφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων ἐπιχορηγούμενον καὶ συμβιβαζόμενον)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the sentence in active form. Alternate translation: [which supplies and holds the whole body together throughout the joints and ligaments]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **and … the joints … ligaments**
UST each and every part
(τῶν ἁφῶν καὶ συνδέσμων)

The word **joints** refers to where parts of the body are connected together, while the word translated **ligaments** refers to what holds these parts together. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use technical terms that correspond to **joints** and **ligaments**, or you could use more general language for what holds the body together. Alternate translation: [what holds it together] or [all its parts]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **grows with the growth**
UST In this way the body grows … so that it grows … to grow
(αὔξει τὴν αὔξησιν)

The words **grows** and **growth** are directly related and may be redundant in your language. If your language does not use repetition in this way, you could use just one form of "grow." Alternate translation: [experiences the growth]

Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **with the growth from God**
UST as God wants it to grow
(τὴν αὔξησιν τοῦ Θεοῦ)

Paul here speaks of **growth** that is **from God** to show that the church's **growth** is given by **God** and fits with what **God** desires. If your language would not use this form to express that idea, you could express the idea with a relative clause. Alternate translation: [with the growth that God gives] or [with the growth that God enables]

Support Reference: Possession

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
from God	as God wants it

Colossians 2:20

ULT	UST
If you died with Christ from the elemental principles of the world, why, as living in the world, are you being subjected to its decrees:	*It is as if you have died, {because God included you} when the Messiah died. {This frees you} from the spiritual beings that rule this world. So, you should not obey the rules {that these people have given to you}. {Doing so would mean that} you were really still part of this world.*

ULT If you died with Christ
UST It is as if you have died, {because God included you} when the Messiah died
(εἰ ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ)

Paul is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, then you could translate the clause as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: [Since you died with Christ]

Support Reference: Connect — Factual Conditions

ULT you died with Christ
UST It is as if you have died, {because God included you} when the Messiah died
(ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ)

Paul now returns to a metaphor he has used earlier: believers have died and “been buried with” Christ (2:12). This means that, in their union with Christ, believers share in his death so that they too have died. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the language of analogy, or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [you participated in the Messiah’s death]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **you died with Christ from**
> UST It is as if you have died, {because God included you} when the Messiah died. {This frees you} from
> (ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ ἀπὸ)

To "die from" something does not identify what caused the death, but rather it indicates what the death separated the person from. Here, then, the Colossians were separated from the **elemental principles** by participating in Christ's death. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [you died with Christ, which separated you from] or [you died with Christ, which rescued you from]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **the elemental principles of the world**
> UST the spiritual beings that rule this world
> (τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου)

As in 2:8, the word **elemental principles** could refer to: (1) the spiritual powers of this world. Alternate translation: [the powerful spiritual beings that rule this world]; (2) basic human opinions about how the world works. Alternate translation: [the basic things that humans teach about the world]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **why, as living in the world, are you being subjected to its decrees**
> UST So, you should not obey the rules {that these people have given to you}. {Doing so would mean that} you were really still part of this world
> (τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ δογματίζεσθε)

If this structure would be difficult to understand in your language, you could move the phrase **as living in the world** to the end of the sentence. Alternate translation: [why are you being subjected to the world's decrees as living in the world]

Support Reference: Information Structure

> ULT **living in the world**
> UST you were really still part of this world
> (ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ)

Paul uses the verb **living** to describe the Colossian's way of life. They are indeed physically alive and in the world, but he wants them to behave in ways that do not match what people **in the world** normally do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a verbal phrase such as "belonging to" or "conforming to." Alternate translation: [belonging to the world] or [conforming to the world]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **as living in the world**
> UST {Doing so would mean that} you were really still part of this world
> (ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ)

In this context, the word **as** introduces something that is not true: the Colossians do not actually live **in the world**. If **as** would be misunderstood your language, you could clarify that **living in the world** is not true of the Colossians, using a phrase such as "as if." Alternate translation: [as if living in the world]

Support Reference: Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions

> ULT **why, as living in the world, are you being subjected to its decrees**
> UST So, you should not obey the rules {that these people have given to you}. {Doing so would mean that} you were really still part of this world
> (τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ δογματίζεσθε)

Paul does not ask this question because he is looking for information. Rather, he asks it to involve the Corinthians in what he is arguing. There is no answer to the question here, since that is exactly Paul's point. There is no reason for them to be **subjected to its decrees**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea as an imperative or a "should" statement. Alternate translation: [do not, as living in the world, be subjected to its decrees] or [you should not, as living in the world, be subjected to its decrees]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

> ULT **are you being subjected to its decrees**
> UST you should not obey the rules {that these people have given to you}
> (δογματίζεσθε)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in its active form, perhaps by using a similar verb. Alternate translation: [do you submit to its decrees] or [do you subject yourselves to its decrees]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **are you being subjected to its decrees**
UST you should not obey the rules {that these people have given to you}
(δογματίζεσθε)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **decrees**, you could express the idea with a relative clause. Alternate translation: [are you being subjected to what people require] or [are you being subjected to what it commands]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Christ	{because God included you} when the Messiah died
of the world	that rule this world
the world	you were really still part of this world

Colossians 2:21

ULT	UST
“You may not handle, nor taste, nor touch!”	*{These rules include commands like these:} “Do not feel {certain things}!” “Do not try {certain foods}!” “Do not take hold of {certain things}!”*

ULT **You may not handle, nor taste, nor touch**
UST These rules include commands like these:} “Do not feel {certain things}!” “Do not try {certain foods}!” “Do not take hold of {certain things}
(μὴ ἅψῃ! μηδὲ γεύσῃ! μηδὲ θίγῃς)

This verse gives three commands that are not from Paul, but rather they are examples of the “decrees” from 2:20. If it would be helpful in your language, you could introduce these commands with a phrase, such as “for example,” to show that they connect to the “decrees” in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [for example, “You may not handle, nor taste, nor touch]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **You may not handle, nor taste, nor touch**
UST These rules include commands like these:} “Do not feel {certain things}!” “Do not try {certain foods}!” “Do not take hold of {certain things}
(μὴ ἅψῃ! μηδὲ γεύσῃ! μηδὲ θίγῃς)

Paul does not express what these commands say not to **handle**, **taste**, or **touch**, but it is clear that only certain things would be included, not all things. If your language would make this information explicit, you could add a generic phrase such as “certain things” or use words that match each command. Alternate translation: [You may not handle certain objects, nor taste certain foods and drinks, nor touch certain people]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **You may … handle … taste … touch**
> UST {These rules include commands like these:} “Do … feel {certain things}!” “Do … try {certain foods}!” “Do … take hold of {certain things}
> (ἅψῃ & γεύσῃ & θίγῃς)

These commands are addressed to **You** in the singular. Most likely, Paul refers to specific commands given to one person in a specific situation. However, he does intend these to be taken as examples of commands that might be given to any person among the Colossians. If your language can use a command in the singular as a generic example, you could do so here. If this does not make sense in your language, you could use plural commands here. Alternate translation: [You all may … handle … taste … touch]

Support Reference: Forms of ‘You’ — Singular

Colossians 2:22

ULT	UST
which are all for destruction with the use, according to the commands and teachings of men;	*All such rules concern things that perish when people make use of them. Further, people{, not God,} teach and require {these rules}.*

ULT **which**
UST such rules
(ἅ)

This pronoun refers to the commands in the previous verse, especially focusing on the implied objects of the rules. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a noun or a short phrase. Alternate translation: [The things that these commands regulate]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **are all for destruction with the use**
UST All … concern things that perish when people make use of them
(ἐστιν πάντα εἰς φθορὰν τῇ ἀποχρήσει)

This phrase means that all the objects that the commands in the previous verse are about end up being destroyed when they are used. In other words, food and drink are destroyed when they are eaten, and tools eventually break when they are used. By describing the objects in this way, Paul shows that the rules about these objects are not very important. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind this phrase differently, such as with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: [all end up in destruction because of their use]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **for destruction with the use**
UST concern things that perish when people make use of them
(εἰς φθορὰν τῇ ἀποχρήσει)

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **destruction** and **use**, you could express the idea by using verbs. Alternate translation: [destroyed when they are used]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the commands and teachings of men**
UST people{, not God,} teach and require {these rules}
(τὰ ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων)

Paul here uses the possessive form to describe **commands and teachings** that come from **men**. If your language does not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could clarify that these teachings "come from" **men**. Alternate translation: [the commands and teachings that come from men] or [the commands and teachings that men make]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **the commands and teachings of men**
UST people{, not God,} teach and require {these rules}
(τὰ ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων)

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **commands** and **teachings**, you could express the idea by using verbs. Alternate translation: [what men command and teach]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **of men**
UST people{, not God … }
(τῶν ἀνθρώπων)

Although the word **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: [of men and women] or [of humans]

Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
destruction	things that perish

Colossians 2:23

ULT	UST
which, having indeed a word of wisdom in self-made religion and false humility {and} severity of the body, are not of any value against indulgence of the flesh.	*Following these rules may seem to be a wise thing to do for people who worship God the way they want to, who pretend to be humble, and who treat their bodies badly {as part of their religion}. However, {following these rules} will not help you stop sinning.*

ULT **having indeed a word of wisdom**
UST may seem to be a wise thing to do
(λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας)

Commands that have **a word of wisdom** are commands that come from wise thinking or require wise behavior. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this idiom with a comparable expression, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [being indeed characterized by wisdom]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **a word**
UST may seem to be a … thing to do
(λόγον)

Here, **a word** represents a message that is made up of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [a message] or [a lesson]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **which, having indeed a word of wisdom in self-made religion and false humility {and} severity of the body**
UST Following these rules may seem to be a wise thing to do for people who worship God the way they want to, who pretend to be humble, and who treat their bodies badly {as part of their religion}
(ἅτινά & λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθρησκείᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ, ἀφειδίᾳ σώματος)

While there is no grammatical marker for a condition here, the word **in** functionally introduces a condition: these commands have a **word of wisdom** "if" one values **self-made religion and false humility and severity of the body**. It is only if one values these things that the commands have wisdom. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea by using a conditional expression, or use the word "seem." Alternate translation: [which, having indeed a word of wisdom if one values self-made religion and false humility and severity of the body] or [which, seeming to have a word or wisdom for those who practice self-made religion and false humility and severity of the body]

Support Reference: Hypothetical Situations

ULT **having indeed a word of wisdom in self-made religion and false humility {and} severity of the body**
UST may seem to be a wise thing to do for people who worship God the way they want to, who pretend to be humble, and who treat their bodies badly {as part of their religion}
(λόγον μὲν ἔχοντα σοφίας ἐν ἐθελοθρησκείᾳ καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ, ἀφειδίᾳ σώματος)

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **wisdom**, **religion**, **humility**, and **severity**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [having indeed a word that seems wise according to people who serve God in their own way, who humble themselves for gain, and who act severely to their bodies]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **{and} severity of the body**
UST and who treat their bodies badly {as part of their religion}
(ἀφειδίᾳ σώματος)

The phrase **severity of the body** refers to treating one's body harshly as part of one's religious practice. This could include beating oneself, not eating enough, or practicing other ascetic practices. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an expression that refers to religious practice or translate the idea with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: [and wounding one's body] or [and torturing one's body]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **are not of any value**
> UST may seem to be a … thing to do … However, {following these rules} will not help you
> (ἐστιν & οὐκ ἐν τιμῇ τινι)

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **value**, you could combine it with the verbal phrase **are not** to create a new phrase. Alternate translation: [do nothing] or [are ineffective]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **indulgence of the flesh**
> UST stop sinning
> (πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός)

Paul uses the possessive form to speak of **indulgence** one gives to the **flesh**. If your language would not use the possessive form to express this idea, you could translate **indulgence** with a verb such as “indulging.” Alternate translation: [indulging the flesh.]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **indulgence of the flesh**
> UST stop sinning
> (πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός)

If one indulges **the flesh**, this means that one behaves in ways that satisfy the desires of one’s weak and sinful parts. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea by using a word for “sin.” Alternate translation: [sin] or [giving in to sin]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **indulgence of the flesh**
> UST stop sinning
> (πλησμονὴν τῆς σαρκός)

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **indulgence**, you could use a verb such as “indulge.” Alternate translation: [indulging the flesh]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
of wisdom	wise

Colossians 3

Colossians 3 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

4:1 belongs to the section that begins in 3:18, even though it is in the next chapter.

1. Exhortation Section
    - Seek the Things Above (3:1–4)
    - Take off Vices, Put on Virtues (3:5–17)
    - Commands for the Household (3:18–4:1)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Old and new “man”

Paul refers to the old and new “man” in 3:9–10. These terms refer to the person before (“old”) and after (“new”) dying and rising with Christ. With these key words, Paul makes a similar claim to what he argued in 2:11–13: believers are not who they used to be; rather, they have received new life in Christ and are new people. Your translation should reflect the idea that Paul tells the Colossians that they are new people in their union with Christ.

The wrath of God

In 3:6, Paul speaks of the “wrath of God,” which is “coming.” God’s “wrath” is not primarily an emotion, but rather, it is his act of judgment on those who do not believe and who disobey. It is “coming” because God will act in judgment soon. In your translation, emphasize God’s act over his emotion.

No Greek and Jew …

In 3:11, Paul refers to multiple different ways to categorize people in his world. See the notes on that verse for details. Paul says that none of these categories exist in the “new man.” By this, he means that these categories are not relevant for those who

have died and risen with Christ. It is one's status as a "new" person that is relevant and important.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Christ, your life

In 3:4, Paul identifies Christ as the Colossians' "life." This metaphor comes from the previous verse, where Paul says that the Colossians' life is "hidden with Christ." Since their life is in Christ, Christ can be called their life. To say this a different way, the Colossians only have life in Christ, so their life and Christ's life are bound together.

Avoiding vices, pursuing virtues

In his exhortation to the Colossians to avoid vices and pursue virtues, Paul uses a number of metaphors. For avoiding vices, he uses the language of "putting to death" (3:5), "laying aside" (3:8), and "taking off" (3:9). All these metaphors require separation from vices, whether that is pictured as putting to death parts of the body that pursue vices or as taking off evil desires as if they were clothing. For pursuing virtues, he opposes "taking off" with "putting on" (3:10; 3:12). Just as the Colossians should "take off" the desire to pursue vices, they should "put on" the desire to pursue virtues. These metaphors are all intended to help the Colossians pursue virtue instead of vice.

Vice and virtue lists

In 3:5 and 3:8, Paul gives lists of vices. These lists are not meant to provide a complete catalog of immoral and evil behaviors. Instead, they provide some examples that are meant to show the Colossians the kinds of behaviors that Paul has in mind. In 3:12, he provides a corresponding list of virtues. The same thinking applies here: this is not a complete catalog of correct or good behavior but instead gives examples of the kinds of things that Paul wants the Colossians to do. You could introduce these lists as examples if it would help your readers understand.

The "household code"

In 3:18–4:1, Paul uses a form that was well-known in his culture. It is often called a "household code," and it consists of a list of instructions to different members of the

household, including parents, children, slaves, and others. Paul uses this form and gives his own specific instructions to members of the household. Of course, he is not addressing a household but a church. He gives his instructions to whomever in the audience was a parent or a child or a slave.

Colossians 3:1

ULT	UST
If, therefore, you were raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.	*To return {to what I said before}, it is as if God brought you back to life {because he included you} when he brought the Messiah back to life. {Because of this,} I want you to stay focused on what is in heaven, since the Messiah is there. He sits next to God the Father on the throne {and rules everything}.*

ULT **therefore**
UST To return {to what I said before}
(οὖν)

The word **therefore** introduces an exhortation based on what Paul has already said about being "raised with Christ" in 2:12. Use a word or phrase that introduces an inference or concluding command based on what has already been said. Alternate translation: [then]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **If … you were raised with Christ**
UST To return {to what I said before}, it is as if God brought you back to life {because he included you} when he brought the Messiah back to life
(εἰ & συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ)

Paul is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: [Since … you were raised with Christ]

Support Reference: Connect — Factual Conditions

ULT **you were raised with Christ**
UST it is as if God brought you back to life {because he included you} when he brought the Messiah back to life
(συνηγέρθητε τῷ Χριστῷ)

Paul again states that believers have been raised from the dead with Christ. By this, he means that believers are united to Christ in his resurrection and thus receive new life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this idea plainly. Alternate translation: [in union with the Messiah in his resurrection you received new life]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **you were raised with**
> UST it is as if God brought you back to life
> (συνηγέρθητε)

Paul uses the word **raised** to refer to someone who had died and came back to life. If this word does not refer to coming back to life in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or a short phrase. Alternate translation: [you were restored to life with]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **you were raised with**
> UST it is as if God brought you back to life
> (συνηγέρθητε)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [God the Father raised you with]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **seek the things above**
> UST {Because of this,} I want you to stay focused on what is in heaven
> (τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε)

Paul speaks as if he wants the Colossians to look for or try to find **things above**. By using the word **seek**, Paul tells the Colossians to focus on **the things above** as if they were something valuable that the Colossians needed to find. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [direct your attention to the things above] or [focus on the things above]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **the things above**
> UST what is in heaven
> (τὰ ἄνω)

The **things above** is another term for heavenly things, which Paul makes clear in the next phrase. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that the phrase refers specifically to things in heaven. Alternate translation: [the heavenly things]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **sitting at the right hand of God**
UST He sits next to God the Father on the throne {and rules everything}
(ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ Θεοῦ καθήμενος)

This phrase implies two things. First, what Christ sits on is the divine throne in heaven. Second, **sitting** on this throne means that Christ has assumed a position of authority over the universe with God the Father. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make either or both of these points explicit. Alternate translation: [sitting on the throne at the right hand of God] or [ruling at the right hand of God]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Christ	{because he included you} when he brought the Messiah back to life
seek	{Because of this,} I want you to stay focused on
Christ	the Messiah
of God	God the Father

Colossians 3:2

ULT	UST
Think about the things above, not the things on the earth.	*I want you to desire what {God has ready for you} in heaven, not what {you could have here} on earth.*

ULT Think about
UST I want you to desire
(φρονεῖτε)

Alternate translation: [Focus on] or [Meditate on]

ULT the things above
UST what {God has ready for you} in heaven
(τὰ ἄνω)

Just as in 3:1, the **things above** is another term for heavenly things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that the phrase refers specifically to things in heaven. Alternate translation: [the heavenly things]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT the things on the earth
UST what {you could have here} on earth
(τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς)

The **things on the earth** describes those things in this world that are not connected to Christ and are not **the things above**. Not thinking about **the things on the earth** does not mean that the Colossians are supposed to abandon all care for earthly things. Instead, Paul is urging them to focus on Christ and what he has promised for them, not on whatever they could gain on earth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify this contrast by further describing **the things on the earth**. Alternate translation: [the things that matter in this world]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Think about	I want you to desire
earth	what {you could have here} on earth

Colossians 3:3

ULT	UST
For you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.	*{You should think this way} because it is as if you have died. You are spiritually alive only because God has united you to the Messiah in close relationship with himself, and this cannot be seen {on earth right now}.*

ULT **For**
UST {You should think this way} because
(γάρ)

The word **For** introduces the reason why the Colossians should think about the things above (3:1–2): it is because they **died**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the transition more explicitly. Alternate translation: [You should think about the things above, because]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **you died**
UST it is as if you have died
(ἀπεθάνετε)

Here Paul expresses in slightly different form the idea he already stated in 2:20: the Colossians have been united to Christ in his death. As Christ actually died, so God counts the Colossian believers as having **died** with Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this idea as you did in 2:20, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [you died in union with the Messiah] or [you participated in the Messiah's death]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **your life has been hidden with Christ in God**
UST You are spiritually alive … because God has united you to the Messiah in close relationship with himself, and this cannot be seen {on earth right now}
(ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ Θεῷ)

Paul speaks as if the Colossians' lives were objects that could be **hidden** where Christ is, and as if the place they were hidden was God. By using this metaphor, Paul wants the Colossians to know that they are safe (**with Christ in God**) but also that their new life is not yet fully revealed (**hidden**). If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [God is protecting your new life with Christ and will reveal it when the time comes]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **your life has been hidden with Christ in God**
> UST You are spiritually alive … because God has united you to the Messiah in close relationship with himself, and this cannot be seen {on earth right now}
> (ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ Θεῷ)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form. Alternate translation: [God has hidden your life with Christ in himself]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **your life has been hidden**
> UST You are spiritually alive … and this cannot be seen {on earth right now}
> (ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **life**, you could rephrase the sentence so that you could use a verb for "living." Alternate translation: [you live in a hidden way]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Christ	because God has united you to the Messiah
God	himself

Colossians 3:4

ULT	UST
When Christ, your life,is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.	*You are alive because God has united you to the Messiah. {Therefore,} when {he returns again to earth and} everyone sees him, at that time you will be with him. Then, everyone will see that you too have become glorious {beings like him}.*

ULT **Christ, your life,is revealed**
UST You are alive because God has united you to the Messiah … {he returns again to earth and} everyone sees him
(ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ, ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could translate the idea in active form with: (1) Christ as the subject. Alternate translation: [Christ, your life, reveals himself] or [Christ, your life, appears]; (2) God the Father as the subject. Alternate translation: [God the Father reveals Christ, your life,]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **your life**
UST You are alive because God has united you to the Messiah
(ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν)

Continuing the theme of the Colossians' life being hidden with Christ, Paul now identifies Christ as the Colossians' **life**. In other words, if the Colossians' life is hidden with Christ, then Christ can be called their **life**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a comparable metaphor, or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [who holds your life] or [with whom you have life]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **your life**
UST You are alive because God has united you to the Messiah
(ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **life**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [in whom you live]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **is revealed … will be revealed with him**
UST { … returns again to earth and} everyone sees him … will be with him. Then, everyone will see
(φανερωθῇ & σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε)

Paul uses the word **is revealed** to refer to Christ's second coming, when he is revealed to everyone as who he truly is. Paul uses the phrase **will be revealed with him** to refer to how the Colossians will participate with Christ in that second coming and also be **revealed** as who they truly are. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use words such as "coming" or "returning" instead of "revealing." Alternate translation: [comes again … will come with him] or [returns … will return with him]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **When … then**
UST {Therefore,} when … at that time
(ὅταν & τότε)

The word **When** indicates a moment in time, and the word translated **then** refers back to that same time. Therefore, the events described in two parts of this sentence occur at the same time. Use a construction that indicates simultaneous time in your language. Alternate translation: [When … at the same time]

Support Reference: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

ULT **in glory**
UST that you … have become glorious {beings like him}
(ἐν δόξῃ)

As a previous note pointed out, the "revealing" language suggests that something will be revealed about Christ and the Colossians. Here, Paul describes it as **glory**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that this is one thing that **is revealed** about Christ and the Colossians: they are glorious. Alternate translation: [as glorious]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **in glory**
UST that you … have become glorious {beings like him}
(ἐν δόξῃ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **glory**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [as very great]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Christ	he
glory	that you … have become glorious {beings like him}

Colossians 3:5

ULT	UST
Put to death, therefore, the members {that are} on the earth—sexual immorality, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and envy, which is idolatry,	*Because {this is your destiny}, think of the desires you have to do evil things in this world as enemies that you must kill. {The evil things that you might desire include} having improper sex, doing impure things, enjoying wrong emotions, desiring evil things, and wanting more than you need, which is the same as worshiping another god.*

ULT **therefore**
UST Because {this is your destiny}
(οὖν)

Here, the word **therefore** introduces an exhortation based on previous statements. In this case, Paul bases his exhortation on what he has said about the Colossians' union with Christ and its end goal: being revealed with him in glory. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable connecting word or express the idea with a phrase that refers back to what Paul has already said. Alternate translation: [because of your union with Christ]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **Put to death, therefore**
UST Because {this is your destiny}, think of … as enemies that you must kill
(νεκρώσατε οὖν)

If your language would normally put a transition word like **therefore** at the beginning of the sentence, you could move it there in your translation. Alternate translation: [Therefore, put to death]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **Put to death … the members {that are} on the earth**
UST think of the desires you have to do evil things in this world as enemies that you must kill
(νεκρώσατε & τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς)

Here Paul speaks of the **members** as if they were people that one could kill or **Put to death**. By using this metaphor, he wants to show the Colossians that the evil desires he lists should be treated as enemies and dealt with as harshly as possible. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [Eliminate … the members that are on the earth]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **the members {that are} on the earth**
> UST the desires you have to do evil things in this world
> (τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς)

Paul here speaks of sins as if they were **members** or limbs of the body that are part of the person **on the earth**. What this metaphor means is that these sins can be so much a part of a person while they are living on earth that getting rid of them is like cutting off an arm or leg. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [the sins that have become part of you while you live on earth]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **sexual immorality, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and envy, which is idolatry**
> UST {The evil things that you might desire include} having improper sex, doing impure things, enjoying wrong emotions, desiring evil things, and wanting more than you need, which is the same as worshiping another god
> (πορνείαν, ἀκαθαρσίαν, πάθος, ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ἥτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρία)

If your language would not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **immorality**, **uncleanness**, **passion**, **desire**, **envy**, and **idolatry**, you could rephrase this sentence and use adjectives or verbs to express the idea. Alternate translation: [behaving in ways that are sexually immoral, unclean, wrongly emotional, lustful, and envious, which is idolatrous]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **uncleanness**
> UST doing impure things
> (ἀκαθαρσίαν)

The word **uncleanness** describes morally dirty or impure behavior. This is a general term that covers many sins that would make one unclean, that is, that would make other people avoid one. If you have a comparable expression in your language, you could use it here, or you could express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [unclean behavior] or [disgusting acts]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **passion**
UST enjoying wrong emotions
(πάθος)

The word **passion** refers to negative emotions that are triggered by outside events. Examples would include forms of anger and jealousy. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that these are improper emotions, since Paul is not saying that all emotions are wrong. Alternate translation: [improper emotions] or [evil passions]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **evil desire**
UST desiring evil things
(ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν)

The word **desire** refers to longing after something, often in a sexual context. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [evil lust] or [evil longing]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **envy**
UST wanting more than you need
(τὴν πλεονεξίαν)

Paul uses the word **envy** to refer to wanting more than one needs, especially wanting more than what others have. If you have a comparable term, you could use if here, or you could express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [desiring to have more than what others have]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **which**
UST which
(ἥτις)

Here, **which** refers back to **envy** only, not to other items in the list. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that **which** refers to **envy**. Alternate translation: [and envy]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
members	the desires you have to do evil things
earth	this world
sexual immorality	{The evil things that you might desire include} having improper sex

ULT	UST
desire	desiring
evil	evil things
envy	wanting more than you need
idolatry	the same as worshiping another god

Colossians 3:6

ULT	UST
because of which the wrath of God is coming,	*Because people have these desires, God is angry with them and will punish them.*

ULT **is coming**
UST is angry with them and will punish them
(ἔρχεται)

Many ancient manuscripts include “on the sons of disobedience” after **is coming**. Several early and reliable manuscripts do not include it, however. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to include these words if that translation includes them. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to follow the example of the ULT and not include these words. The phrase “sons of disobedience” is an idiom that refers to people who disobey. Alternate translation: [is coming against people who disobey]

Support Reference: Textual Variants

ULT **because of which**
UST Because people have these desires
(δι’ ἃ)

With this phrase, Paul identifies the sins listed in the previous verse as the reason why God’s “wrath” is coming. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify this idea by including a word such as “sins” in the phrase. Alternate translation: [because of which sins]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **the wrath of God is coming**
UST God is angry with them and will punish them
(ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ)

Here Paul speaks of **the wrath of God** as if it were a person or package that can arrive somewhere. By this, he means that God has not yet acted upon his **wrath** but that he will act soon. The Colossians can expect **the wrath** to come soon, just like a package that is arriving soon. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [God will act upon his wrath soon] or [the wrath of God will be enacted soon]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **the wrath of God is coming**
> UST God is angry with them and will punish them
> (ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ)

When the **wrath of God** "is coming," it must arrive somewhere and be against certain people. If you would explicitly state these things in your language, you could clarify that the **wrath** of God comes on earth and against those who do the sins listed in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [the wrath of God is coming on earth against those who do these things]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **the wrath of God**
> UST God is angry with them and will punish them
> (ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ)

The **wrath of God** does not refer simply to an emotion. Rather, this phrase primarily refers to God acting against the sin he hates (examples of which appear in the previous verse). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that indicates action and not just emotion. Alternate translation: [punishment from God]

Support Reference: Metonymy

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wrath	is angry with them and will punish them
of God	God

Colossians 3:7

ULT	UST
in which you also formerly walked when you were living in them.	*You, just like them, used to have these desires to do evil things. {That was} when you acted out these desires.*

ULT in which
UST these desires to do evil things
(ἐν οἷς)

The word **which** refers again back to the list of sins in 3:5. If it would be helpful in your language, you could include the word "sins" to clarify this reference. Alternate translation: [in which sins]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT in which you also formerly walked
UST You, just like them, used to have these desires to do evil things
(ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε)

Paul speaks of behavior that is characteristic of one's life as if it were something that one could "walk in." By this, he means that the sinful behaviors were things that they normally did. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [which formerly characterized your lives too]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT formerly walked
UST used to have
(περιεπατήσατέ ποτε)

The word **formerly** is used to refer to some indefinite time in the past. Here Paul uses it to refer to the time before the Colossians believed in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify the specific time reference. Alternate translation: [walked before you believed]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **when**
UST {That was} when
(ὅτε)

The word **when** introduces a clause that occurs simultaneously with the main clause. Here, the Colossians "lived" **in them** at the same time as they were "walking" in them. Use an expression that indicates simultaneous time in your language. Alternate translation: [at the time when]

Support Reference: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

ULT **you were living in them**
UST you acted out these desires
(ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις)

The phrase **living in** something could mean: (1) that the Colossians practiced these sins in addition to having lives characterized by them ("walking in them"). Alternate translation: [you were doing these things]; (2) that the Colossians were living among people who did these things. Alternate translation: [you were living among people who did these things]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in which you also formerly walked when you were living in them**
UST You, just like them, used to have these desires to do evil things. {That was} when you acted out these desires
(ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιεπατήσατέ ποτε ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν τούτοις)

If **which** and **them** both refer to the sins mentioned in 3:5, then "walking" and **living** in them mean very similar things. Paul uses the repetition to emphasize how thoroughly the Colossians' lives were characterized by sins. If your language does not use repetition in this way or has only one phrase for this concept, you could use just one of these phrases. Alternate translation: [in which you also formerly walked] or [in which you used to live]

Support Reference: Doublet

Colossians 3:8

ULT	UST
But now you must also lay aside all {such things}—wrath, anger, evil desire, slander, {and} obscene speech from your mouth.	*But now {that you have believed}, you must stop behaving in all evil ways. {These evil ways include} acting in angry ways, being angry with others, desiring to hurt others, talking bad about others, and speaking shameful words.*

ULT **But now**
UST But now {that you have believed}
(νυνὶ δὲ)

The phrase **But now** introduces a contrast with the previous verse, a contrast that focuses on time. The word translated **now** refers to the time after the Colossians believed. It introduces how they should behave **now** in contrast to how they behaved "formerly" (3:7). If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify what **now** refers to. Alternate translation: [But now that you believe in Jesus,]

Support Reference: Connect — Contrast Relationship

ULT **must … lay aside**
UST must stop behaving in
(ἀπόθεσθε)

Here Paul exhorts the Colossians to **lay aside** sins as if the sins were garments that they could take off or objects they could set down and stop using. By talking this way, Paul encourages the Colossians to no longer use or be associated with sins that are not part of who they are in their union with Christ, just as clothes and objects are not part of the person but can be removed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a comparable metaphor or plainly. Alternate translation: [must … separate yourselves from] or [must … no longer do]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **wrath, anger, evil desire, slander, {and} obscene speech from your mouth**
UST {These evil ways include} acting in angry ways, being angry with others, desiring to hurt others, talking bad about others, and speaking shameful words
(ὀργήν, θυμόν, κακίαν, βλασφημίαν, αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν)

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind these words, you could express the ideas by using verbs or adjectives. Alternate translation: [wrathful, angry, and lustful behavior, and slanderous and obscene words]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **wrath, anger**
UST {These evil ways include} acting in angry ways, being angry with others
(ὀργήν, θυμόν)

The words **wrath** and **anger** are almost synonymous, with **wrath** emphasizing angry actions and **anger** emphasizing angry emotions. If your language does not have two words for "anger" that work here, you could express the idea with one word. Alternate translation: [anger]

Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **evil desire**
UST desiring to hurt others
(κακίαν)

The phrase **evil desire** is a broad term that means "vice," the opposite of "virtue." If your language has a general term for "vice," you could use it here. Alternate translation: [vice]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **{and} obscene speech**
UST and … shameful words
(αἰσχρολογίαν)

The phrase **obscene speech** refers to "shameful words," words that are not spoken in polite company. If your language has a word or phrase for these kinds of words, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [and obscenities] or [and cursing]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **from your mouth**
UST speaking
(ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν)

Here, **from your mouth** is an idiom that refers to speaking, since speech comes out of the **mouth**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or express the idea with a word such as "talk." Alternate translation: [in your talk]

Support Reference: Idiom

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wrath	{These evil ways include} acting in angry ways
anger	being angry with others
evil desire	desiring to hurt others

ULT	UST
slander	talking bad about others

Colossians 3:9

ULT	UST
Do not lie to one another, having taken off the old man with its practices	*You must not tell lies to one another. You are not the person you used to be, a person who normally behaved in these evil ways.*

ULT **having taken off**
UST You are not
(ἀπεκδυσάμενοι)

The clause that begins with **having taken off** could: (1) give the reason why the Colossians should not lie to each other (and should put off the sins listed in the previous verse). Alternate translation: [because you have taken off]; (2) give another command. Alternate translation: [and take off]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **having taken off the old man**
UST You are not the person you used to be
(ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον)

Here Paul uses a metaphor that is similar to one he used in 2:11, where he speaks of the "circumcision of Christ" that "puts off" the body of flesh. Here, he speaks of the **old man** as if it were a piece of clothing that the Colossians could "take off." This does not mean that their true selves are found underneath the **old man**, since the next verse has them putting on the **new man**. Instead, Paul uses the metaphor to illustrate how they have changed identity from **old** to "new." If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [having forsaken your old identity]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **the old man**
> UST the person you used to be
> (τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον)

Paul uses the phrase **the old man** as part of his language about dying and rising with Christ. The **old man** is thus the person who died with Christ. It does not refer to a part of the person, but rather, it refers to what the whole person used to be before dying with Christ. This is why the ULT uses the neuter pronoun **its** to refer to **old man** later in the verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a term that refers to the whole person and who he or she used to be. Alternate translation: [the old you] or [your old identity]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **man**
> UST person
> (ἄνθρωπον)

While the word **man** is grammatically masculine, it does not refer primarily to male people but to humans in general. If you have a general word for humans in your language, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [human] or [human being]

Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

> ULT **with its practices**
> UST a person who normally behaved in these evil ways
> (σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **practices**, you could express the idea by using a relative clause that refers to what the **old man** "normally does." Alternate translation: [along with what it does] or [with how it acts]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

Colossians 3:10

ULT	UST
and having put on the new man being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one having created it;	*You are a new person now, {a person} in whom God is working to make you know him more. {You are now a person} who is like God, who turned you into this new person.*

ULT **having put on**
UST You are … now
(ἐνδυσάμενοι)

The clause that begins with **having put on** is parallel to the clause beginning with "having taken off" in the previous verse (3:9). Translate this clause with the same structure you used in the previous verse. This clause could: (1) give the reason why the Colossians should not lie to each other (and should put off the sins listed in the 3:8). Alternate translation: [because you have put on]; (2) give another command. Alternate translation: [put on]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **having put on the new man**
UST You are a new person now
(ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον)

Here, Paul continues the metaphor of changing clothing, which he began in 3:9. Once the Colossians have "taken off" the "old man," they **put on** the **new man**. Translate this expression as an appropriate opposite to your translation of "take off" in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [having stepped into your new identity]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the new man**
UST a new person
(τὸν νέον)

As in the previous verse (3:9), the phrase **new man** does not refer to a male person but to what one has become when one is raised with Christ. It does not refer to a part of the person but rather to what the whole person has become after being raised with Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a term that refers to the whole person and who they are. Alternate translation: [the new you] or [your new identity]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **being renewed**
> UST {a person} in whom God is working
> (τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [whom God is renewing]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **in knowledge**
> UST to make you know him more
> (εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν)

The first thing Paul says about the "renewing" is its purpose, which is **knowledge**. If **in knowledge** would not be understood as a purpose statement in your language, you could use an expression that indicates that gaining **knowledge** is one purpose of **being renewed**. Alternate translation: [to gain knowledge] or [so as to know more]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

> ULT **knowledge**
> UST to make you know him more
> (ἐπίγνωσιν)

While Paul does not say here what this **knowledge** concerns, it probably refers to knowing both God (as in 1:10) and God's will (as in 1:9). If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify what this knowledge concerns. Alternate translation: [the knowledge of God and his will]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **knowledge**
> UST to make you know him more
> (ἐπίγνωσιν)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **knowledge**, you could express the idea in a different way, such as with a relative clause. Alternate translation: [what you know]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **according to the image of the one having created it**
UST {You are now a person} who is like God, who turned you into this new person
(κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν)

The second thing Paul says about the "renewing" is the standard or pattern by which God renews his people: the **image of the one who created it**. Use a word or phrase in your language that indicates the standard or pattern according to which something is accomplished. Alternate translation: [so that it matches the image of the one who created it]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

ULT **according to the image of the one**
UST {You are now a person} who is like God, who turned you into
(κατ᾽ εἰκόνα τοῦ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **image**, you could express the idea in a different way, such as with a relative clause. Make sure your translation fits with what **image** refers to, as discussed in the previous note. Alternate translation: [according to how you reflect the one] or [according to Christ, who reflects the one]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **of the one having created**
UST God, who turned you into
(τοῦ κτίσαντος)

The **one having created it** refers to God. If **the one having created it** would be misunderstood, you could clarify that God is **the one**. Alternate translation: [of God, who created]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **it**
UST this new person
(αὐτόν)

The pronoun **it** refers to "the new man." If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer back to "the new man" more directly. Alternate translation: [this new man]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
knowledge	to make you know him more
the image	{You are now a person} who is like

ULT	UST
having created	God, who turned you into

Colossians 3:11

ULT	UST
where there is no Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ {is} all, and in all.	*Since {you are all new people}, {it is not important} whether anyone is a non-Jew or a Jew, or whether anyone is circumcised or not, or whether anyone is a foreigner or an uncivilized person, or whether anyone is a slave or not. Instead, it is the Messiah who is most important, and God has united him to all {of you}.*

ULT **where**
UST Since {you are all new people}
(ὅπου)

Here Paul refers to the "new man" from the previous verse as if it were a place one could be in. This means that the word **where** refers to the new situation of those who have put on this "new man." If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea by identifying those who have put on the "new man" as the ones addressed by this verse. Alternate translation: (start a new sentence) [For those who have put on the new man,]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **there is no**
UST {it is not important} whether anyone is … or whether anyone is … or whether anyone is … or whether anyone is
(οὐκ ἔνι)

Here, Paul speaks as if none of the kinds of people he mentions exist in this new situation. The Colossians would have understood this as a way to emphasize how little the differences between all these kinds of people matter once they have died and risen with Christ. They all fit into the category of the "new man" now. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea without the hyperbole by emphasizing the new unity of people from all these categories. Alternate translation: [all people are the same,]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **there is no Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman**
UST {it is not important} whether anyone is a non-Jew or a Jew, or whether anyone is circumcised or not, or whether anyone is a foreigner or an uncivilized person, or whether anyone is a slave or not
(οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος)

All these terms are nouns that refer to groups of people that are characterized by the trait that the noun names. These words do not refer to just one person. If your language has a way to categorize people by characteristics, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: [there are no Greek and Jewish people, circumcised and uncircumcised people, barbaric people, Scythian people, enslaved people, free people]

Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **barbarian**
UST a foreigner
(βάρβαρος)

The word **barbarian** was used by people who spoke Greek to describe anyone who did not speak Greek. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a word such as “foreign.” Alternate translation: [alien]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **Scythian**
UST or an uncivilized person
(Σκύθης)

The word **Scythian** was used to describe a nomadic group of people who were fierce warriors. It was also used to describe those who behaved in similar ways, who were often considered rough or rude. If it would be helpful in your language, you could add an adjective before **Scythian** to clarify its connotation, or you could use a comparable label. Alternate translation: [uncivilized Scythian] or [rough Scythian]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **Christ {is} all, and**
UST it is the Messiah who is most important, and
(πάντα καὶ & Χριστός)

Here Paul speaks of **Christ** as being **all** things. By this, he means that none of the categories he just listed matter because Christ is the only person who matters. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a verb such as "matters" or a noun such as "importance." Alternate translation: [Christ is all that matters, and he is]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in all**
UST God has united him to all {of you}
(ἐν πᾶσιν)

Again, Paul speaks of those who have died and risen with Christ. Here, instead of speaking of the Colossians being "in Christ," he reverses the form, just as he did in 1:27: Christ is **in all** of those who believe in him. If possible, translate this expression the same way you translated "Christ in you" in 1:27. Alternate translation: [is united to all of you]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Greek	a non-Jew
Jew	a Jew
circumcision	circumcised
uncircumcision	not
slave	a slave
freeman	or not
Christ	it is the Messiah

Colossians 3:12

ULT	UST
Therefore, as chosen ones of God, holy and beloved, put on inner parts of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, {and} patience,	*God has chosen you, he has set you apart as his own people, and he loves you. Because of these things and because {you are new people}, you must always behave properly {towards others}. {This includes} caring about them, being kind to them, not being proud, not behaving harshly, and taking a long time to become angry.*

ULT Therefore
UST and because {you are new people}
(οὖν)

Here the word **Therefore** introduces an exhortation based on what Paul has already told the Colossians in 3:9–11 about putting off the old man, putting on the new man, and the effects of this. Use a word or phrase in your language that introduces an exhortation based on what has already been said, and you could refer back to what Paul has already said. Alternate translation: [Because you have put off the old man and put on the new man]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT put on
UST you must always behave properly {towards others}
(ἐνδύσασθε)

The phrase **put on** uses the same words Paul used in 3:10 for "having put on" the new man. Here, he uses the same clothing metaphor to show the Colossians that "putting on" the new man means that they also must **put on** the character traits he lists here. This means that they must consistently behave in ways that show **mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, {and} patience**. If possible, translate **put on** as you did in 3:10. Alternate translation: [step into new virtues, including]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **as**
UST Because of these things
(ὡς)

Paul uses the word **as** to introduce his description of who the Colossians are. He describes them in ways that will give them a reason to "put on" the virtues he lists. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea by using a word or phrase that gives a reason or basis for a command. Alternate translation: [because you are]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **chosen ones of God**
UST God has chosen you
(ἐκλεκτοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ)

Paul here uses the possessive form to indicate that the Colossians are **chosen ones** because **God** chose them. If your language would not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could express the idea by translating **chosen** with a verb such as "chose," with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [ones whom God has chosen]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **inner parts of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, {and} patience**
UST {This includes} caring about them, being kind to them, not being proud, not behaving harshly, and taking a long time to become angry
(σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ, χρηστότητα, ταπεινοφροσύνην, πραΰτητα, μακροθυμίαν)

If your language would not use abstract nouns to express these ideas, you could: (1) translate the abstract nouns as verbs. Alternate translation: [the character traits of showing care to others, treating them nicely, not thinking highly of yourselves, considering others more important than yourselves, and not being easily annoyed]; (2) translate the abstract nouns as adjectives. Alternate translation: [the merciful, kind, humble, gentle, and patient new man]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **inner parts of mercy**
UST {This includes} caring about them
(σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμοῦ)

Greek speakers could refer to the **inner parts** as the location of emotions, especially emotions related to love or empathy for another person. The **inner parts of mercy**, then, refers to having **mercy** where one experiences emotions. In this sentence, **inner parts** is connected with an **of** only to **mercy**, not to any of the other character traits. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an alternate metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [a heart of mercy] or [a merciful heart]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **kindness**
UST being kind to them
(χρηστότητα)

The word **kindness** refers to the character trait of being good, kind, or helpful to others. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [a generous attitude toward others]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **gentleness**
UST not behaving harshly
(πραΰτητα)

The word **gentleness** describes the character trait of being considerate of and gentle with others. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [a considerate attitude]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **{and} patience**
UST and taking a long time to become angry
(μακροθυμίαν)

In this context, the word **patience** refers to the ability to remain calm and even-tempered even when others do things that provoke one to anger. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or express the idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [and forbearance] or [and the ability to remain calm]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
chosen ones	has chosen you

ULT	UST
of God	God
holy	he has set you apart as his own people
beloved	he loves you
of mercy	{This includes} caring about them
inner parts of mercy	{This includes} caring about them
{and} patience	and taking a long time to become angry

Colossians 3:13

ULT	UST
bearing with one another and being gracious to each other if someone may have a complaint against someone else; just as also the Lord forgave you, so also should you.	*You must not easily become irritated with one another. When you blame other people for the things they have done, you must forgive them. You should imitate how the Lord forgave you by {forgiving one another}.*

ULT **bearing with one another and being gracious to each other if someone may have a complaint against someone else**
UST You must not easily become irritated with one another. When you blame other people for the things they have done, you must forgive them
(ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων καὶ χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς, ἐάν τις πρός τινα ἔχῃ μομφήν)

If your language would put the conditional statement first, you could move the **if** clause to the beginning, starting a new sentence. Alternate translation: [If someone may have a complaint against someone else, bear with one another and be gracious to each other]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **bearing with one another**
UST You must not easily become irritated with one another
(ἀνεχόμενοι ἀλλήλων)

In Paul's culture, the phrase **bearing with one another** refers to being patient with others, even when they do things that are annoying or strange. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [putting up with one another] or [being patient with one another]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **if**
UST When
(ἐάν)

Paul uses **if** to introduce a hypothetical situation that he thinks will happen among the Colossians at times. It is in this kind of situation that he wants them to "bear with one another and be gracious to each other." If your language would not use **if** to express that idea, you could express the idea by using a word or phrase that refers to any time something happens. Alternate translation: [whenever]

Support Reference: Hypothetical Situations

> ULT **someone may have a complaint against someone else**
> UST you blame other people for the things they have done
> (τις πρός τινα ἔχῃ μομφήν)

This phrase indicates a situation in which one person feels offended or hurt by another person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or an expression that indicates that one party has been offended or hurt by another. Alternate translation: [a person has been offended by another person]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **may have a complaint against**
> UST blame other people for the things they have done
> (πρός & ἔχῃ μομφήν)

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **complaint**, you could express the idea by translating the abstract noun as a verb. Alternate translation: [may complain against]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **just as also the Lord forgave you, so also should you**
> UST You should imitate how the Lord forgave you by {forgiving one another}
> (καθὼς καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς)

If your language would put the comparison after the command, you could switch them in your translation, including “forgive” in the new first clause. Alternate translation: [you should forgive others, just as the Lord forgave you]

Support Reference: Information Structure

> ULT **just as also the Lord forgave you**
> UST how the Lord forgave you
> (καθὼς καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν)

Here Paul draws a comparison between how he wants the Colossians to forgive and how Jesus has forgiven them. Use a word or phrase that would normally be used for comparing things that are similar. Alternate translation: [in the same way that the Lord forgave you]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT so also should you
UST You should imitate … by {forgiving one another}
(οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς)

Paul leaves out words that could be needed in some languages to make a complete statement. If your language needs these words, you could supply words such as “forgive one another.” Alternate translation: [so also you should forgive each other]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
bearing with	You must not easily become irritated
Lord	Lord
forgave	forgave

Colossians 3:14

ULT	UST
But above all these things, love, which is the bond of perfection.	*Finally, {what is} more important than everything {I have said} so far is that you love one another. By doing this you will unite yourselves together, just as God has called you to do.*

ULT **But above all these things, love**
UST Finally, {what is} more important than everything {I have said} so far is that you love one another
(ἐπὶ πᾶσιν δὲ τούτοις, τὴν ἀγάπην)

Here Paul speaks as if **love** is higher than, or **above**, all the things he has said. By this, he means that **love** is more important than **all these things**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly with a word such as “important” or “essential.” Alternate translation: [But what is most essential is love]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **love**
UST is that you love one another
(τὴν ἀγάπην)

Here Paul omits some words that may be required in your language to make a complete thought. If your language would include more words, you could insert the words that Paul implies, which can be found in 3:12: “put on.” Alternate translation: [put on love]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **love**
UST is that you love one another
(τὴν ἀγάπην)

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **love**, you could express the idea by using a verb. If your language requires you to specify who the Colossians are supposed to “love,” you could clarify that Paul has other believers in mind first, but he is also thinking of God. Alternate translation: [love one another] or [love each other and God]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **which is the bond of perfection**
UST By doing this you will unite yourselves together, just as God has called you to do
(ὅ ἐστιν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος)

Here, **the bond of perfection** is a metaphor for something that brings people together in perfect unity. This could refer to: (1) the perfect unity in community that Paul wishes for believers. Alternate translation: [which brings you together in perfect unity]; (2) the perfect unity that love brings to all Christian virtues. Alternate translation: [which brings all these virtues together to perfection]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the bond of perfection**
UST you will unite yourselves together, just as God has called you to do
(σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος)

Here Paul uses the possessive form to describe: (1) **the bond** that leads to **perfection**. Alternate translation: [the bond that brings perfection]; (2) **the bond** that has **perfection**. Alternate translation: [the perfect bond]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **the bond of perfection**
UST you will unite yourselves together, just as God has called you to do
(σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος)

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **perfection**, you could express the idea by an adjective such as “perfect” or a verb such as “complete.” Alternate translation: [the perfect bond] or [the bond that completes]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
love	is that you love one another
the bond	you will unite yourselves together

Colossians 3:15

ULT	UST
And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body, and become thankful.	*You must make the peace which the Messiah has given you a primary factor when you choose what to do. {You must do this} because God has chosen you to have peace as he unites you closely together, as closely as if you were one person's body. Also, you must give thanks to God.*

ULT **let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts**
UST You must make the peace which the Messiah has given you a primary factor when you choose what to do … as
(ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν)

Here Paul uses a third person imperative. If you have third person imperatives in your language, you could use one here. If you do not have third person imperatives, you could translate this imperative in the second person, with the Colossians as the subject of a verb such as "obey" and the **peace of Christ** as the object. Alternate translation: [in your hearts obey the peace of Christ]

Support Reference: Imperatives — Other Uses

ULT **let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts**
UST You must make the peace which the Messiah has given you a primary factor when you choose what to do … as
(ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβευέτω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν)

Paul speaks of the **peace of Christ** as if it should be the "ruler" in the Colossians' hearts. The word **rule** is closely related to the word translated as "deprive of your prize" that Paul uses in 2:18: both are used of a judge or an umpire making a decision, although in 2:18, the judge or umpire decides against the Colossians. Here, the idea is that the **peace of Christ** acts as the judge or umpire in the **hearts** of the Colossians, which means that this **peace** helps them decide what to feel and do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [let the peace of Christ make your decisions in your hearts]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in your hearts**
UST when you choose what to do
(ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν)

In Paul's culture, **hearts** are the places where humans think and plan. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to the place where humans think in your culture or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [in your minds] or [your thinking]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **which**
UST {You must do this} because … to have peace
(ἣν)

The pronoun **which** refers to "the peace of Christ." If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: [which peace]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **also you were called**
UST God has chosen you
(καὶ ἐκλήθητε)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with God as the subject. Alternate translation: [God called you also]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **in one body**
UST he unites you closely together, as closely as if you were one person's body
(ἐν ἑνὶ σώματι)

Paul speaks of the Colossians as if they were **in**, or part of, **one body**. With this metaphor, he clarifies the situation in which they have been called to peace: in the **one body**, which is the church. Just as the parts of a body are at "peace" with each other (when the body is working properly), so also the Colossians are to be at peace with each other in the church. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [as you together make up the church]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **become thankful**
UST you must give thanks to God
(εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε)

Alternate translation: [become thankful people] or [be thankful]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
peace	peace
of Christ	which the Messiah has given you
let … rule	You must make … a primary factor … as
you were called	God has chosen you

Colossians 3:16

ULT	UST
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, {and} spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.	*You must focus completely on the message about the Messiah as you think and act. You must teach and instruct one another very wisely using songs from the Scriptures, songs about Jesus, and songs that the Holy Spirit has given to you. You must thankfully and sincerely sing to God.*

ULT **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly**
UST You must focus completely on the message about the Messiah as you think and act
(ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως)

Here Paul uses a third person imperative. If you have third person imperatives in your language, you could use one here. If you do not have third person imperatives, you could express Paul's command in the second person with the Colossians as the subject of a verb such as "welcome." Alternate translation: [Welcome the word of Christ richly into your lives]

Support Reference: Imperatives — Other Uses

ULT **Let the word of Christ dwell in you**
UST You must focus … on the message about the Messiah as you think and act
(ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικείτω ἐν ὑμῖν)

Here Paul speaks as if the **word of Christ** were a person who could **dwell** or live in a location, which is the group of believers in Colossae. This metaphor emphasizes how the **word of Christ** should be a consistent and constant part of the Colossians' lives as surely as if it were somebody permanently living with them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a comparable metaphor or plainly. Alternate translation: [Let the word of Christ be a part of your lives consistently and]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the word of Christ**
UST the message about the Messiah
(ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ)

Here Paul uses the possessive form to relate **the word** to **Christ**. This could mean: (1) that **the word** is about **Christ**. Alternate translation: [the word concerning the Messiah]; (2) that **the word** is spoken by **Christ**. Alternate translation: [the word from Christ]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **the word**
UST the message
(ὁ λόγος)

Here, **word** represents a message that is made up of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the message]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **richly**
UST completely
(πλουσίως)

Here Paul speaks as if the "word" were wealthy and could do something **richly**. He uses this metaphor to command that the word should dwell in the Colossians completely and with all the blessings that come from it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [in every way and with every blessing] or [fully]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in all wisdom**
UST very wisely
(ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **wisdom**, you could express the idea another way. Alternate translation: [in all wise ways]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another … singing**
UST You must teach and instruct one another very wisely … You must … sing
(ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ, διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς & ᾄδοντες)

Paul uses the words **teaching**, **admonishing**, and **singing** to show the Colossians some ways in which they can "let the word of Christ dwell" in them. Therefore, **teaching**, **admonishing**, and **singing** happen at the same time as **the word of Christ** dwelling in them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could directly state it. Alternate translation: (start a new sentence) [you could do this by teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom … and by singing]

Support Reference: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

ULT **teaching and admonishing**
UST You must teach and instruct
(διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες)

These two verbs have only slightly different meanings. The word **teaching** refers positively to giving someone information, skills, or concepts. The word **admonishing** refers negatively to warning someone against something. If you have words that fit these two ideas, you could use them here. If you do not have words that make these distinctions, you could translate both of them with a single verb such as “instruct.” Alternate translation: [instructing]

Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **with psalms, hymns, {and} spiritual songs**
UST using songs from the Scriptures, songs about Jesus, and songs that the Holy Spirit has given to you
(ψαλμοῖς, ὕμνοις, ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς)

These three terms name different kinds of songs. The word **psalms** refers to songs from the book of Psalms in the Bible. The word **hymns** refers to songs sung in praise, usually to a deity. Finally, the word **songs** refers to vocal music that celebrates someone or something, usually in poem form. If you have words that roughly match these categories in your language, you could use them here. If you do not have words that match these categories, you could express the idea with only one or two words or use adjectives to describe the different types of songs. Alternate translation: [psalms and spiritual songs] or [biblical songs, praise songs, and celebratory spiritual songs]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **{and} spiritual songs**
UST and songs that the Holy Spirit has given to you
(ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς)

The word **spiritual** could refer to: (1) the Holy Spirit as the origin or inspiration of the **songs**. Alternate translation: [and songs from the Spirit]; (2) **songs** that are sung by or in the power of the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: [and songs empowered by the Spirit]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **with thankfulness**
UST thankfully
(ἐν τῇ χάριτι)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **thankfulness**, you could express the idea by using an adverb such as "thankfully" or an adjective such as "thankful." Alternate translation: [in thankful ways]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **in your hearts**
UST and sincerely
(ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν)

Here the Colossians would have understood the phrase **in your hearts** to describe something that people do that they fully believe in. It means that the **singing** should be done with sincerity and the full approval of one's own mind. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable idiom or plainly. Alternate translation: [wholeheartedly] or [with genuineness]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **in your hearts**
UST and sincerely
(ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν)

In Paul's culture, **hearts** are the places where humans think and desire. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to the place where humans think in your culture or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [in your minds]

Support Reference: Metonymy

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
word of Christ	message about the Messiah
wisdom	very wisely
admonishing	instruct
with psalms	using songs from the Scriptures
spiritual	that the Holy Spirit has given to you
thankfulness	thankfully
to God	to God

Colossians 3:17

ULT	UST
And everything, whatever you might do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.	*Whenever you say or do anything, {you should behave} in every situation {as people who} represent the Lord Jesus. Also, you should thank God, {who is our} Father. {You can do this only} because of {the work of} the Messiah.*

ULT **everything, whatever you might do in word or in deed, do all in**
UST Whenever you say or do anything, {you should behave} in every situation {as people who} represent
(πᾶν, ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν)

The word **all** refers back to **everything, whatever you might do in word or in deed**. If your language would not write the object (**everything, whatever you might do in word or in deed**) first, you could put it where **all** is, after the verb. Or, you could change the object into a relative clause. Alternate translation: [do everything, whatever you might do in word or in deed, in]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **everything, whatever you might do**
UST Whenever you … anything
(πᾶν, ὅ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε)

In Paul's culture, this is a natural way to refer to anything someone might do, including all possibilities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary way to refer to all possible actions. Alternate translation: [anything you do]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **in word or in deed**
UST say or do
(ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ)

If your language does not use abstract nouns to express the ideas behind **word** and **deed**, you could express the idea with verbs such as "speak" and "act." Alternate translation: [in speaking or in acting] or [when you speak or act]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT in the name of the Lord Jesus
UST you should behave … {as people who} represent the Lord Jesus
(ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ)

Acting **in the name of** a person means representing that person. Representatives, those who do anything **in the name of** someone else, should act so as to help others think well of and honor the people they represent. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom for representing someone or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [as representatives of the Lord Jesus] or [in a way that leads to honor for the Lord Jesus]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT through him
UST {You can do this only} because of {the work of} the Messiah
(δι᾽ αὐτοῦ)

The phrase **through him** does not mean that the prayers of thanks are mediated to God the Father by God the Son. Rather, it is **through** the Son that the Colossians are able to give thanks. This means that they can give thanks because of what the Son has done for them. If that meaning of **through him** would not be understood in your language, you could express the idea with a preposition such as “because” or clarify that it is **through** the “work” of the Son. Alternate translation: [because of what he has done] or [through his work]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
of the Lord	the Lord
Jesus	Jesus
to God the Father	God, {who is our} Father

Colossians 3:18

ULT	UST
Wives, be subjected to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.	*Wives must treat their husbands as the leaders {in their families}, since this is appropriate behavior for those whom God has united to the Lord.*

ULT **Wives**
UST Wives
(αἱ γυναῖκες)

Here Paul directly addresses the **Wives** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: [You wives]

ULT **be subjected to your husbands**
UST must treat their husbands as the leaders {in their families}
(ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς ἀνδράσιν)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form with a verb such as “obey” or “submit.” Alternate translation: [obey your husbands] or [submit to your husbands]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **to your husbands**
UST their husbands
(τοῖς ἀνδράσιν)

Here Paul does not explicitly state that wives must **be subjected** to “their own” husbands. However, Paul writes this sentence in such a way that the Colossians would have understood him to mean this. The ULT includes **your** because this is an essential part of what Paul is saying. Use a form in your language that specifies that Paul has each wife’s husband in mind. Alternate translation: [to your own husbands]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **as**
UST since
(ὡς)

Here, the word **as** functions to introduce the reason why “wives” should “be subjected to” their **husbands**. If **as** does not indicate a reason in your language, you could express this idea using a causal word such as “since” or “because.” Alternate translation: [because this]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **is fitting**
UST this is appropriate behavior for those
(ἀνῆκεν)

The phrase **is fitting** refers to what or to whom something properly belongs. If **is fitting** would be misunderstood your language, you could express the idea by using a word or phrase that identifies proper behavior in specific circumstances. Alternate translation: [is suitable] or [suits your position]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **in the Lord**
UST whom God has united to the Lord
(ἐν Κυρίῳ)

Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in the Lord** to describe the union of believers with Christ. In this case, being **in the Lord** or united to the Lord is the standard for how to behave. Alternate translation: [in your union with the Lord]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
be subjected	must treat … as the leaders {in their families}
the Lord	whom God has united to the Lord
in the Lord	whom God has united to the Lord

Colossians 3:19

ULT	UST
Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them.	*Husbands must love their wives and not treat them harshly.*

ULT Husbands
UST Husbands
(οἱ ἄνδρες)

Here Paul directly addresses the **Husbands** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: [You husbands]

ULT your wives
UST their wives
(τὰς γυναῖκας)

Here Paul does not explicitly state that husbands must **love** "their own" wives. However, Paul writes this sentence in such a way that the Colossians would have understood him to mean this. The ULT includes **your** because this is an essential part of what Paul is saying. Use a form in your language that specifies that Paul has each husband's wife in mind. Alternate translation: [your own wives]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT do not be embittered against
UST not treat them harshly
(μὴ πικραίνεσθε πρὸς)

The phrase **be embittered** could refer to: (1) the husband doing or saying things that cause his wife to be bitter or upset with him. Alternate translation: [do not do what makes them bitter against you]; (2) the husband becoming bitter or upside with his wife for doing or saying certain things. Alternate translation: [do not become bitter against them]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
love	must love

Colossians 3:20

ULT	UST
Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is pleasing in the Lord.	*Children must obey their parents in every circumstance. This pleases God {and is appropriate} for those whom God has united to the Lord.*

ULT **Children**
UST Children
(τὰ τέκνα)

Here Paul directly addresses the **Children** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: [You children]

ULT **your parents**
UST their parents
(τοῖς γονεῦσιν)

Here Paul does not explicitly state that children must **obey** "their own" parents. However, Paul writes this sentence in such a way that the Colossians would have understood him to mean this. The ULT includes **your** because this is an essential part of what Paul is saying. Use a form in your language that specifies that Paul has each child's parents in mind. Alternate translation: [your own parents]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **in all things**
UST in every circumstance
(κατὰ πάντα)

The phrase **in all things** is an idiom that indicates that children should obey "everything their parents command" or "in every situation." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or indicate what the **things** are. Alternate translation: [in everything they tell you to do]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **for**
(γὰρ)

The word **for** introduces the basis or reason for something; here it is Paul's command to children. Use a word that indicates the reason for a command in your language. Alternate translation: [since]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **is pleasing**
UST pleases God
(εὐάρεστόν ἐστιν)

If something **is pleasing**, that means that the person it "pleases" finds that thing acceptable, agreeable, or pleasant. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that emphasizes that obedience to parents is something that is acceptable to God. Alternate translation: [is acceptable]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **pleasing**
UST pleases God
(εὐάρεστόν)

Paul does not state to whom obedience to parents is **pleasing**, but it is clear that it pleases God. If your language would state who is pleased, you could expressly state that it is God. Alternate translation: [pleasing to God]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **in the Lord**
UST {and is appropriate} for those whom God has united to the Lord
(ἐν Κυρίῳ)

Just as in 3:18, Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in the Lord** to describe the union of believers with Christ. In this case, being **in the Lord**, or united to **the Lord**, identifies specifically that those who are united to **the Lord** are to behave in this way. Alternate translation: [in your union with the Lord]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the Lord	{and is appropriate} for those whom God has united to the Lord

ULT	UST
in the Lord	{and is appropriate} for those whom God has united to the Lord

Colossians 3:21

ULT	UST
Fathers, do not provoke your children, so that they may not be discouraged.	*Fathers must not make their children angry. Otherwise, the children may feel like giving up.*

ULT Fathers
UST Fathers
(οἱ πατέρες)

Here Paul directly addresses the **Fathers** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: [You fathers]

ULT do not provoke your children
UST must not make their children angry
(μὴ ἐρεθίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν)

The word **provoke** in this context refers to irritating someone or making them angry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or a short phrase. Alternate translation: [do not irritate your children] or [do not provoke your children to anger]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT so that they may not be discouraged
UST Otherwise, the children may feel like giving up
(ἵνα μὴ ἀθυμῶσιν)

This clause indicates the goal or purpose of the previous command, but this purpose is in the negative. If your language has a customary way to indicate a negative purpose, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [lest they be discouraged]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

ULT they may not be discouraged
UST Otherwise, the children may feel like giving up
(μὴ ἀθυμῶσιν)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form with the **Fathers** as the subject. Alternate translation: [you may not discourage them]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **they may … be discouraged**
> UST the children may feel like giving up
> (ἀθυμῶσιν)

The phrase **they may … be discouraged** describes the feeling of despair or hopelessness. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that expresses this idea. Alternate translation: [they may … despair] or [they may … lose heart]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
do … provoke	must … make … angry

Colossians 3:22

ULT	UST
Slaves, obey your masters according to the flesh in all things, not with eyeservice as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.	*Slaves must obey those who are their masters in this world in every circumstance. {They should obey} not just when their masters are watching, which is how those who want to please only humans behave. Instead, {they should obey their masters} sincerely because they treat the Lord with reverence.*

ULT **Slaves**
UST Slaves
(οἱ δοῦλοι)

Here Paul directly addresses the **Slaves** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: [You slaves]

ULT **your masters according to the flesh**
UST those who are their masters in this world
(τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις)

The phrase **according to the flesh** describes the **masters** as humans on this earth. Paul uses this phrase to describe these **masters** because he is already setting up a contrast with the "Master" over these masters: Jesus (See: 4:1). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or express the idea with an adjective such as "human" or "earthly." Alternate translation: [your earthly masters] or [your human masters]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **your masters**
UST those who are their masters
(τοῖς & κυρίοις)

Here Paul does not explicitly state that slaves must **obey** "their own" masters. However, Paul writes this sentence in such a way that the Colossians would have understood him to mean this. The ULT includes **your** because this is an essential part of what Paul is saying. Use a form in your language that specifies that Paul has each slave's master in mind. Alternate translation: [your own masters]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **in all things**
UST in every circumstance
(κατὰ πάντα)

Just as in 3:20, the phrase **in all things** is an idiom that indicates that slaves should obey "everything their masters command" or "in every situation." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable idiom or indicate what the **things** are. Alternate translation: [in everything they tell you to do]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **not with eyeservice**
UST {They should obey} not just when their masters are watching
(μὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοδουλεία)

The word **eyeservice** describes how people sometimes behave to look good more than to do the right thing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or a short phrase such as "wanting to look impressive." Alternate translation: [not focusing on how you appear to others]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **as people pleasers**
UST which is how those who want to please only humans behave
(ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι)

The phrase **people pleasers** describes the kind of people who care about "eyeservice." Here, **people pleasers** are those who focus on impressing humans rather than doing what God desires. If it would be helpful in your language, you could emphasize that **people pleasers** want to please humans only, not God. Alternate translation: [as people who want to please humans rather than God]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **with sincerity of heart**
UST {they should obey their masters} sincerely
(ἐν ἁπλότητι καρδίας)

Paul here uses the possessive form to describe a **heart** that is characterized by its **sincerity**. If your language would not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could express the idea by translating **sincerity** with an adjective such as "sincere." Alternate translation: [with a sincere heart]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **with sincerity of heart**
UST {they should obey their masters} sincerely
(ἐν ἁπλότητι καρδίας)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **sincerity**, you could express the idea by using an adjective such as "sincere" or and adverb such as "sincerely." Alternate translation: [sincerely in your heart] or [with a sincere heart]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **of heart**
UST {they should obey their masters} sincerely
(καρδίας)

In Paul's culture, the **heart** is the place where a person thinks and desires. If it would be helpful in your language, you could refer to the place where humans think in your culture or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [of mind] or [of desire]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **fearing the Lord**
UST because they treat the Lord with reverence
(φοβούμενοι τὸν Κύριον)

The phrase **fearing the Lord** could describe: (1) the reason why the slaves should obey their masters. Alternate translation: [because you fear the Lord]; (2) the way or manner in which the slaves should obey their masters. Alternate translation: [showing fear for the Lord] or [in a way that shows that you fear the Lord]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Slaves	Slaves
masters	are their masters
fearing	because they treat … with reverence
Lord	Lord

Colossians 3:23

ULT	UST
Whatever you might do, work from the soul as to the Lord and not to men,	*You must do whatever work you have to do diligently, as if {you were working} for the Lord instead of for merely human masters.*

ULT Whatever you might do
UST whatever work you have to do
(ὃ ἐὰν ποιῆτε)

In Paul's culture, this is a natural way to refer to anything someone might do, including all possibilities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary way of referring to all possible actions. Alternate translation: [In anything you do]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT from the soul
UST diligently
(ἐκ ψυχῆς)

Working **from the soul** is comparable to the English idiom working "with all one's heart," which refers to doing something with diligence, without holding anything back. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable idiom or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [with all your heart] or [with all your strength]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT as to the Lord and not to men
UST as if {you were working} for the Lord instead of for merely human masters
(ὡς τῷ Κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις)

This contrast indicates that, even though they serve **men**, they should consider their work to be directed to or in service of **the Lord**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a contrast phrase such as "even as." Alternate translation: [to serve the Lord, even as you are serving men]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **to men**
UST for merely human masters
(ἀνθρώποις)

The word **men** does not refer to only male people but to humans in general. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that refers to people or humans in general. Alternate translation: [to humans] or [to people]

Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the soul	diligently
work	You must do
to the Lord	{you were working} for the Lord

Colossians 3:24

ULT	UST
knowing that you will receive from the Lord the reward of the inheritance. You are serving the Lord Christ.	*{You must obey and serve in this way} because you know that the Lord will justly repay you by giving you what he has kept for you. {Remember that} the Lord Messiah is {the real master} for whom you are working.*

ULT **knowing**
UST {You must obey and serve in this way} because you know
(εἰδότες)

The word **knowing** introduces a reason why the slaves should obey as Paul commands them to in 3:22–23. If **knowing** would not introduce a reason in your language, you could clarify this by using a word such as "because." Alternate translation: [since you know] or [for you know]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **the reward of the inheritance**
UST will justly repay you … what he has kept for you
(τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τῆς κληρονομίας)

Here Paul uses the possessive form to identify the **reward** as **the inheritance**. If your language does not use the possessive form in this way, you could clarify that these two words name the same thing by using a phrase such as "that is." Alternate translation: [the reward, that is, the inheritance] or [the reward, which is your inheritance]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **the reward of the inheritance**
UST will justly repay you … what he has kept for you
(τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τῆς κληρονομίας)

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas behind **reward** and **inheritance**, you could express those ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [what he has promised to hand down to you]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT You are serving the Lord Christ

UST {Remember that} the Lord Messiah is {the real master} for whom you are working
(τῷ Κυρίῳ Χριστῷ δουλεύετε)

Here Paul uses a simple statement as: (1) a reminder that states for whom they actually work. Alternate translation: [Keep in mind that you are serving the Lord Christ]; (2) a command about whom they should serve. Alternate translation: [Serve the Lord Christ] or [You should serve the Lord Christ]

Support Reference: Statements — Other Uses

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
knowing	{You must obey and serve in this way} because you know
the Lord	the Lord
you will receive	by giving you
of the inheritance	what he has kept for you
Lord	Lord
Christ	Messiah
You are serving	Remember that … is {the real master} for whom you are working

Colossians 3:25

ULT	UST
For the one doing unrighteousness will receive what he did unrighteously, and there is no favoritism.	*{You must remember who the real master is} because God will punish anyone who does wrong in proportion to those wrong actions. {This is because} God does not judge people based on how they look or who they are but on what they have done.*

ULT **For**
UST {You must remember who the real master is} because
(γὰρ)

The word **For** introduces support for what has already been said. Here Paul uses it to introduce a negative reason for obedience (he already gave a positive reason in 3:24). If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that the word introduces another reason for obedience. Alternate translation: [Do these things because]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **the one doing unrighteousness … he did unrighteously**
UST anyone who does wrong … those wrong actions
(ὁ & ἀδικῶν & ἠδίκησεν)

Here Paul speaks in general of anyone who does **unrighteousness**. However, he directs this general statement to the slaves he has been addressing (not the masters, since he does not address them until 4:1). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary form for generic statements or include the slaves as the ones being addressed. Alternate translation: [any of you who do unrighteousness … you did unrighteously]

Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **doing unrighteousness**
UST who does wrong
(ἀδικῶν)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **unrighteousness**, you could express the idea differently, such as with an adverb. Alternate translation: [acting unrighteously] or [doing unrighteous things]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **will receive what he did unrighteously**
> UST God will punish … in proportion to those wrong actions
> (κομιεῖται ὃ ἠδίκησεν)

In this context, the phrase **will receive** refers to getting something in payment or in return for something else. Paul, then, speaks as if **the one doing unrighteousness** will **receive** as payment or recompense exactly **what he did unrighteously**. By this, Paul means that God will punish those who do **unrighteousness** in a way that fits with what they did. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [will receive a punishment that fits the crime]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **there is no favoritism**
> UST God does not judge people based on how they look or who they are but on what they have done
> (οὐκ ἔστιν προσωπολημψία)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **favoritism**, you could express the idea with a verb such as “favor” or with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [God does not favor anyone] or [God judges everyone by the same standard]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
doing unrighteousness	who does wrong
will receive	God will punish … in proportion to
he did unrighteously	those wrong actions
favoritism	God does not judge people based on how they look or who they are but on what they have done

Colossians 4

Colossians 4 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

4:1 belongs to the section that begins in 3:18, even though it is in this chapter.

1. Exhortation Section
    - Prayer Request and Behavior towards Outsiders (4:2–6)
2. Letter Closing (4:7–18)
    - The Messengers (4:7–9)
    - Greetings from Friends (4:10–14)
    - Greetings and Instructions from Paul (4:15–17)
    - Greeting in Paul's Own Hand (4:18)

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Letter writing and sending

In this culture, someone who wanted to send a letter often spoke what they wanted to say, and a scribe would write it down for them. Then, they would send the letter with a messenger, who would read the letter to the person or people to whom it was addressed. In this chapter, Paul mentions the messengers with whom he is sending his letter: Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7–9). They also are able to communicate more about Paul's situation than he says in the letter. Additionally, Paul mentions that he writes the final greeting "by my own hand" (4:18). This is because the rest of the letter was written by a scribe, who wrote down what Paul dictated. Paul writes the last greeting as a personal touch and to prove that he was indeed the author.

Greetings

In this culture, it was common for those who sent letters to include greetings to and from others in their letter. In this way, many people could greet each other but only

send one letter. In 4:10–15 Paul includes greetings to and from many people whom he and the Colossians know.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Paul's chains

Paul refers to his imprisonment in this chapter by using the language of "chains" and "binding." He says that he has "been bound" in 4:3, and he mentions his "chains" in 4:18. The language of binding and chains emphasizes how Paul is restricted in his movements and activities by being imprisoned.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

A "master in heaven"

In 4:1, Paul refers to a "master in heaven." The word translated as "master" and "masters" in this verse is the same word that is translated as "Lord" throughout Colossians. It is translated as "master" in this verse to illustrate Paul's point: those who are "masters" on earth also have a "master," their Lord in heaven. If possible, make this wordplay clear in your translation.

Colossians 4:1

ULT	UST
Masters, give to your slaves {what is} right and fair, knowing that you also have a master in heaven.	*Masters must treat their slaves justly and fairly. {You who are masters must do this} because you know that you too serve a Master{, one who is} in heaven.*

ULT **Masters**
UST Masters
(οἱ κύριοι)

Here Paul directly addresses the **Masters** in the audience. Use a form in your language that indicates that the speaker is singling out a specific group of people as the intended audience of the following words. Alternate translation: [You masters]

ULT **give to your slaves {what is} right and fair**
UST must treat their slaves justly and fairly
(τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὴν ἰσότητα τοῖς δούλοις παρέχεσθε)

Here Paul speaks of how masters treat their slaves as if the master were "giving" the treatment of their slaves. By this, he means that the thing given (**{what is} right and fair**) is what characterizes the master's dealing with the slave. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea by using adverbs such as "rightly" and "fairly" with a verb such as "treat." Alternate translation: [act rightly and fairly towards your slaves]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **{what is} right and fair**
UST justly and fairly
(τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὴν ἰσότητα)

The word **right** describes someone or something that properly follows laws, principles, and expectations. The word translated **fair** describes someone or something that is impartial and does not pick sides. If you have words in your language that roughly represent these ideas, you could them here. If you do not have words that make these distinctions, you could express the idea with one word that indicates that something is fair, legal, and proper. Alternate translation: [what is just and impartial] or [what is right]

Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **knowing**
UST {You who are masters must do this} because you know
(εἰδότες)

Paul uses the word **knowing** to introduce a reason why the masters should treat their slaves as he commands them to. If **knowing** would not introduce a reason in your language, you could make this explicit with a word such as "because" or "since." Alternate translation: [since you know]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **a master in heaven**
UST a Master{, one who is} in heaven
(Κύριον ἐν οὐρανῷ)

The words **Masters** and **master** are usually translated as "lords" and "Lord" elsewhere. However, here they are translated **Masters** and **master** because the relationship between slaves and their masters, or "lords," is in view. Paul wishes the **Masters** to treat their slaves justly because they also serve a "Master," the Lord Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea by identifying that the **master** is the Lord Jesus. Alternate translation: [a master in heaven, the Lord Jesus]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Masters	Masters
right	justly
to your slaves	their slaves
knowing	{You who are masters must do this} because you know
a master	a Master{, one who … }
heaven	{ … is} in heaven

Colossians 4:2

ULT	UST
Continue steadfastly in prayer, staying alert in it in thanksgiving,	*Pray {to God} persistently. Pay attention when you pray, and give thanks {to God}.*

ULT Continue steadfastly in prayer
UST Pray {to God} persistently
(τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτερεῖτε)

Alternate translation: [Keep praying faithfully] or [Pray consistently]

ULT staying alert
UST Pay attention
(γρηγοροῦντες)

The word **staying alert** expresses what Paul wants the Colossians to do as they pray. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary expression that indicates that **staying alert** happens at the same time as they "continue steadfastly in prayer." Alternate translation: [and stay alert]

Support Reference: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

ULT in it
UST when you pray
(ἐν αὐτῇ)

Alternate translation: [during your time of prayer]

ULT in thanksgiving
UST and give thanks {to God}
(ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **thanksgiving**, you could express the idea by using a verbal phrase such as "and giving thanks" or an adverb such as "thankfully." Alternate translation: [thankfully]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
in prayer	Pray {to God}
staying alert	Pay attention

Colossians 4:3

ULT	UST
praying together for us also so that God may open a door to us for the word to speak the mystery of Christ, on account of which also I have been bound,	*When you are praying, pray for us too. {Pray} that God will make it possible for us to freely proclaim our message, which is the secret about the Messiah that we now share with others. Because {we proclaimed} this message, I am now in prison.*

ULT **together**
UST When you are praying
(ἅμα)

In this context, the word **together** does not refer to people being together but rather, it refers to actions happening **together** or at the same time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that indicates that the Colossians should pray for Paul at the same time they pray about other things (the things mentioned in 4:2). Alternate translation: [at the same time]

Support Reference: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

ULT **us … to us**
UST us … will make it possible for us to freely proclaim
(ἡμῶν & ἡμῖν)

In this verse, the word **us** refers to Paul and Timothy but not to the Colossians.

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’

ULT **so that**
UST that
(ἵνα)

The phrase **so that** could introduce: (1) the content of what they should pray. Alternate translation: [that] or [asking that]; (2) the purpose for which the Colossians should pray for Paul. Alternate translation: [in order that]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

> ULT **God may open a door to us for the word**
> UST God will make it possible for us to freely proclaim our message
> (ὁ Θεὸς ἀνοίξῃ ἡμῖν θύραν τοῦ λόγου)

Here Paul speaks of God providing opportunities for Paul and Timothy to preach the gospel as if God were "opening" a **door** to them **for the word**. The image is of God opening a door so that Paul and Timothy can go in and preach the message about Christ. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [God may give us opportunities to preach the word]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **for the word to speak**
> UST our message … that we now share with others
> (τοῦ λόγου, λαλῆσαι)

Here, **for the word** and **to speak** mean almost the same thing. If your language would not use both of phrases here, you could combine them into one. Alternate translation: [to speak]

Support Reference: Doublet

> ULT **for the word**
> UST our message
> (τοῦ λόγου)

Here, **word** represents a message that is made up of words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [for the message] or [for what we say]

Support Reference: Metonymy

> ULT **to speak**
> UST that we now share with others
> (λαλῆσαι)

The phrase **to speak** indicates the purpose for which the "door" is opened. If **to speak** would not indicate purpose in your language, you could use a word or phrase that does indicate purpose. Alternate translation: [in order that we might speak] or [so that we can speak]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

> ULT **the mystery**
> UST which is the secret
> (τὸ μυστήριον)

Paul speaks of his message as **the mystery** of Christ. This does not mean that the message is hard to understand, but rather that it had not previously been revealed. Now, however, Paul does "make it clear" (as 4:4 says). If it would be helpful in your language, you could replace **mystery** with a short descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: [the concealed message] or [the previously hidden message]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **the mystery of Christ**
> UST which is the secret about the Messiah
> (τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ)

Here Paul uses the possessive form to speak of a **mystery** whose content is a message about **Christ**. If your language does not use the possessive form to express that idea, you could express the idea with a preposition such as "about" or a relative clause such as "that concerns." Alternate translation: [the mystery that concerns Christ]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **on account of which**
> UST Because {we proclaimed} this message
> (δι' ὃ)

The pronoun **which** refers back to the "mystery of Christ." If it would be helpful in your language, you could state explicitly what **which** refers to by adding a word such as "mystery." Alternate translation: [on account of which mystery]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

> ULT **I have been bound**
> UST I am now in prison
> (δέδεμαι)

Here Paul uses the phase **I have been bound** to refer to how he is in prison. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or phrase that stands for being in prison or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [I am imprisoned] or [I am incarcerated]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **I have been bound**
UST I am now in prison
(δέδεμαι)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form with a vague or indefinite subject. Alternate translation: [they have bound me] or [the authorities have bound me]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
praying	pray … Pray
God	God
for the word	our message
mystery	which is … secret
of Christ	about the Messiah
I have been bound	I am now in prison

Colossians 4:4

ULT	UST
in order that I may make it clear, as I ought to speak.	*{Pray} that I am able to explain the good news clearly, since this is what God has called me to do.*

ULT **in order that**
UST {Pray} that
(ἵνα)

The phrase **in order that** could introduce: (1) another thing for which the Colossians should pray (in addition to what is said in 4:3). Alternate translation: [and that] or [and asking that]; (2) another purpose for which the Colossians should pray for Paul (in addition to what is said in 4:3). Alternate translation: [and so that]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

ULT **I may make it clear**
UST I am able to explain the good news clearly
(φανερώσω αὐτὸ)

Alternate translation: [I may reveal it] or [I may express it clearly]

ULT **as**
UST since
(ὡς)

Here, the word **as** functions to introduce a reason why Paul must preach his message clearly. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning of **as** with a word or phrase that introduces a reason for an action. Alternate translation: [because this is how]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **I ought to speak**
UST this is what God has called me to do
(δεῖ με λαλῆσαι)

If your language would state who requires Paul **to speak** in these ways, you could include "God" as the one that role. Alternate translation: [God has commanded me to speak]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Colossians 4:5

ULT	UST
Walk in wisdom toward the ones outside, redeeming the time,	*Behave wisely around those who do not believe in the Messiah. Take advantage of every opportunity {you have to do this}.*

ULT **Walk … toward**
UST Behave … around
(περιπατεῖτε πρὸς)

Here Paul uses the word **Walk** to refer to consistent, habitual behavior (like putting one foot in front of the other). In this image, walking **toward** someone refers to consistent behavior in relationship with that person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable metaphor or plainly. Alternate translation: [Act … with]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in wisdom**
UST wisely
(ἐν σοφίᾳ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **wisdom**, you could express the idea with an adverb such as “wisely” or an adjective such as “wise.” Alternate translation: [in wise ways]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the ones outside**
UST those who do not believe in the Messiah
(τοὺς ἔξω)

The phrase **the ones outside** is a way to identify people who do not belong to one’s group. Here, **those outside** would be anyone who does not believe in Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable word or phrase for people who are not in one’s group. Alternate translation: [outsiders]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **redeeming**
UST Take advantage of
(ἐξαγοραζόμενοι)

The word **redeeming** introduces an example of how to "walk in wisdom toward those outside." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary way to indicate that the **redeeming** happens at the same time as "walking in wisdom" and gives an example of how it might look. Alternate translation: [which includes redeeming]

Support Reference: Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

ULT **redeeming the time**
UST Take advantage of every opportunity {you have to do this}
(τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι)

Here Paul speaks of **time** as something that one could be **redeeming**. The picture is of a person buying **time** from someone. Paul uses this picture to refer to making the most of (**redeeming**) one's opportunities (**the time**). If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a comparable metaphor or express it plainly. Alternate translation: [making the most of every chance you have]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wisdom	wisely
time	every opportunity {you have to do this}
redeeming	Take advantage of

Colossians 4:6

ULT	UST
your words always with grace, seasoned with salt, to know how it is necessary for you to answer each one.	*{When you talk with them,} you must always speak in a pleasant and interesting way. {When you do this,} you will know the best way to respond to each person.*

Note:

This verse provides one way in which Paul wants the Colossians to "walk in wisdom toward those outside" (4:5). They are to speak with words that are compelling and carefully chosen to fit the situation.

ULT **your words always with grace**
UST {When you talk with them,} you must always speak in a pleasant
(ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν χάριτι)

Paul has not included a verb for "speaking" in this phrase, because it was not necessary in his language. If your language would require a verb of speaking here, you could include it. Alternate translation: [speaking your words always with grace] or [your words always spoken with grace]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **with grace**
UST in a pleasant
(ἐν χάριτι)

If your language does not use an abstract noun to express the idea behind **grace**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [gracious]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **seasoned with salt**
UST and interesting way
(ἅλατι ἠρτυμένος)

In Paul's culture, when food was **seasoned with salt**, it would taste good and be nourishing. Paul thus speaks of seasoning one's "words" **with salt** to say that the words should be interesting (like food that tastes good) and helpful (like food that is nourishing). If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea with a comparable idiom or plainly. Alternate translation: [both compelling and helpful]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **to know**
UST When you do this … will know
(εἰδέναι)

Here Paul uses the phrase **to know** to introduce the result of speaking words **with grace** and **seasoned with salt**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different word or phrase that introduces a result. Alternate translation: [with the result that you will know] or [so that you might know]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **how it is necessary for you to answer**
UST you … the best way to respond
(πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς & ἀποκρίνεσθαι)

Alternate translation: [how to best answer] or [the right answer to give to]

ULT **each one**
UST to each person
(ἑνὶ ἑκάστῳ)

The phrase **each one** refers to individuals who would be considered part of "those outside" (4:5). If it would be helpful in your language, you could explicitly refer back to how you translated "those outside." Alternate translation: [each outsider] or [each one who does not believe in the Messiah]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
grace	in a pleasant
to know	When you do this … will know

Colossians 4:7

ULT	UST
All the things concerning me, Tychicus will make known to you, the beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow slave in the Lord,	*Tychicus will tell you everything that has been happening to me. {He is} a fellow believer whom I love, who helps me faithfully, and who serves together with me as a man whom God has united to the Lord.*

ULT **All the things concerning me, Tychicus will make known to you, the beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow slave in the Lord**
UST Tychicus will tell you everything that has been happening to me. {He is} a fellow believer whom I love, who helps me faithfully, and who serves together with me as a man whom God has united to the Lord
(τὰ κατ᾽ ἐμὲ πάντα γνωρίσει ὑμῖν Τυχικὸς, ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς, καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος, καὶ σύνδουλος ἐν Κυρίῳ)

Connecting Statement:

If it would be helpful in your language, you could rearrange this sentence so that: (1) what **Tychicus will make known** to them comes after **to you**, and (2) the words that describe **Tychicus** come after his name. You may need to make one or both of these changes to make the verse clear in your language. Alternate translation: [Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow slave in the Lord, will make known to you all the things concerning me]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **All the things concerning me**
UST everything that has been happening to me
(τὰ κατ᾽ ἐμὲ πάντα)

When Paul speaks of **All the things concerning me**, he refers to details about his life such as where he is living, his health, how his work is progressing, and other similar details. If your language has a customary way to refer to this kind of information, you could use it here, or you could express the idea with a descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: [All the news about me] or [All the details about how I am doing]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **Tychicus**
UST Tychicus
(Τυχικὸς)

Tychicus is the name of a man.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **faithful servant**
UST who helps me faithfully
(πιστὸς διάκονος)

If your language would state whom Tychicus serves, you could make this explicit. He could be a **servant** to: (1) Paul. Alternate translation: [my faithful servant]; (2) the Lord, and thus the Lord's church as well. Alternate translation: [faithful servant of the Lord and his church]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **fellow slave**
UST who serves together with me
(σύνδουλος)

If it would be helpful in your language, you could make it explicit that Tychicus is a **slave** of Christ, along with Paul. Alternate translation: [fellow slave of Christ]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **in the Lord**
UST as a man whom God has united to the Lord
(ἐν Κυρίῳ)

Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in the Lord** to describe the union of believers with Christ. In this case, being **in the Lord**, or united to the Lord, identifies Paul and Tychicus as "slaves" of the Lord because of their union with him. Alternate translation: [in union with the Lord]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
will make known	will tell
Tychicus	Tychicus
beloved	whom I love
faithful	faithfully
servant	who helps me
the Lord	as a man whom God has united to the Lord
in the Lord	as a man whom God has united to the Lord

Colossians 4:8

ULT	UST
whom I sent to you for this very {reason}, so that you might know the things concerning usand that he might encourage your hearts.	*I am sending Tychicus to you {with this letter} because I want you to know how we are doing and because Tychicus will help you live confidently.*

ULT **I sent**
UST I am sending … with this letter
(ἔπεμψα)

Here Paul uses the past tense form **sent** to describe something he has not yet done when he is dictating this letter. He uses the past tense because, when the letter is read to the Colossians, his sending of Tychicus will be in the past. If your language would not use the past tense here, you could use whatever tense would customarily be used in this situation in your language. Alternate translation: [whom I send] or [whom I have sent]

Support Reference: Predictive Past

ULT **you for this very {reason}, so that**
UST you … because
(ὑμᾶς εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ἵνα)

It may seem that the phrase **for this very {reason}** contains redundant information in your language, since Paul also includes **so that**. If both of these phrases would be redundant in your language, you could use a single purpose phrase, such as **so that**. Alternate translation: [you so that] or [you in order that]

Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **so that you might know the things concerning us**
UST because I want you to know how we are doing
(ἵνα γνῶτε τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν)

While many manuscripts have **so that you might know the things concerning us**, some say “so that he might know the things concerning you.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the phrase it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to follow the example of the ULT.

Support Reference: Textual Variants

ULT **so that … and that**
UST because … and
(ἵνα & καὶ)

The words **so that** and **and that** introduce two of Paul's purposes in sending Tychicus to the Colossians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a customary way to introduce a goal or purpose. Alternate translation: [in order that … and in order that]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

ULT **the things concerning us**
UST how we are doing
(τὰ περὶ ἡμῶν)

Just like the phrase "all the things concerning me" in 4:7, the phrase **the things concerning us** refers to details about life such as where people are living, their health, how their work is progressing, and other similar details. If your language has a customary way to refer to this kind of information, you could use it here, or you could express the idea with a descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: [the news about us] or [the details about how we are doing]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **us**
UST how we are doing
(ἡμῶν)

The word **us** does not include the Colossians. Instead, Paul is referring to himself and those who are with him, including Timothy.

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

ULT **your hearts**
UST you
(τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν)

Here when Paul refers to **your hearts**, the Colossians would have understood him to mean the entire person. Paul uses **hearts** because his culture identified **hearts** as the body part where people experienced encouragement. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that identifies the location where people experience encouragement in your culture, or you could express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [your souls]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
you might know	I want you to know

ULT	UST
he might encourage	because Tychicus will help … live confidently

Colossians 4:9

ULT	UST
Together with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother who is from among you, they will make known to you all the things here.	*{I am sending him to you} with Onesimus, who is a faithful fellow believer whom I love. He is from your group. Tychicus and Onesimus will tell you about everything {that has been happening} here.*

ULT **Together with Onesimus**
UST {I am sending him to you} with Onesimus
(σὺν Ὀνησίμῳ)

Paul uses this phrase to tell the Colossians that he is sending **Onesimus** along with Tychicus to the city of Colossae. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this explicit by adding a verb such as "sending." Alternate translation: [With him I send Onesimus] (start a new sentence with "they will make")

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **Onesimus**
UST Onesimus
(Ὀνησίμῳ)

Onesimus is the name of a man.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **is from among you**
UST is from your group
(ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν)

The phrase **from among you** means that Onesimus used to live with the Colossians and was part of the group to whom Paul is writing the letter. To express this idea, you could use a word or phrase that indicates that a person belongs to a specific group of people. Alternate translation: [is from your town] or [used to live with you]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **they will make known**
UST Tychicus and Onesimus will tell … about
(γνωρίσουσιν)

The pronoun **they** refers back to Onesimus and Tychicus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this explicit by using their names or referring to "two" of them. Alternate translation: [the two of them will make known]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **all the things here**
UST everything {that has been happening} here
(πάντα & τὰ ὧδε)

Just like the phrases “all the things concerning me” in 4:7 and “the things concerning us” in 4:8, the phrase **all the things here** refers to details about life such as where people are living, their health, how their work is progressing, and other similar details. If your language has a customary way to refer to this kind of information, you could use it here, or you could express the idea with a descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: [all the news about us] or [all the details about what is happening here]

Support Reference: Idiom

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
faithful	faithful
beloved	whom I love
they will make known	Tychicus and Onesimus will tell … about

Colossians 4:10

ULT	UST
Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you, and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received orders; if he may come to you, receive him),	*Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, and Mark, who is Barnabas' cousin, send their regards to you. You already know that you should welcome Mark if he visits you.*

ULT **Aristarchus … Mark … of Barnabas**
UST Aristarchus … Mark … Barnabas
(Ἀρίσταρχος & Μᾶρκος & Βαρναβᾶ)

Aristarchus, **Mark**, and **Barnabas** are all names of men.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **greets**
UST send their regards
(ἀσπάζεται)

As was customary in this culture, Paul concludes the letter by extending greetings from people who are with him and who know the people to whom he is writing. Your language may have a particular way of sharing greetings in a letter. If so, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: [asks to be remembered to] or [says hello to]

ULT **my fellow prisoner**
UST who is in prison with me
(ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου)

Paul assumes that his readers will understand that the phrase **my fellow prisoner** identifies Aristarchus as someone who is in prison along with Paul. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [who has been imprisoned with me]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas**
UST and Mark, who is Barnabas' cousin
(καὶ Μᾶρκος, ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ)

Paul has not included the verb "greet" in this clause because it was unnecessary in his language. If it is necessary in your language, you could include it here. Alternate translation: [and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, also greets you]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

> ULT **the cousin of Barnabas**
> UST who is Barnabas' cousin
> (ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ)

The word **cousin** refers to the son of the brother or sister of one's mother or father. If possible, use a word in your language that makes this relationship clear, or you could describe the relationship. Alternate translation: [the son of Barnabas' aunt or uncle]

Support Reference: Kinship

> ULT **whom … he may come … him**
> UST You already know … Mark … he visits
> (οὗ & ἔλθῃ & αὐτόν)

The words **whom**, **he**, and **him** refer back to Mark, not Barnabas. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make it explicit. Alternate translation: [Mark … he may come … him]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

> ULT **about whom you received orders**
> UST You already know
> (περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολάς)

Paul does not clarify who sent these **orders** to the Colossians, and it was probably not him. If it is possible in your language, leave the person who sent these **orders** unexpressed. If you must clarify who sent the **orders**, you could use an indefinite expression. Alternate translation: [about whom someone sent you orders]

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

> ULT **if he may come to you**
> UST if he visits you
> (ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς)

Here Paul indicates a hypothetical situation. It may be that Mark does visit the Colossians, but Paul is not sure if he will or not. Use a form that indicates a true possibility in your language. Alternate translation: [he may or may not come to you, but if he does,]

Support Reference: Hypothetical Situations

ULT **receive him**
UST that you should welcome Mark
(δέξασθε αὐτόν)

To **receive** someone means welcoming that person into one's group and extending hospitality to him or her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression that indicates this kind of hospitality or express the idea with a descriptive phrase. Alternate translation: [show him hospitality and accept him into your group]

Support Reference: Idiom

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Mark	Mark
of Barnabas	Barnabas
you received	You already know
orders	You already know
receive	that you should welcome

Colossians 4:11

ULT	UST
and Jesus, the one called Justus. These {are} the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God being from the circumcision, who were a comfort to me.	*Jesus, whom you may know by the name Justus, also {sends his regards}. These men{—Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus—}are the only Jewish believers who are working with me for the sake of God's kingdom. They have encouraged me {in this work}.*

ULT **Jesus … Justus**
UST Jesus … the name Justus
(Ἰησοῦς & Ἰοῦστος)

Jesus and **Justus** are two names for the same man.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **the one called Justus**
UST whom you may know by the name Justus
(ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰοῦστος)

Here Paul gives further information about "Jesus." This information identifies which "Jesus" this is (the one also known as **Justus**), distinguishing him from other men who might be named "Jesus." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a form in your language that expresses this idea. Alternate translation: [, the one called Justus]

Support Reference: Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

ULT **the one called**
UST whom you may know by
(ὁ λεγόμενος)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form, with an indefinite or vague subject. Alternate translation: [whom some people call]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **and Jesus, the one called Justus**
UST Jesus, whom you may know by the name Justus, also {sends his regards}
(καὶ Ἰησοῦς, ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰοῦστος)

Paul has not included the verb "greet" in this clause because it was unnecessary in his language. If it is necessary in your language, you could include it here. Alternate translation: [and Jesus who is called Justus also greets you]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **These {are}**
UST These men{—Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus … }
(οὗτοι)

The word **These** refers back to the three men mentioned in this verse and the previous verse: Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could restate their names or indicate the reference in another way. Alternate translation: [These three are]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **These {are} the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God being from the circumcision, who were a comfort to me**
UST These men{—Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus—}are the only Jewish believers who are working with me for the sake of God's kingdom. They have encouraged me {in this work}
(οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς οὗτοι, μόνοι συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν Βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, οἵτινες ἐγενήθησάν μοι παρηγορία)

Paul here describes the three men in two ways. First, he identifies them as the **only** ones among his **fellow workers** who are Jewish (**from the circumcision**). In other words, Paul distinguishes them from all the other people who work with him, because these three men are the only ones who are circumcised Jews. Second, he describes them as ones **who have been a comfort** to him. Here, he is not distinguishing them from other fellow workers; instead, he just wishes to say that they have **been a comfort** to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate the two descriptions differently so that it is clear that the first distinguishes the three men while the second describes the three men. Alternate translation: [Out of all my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, these are the only ones being from the circumcision, and they have been a comfort to me]

Support Reference: Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

ULT **being from the circumcision**
UST are … Jewish believers
(ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς)

Paul uses the label **from the circumcision** to identify the men as Jews who had received circumcision. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea plainly by using a term such as "Jewish." Alternate translation: [who are Jewish]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **who were a comfort to me**
UST They have encouraged me {in this work}
(οἵτινες ἐγενήθησάν μοι παρηγορία)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **comfort**, you could express the idea with a verb such as “comfort.” Alternate translation: [who have comforted me]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
called	whom you may know by
the circumcision	Jewish believers
fellow workers	who are working with me
kingdom of God	God’s kingdom

Colossians 4:12

ULT	UST
Epaphras greets you. He {is} from among you, a servant of Christ Jesus, always striving on behalf of you in prayers so that you may stand complete and fully assured in all the will of God.	*Epaphras, who is from your group {and} who serves the Messiah Jesus, sends his regards to you. He prays earnestly for you very often. {He prays} that God will make you able to be what God has called you to be and to be sure of everything that God wants {you to do}.*

ULT **Epaphras**
UST Epaphras
(Ἐπαφρᾶς)

Epaphras is the name of a man. He was the one who first preached the good news to the people in Colossae (See: Colossians 1:7).

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **greets**
UST sends his regards
(ἀσπάζεται)

As was customary in this culture, Paul concludes the letter by extending greetings from people who are with him and who know the people to whom he is writing. Your language may have a particular way of sharing greetings in a letter. If so, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: [asks to be remembered to] or [says hello to]

ULT **He {is} from among you**
UST who is from your group
(ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν)

The phrase **from among you** means that Epaphras used to live with the Colossians and was part of the group to whom Paul is writing the letter. To express this idea, you could use a word or phrase that indicates in your language that a person belongs to a specific group of people. Alternate translation: [He is from your town] or [He used to live with you]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **always**
UST very often
(πάντοτε)

Here, **always** is an exaggeration that the Colossians would have understood to mean that Epaphras prays for them very often. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that indicates frequency. Alternate translation: [consistently] or [frequently]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **striving on behalf of you in prayers**
UST He prays earnestly for you
(ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς)

The word **striving** is usually used for attempting to win a contest, whether that is athletic, military, or legal. While Epaphras is not actually participating in an athletic or military contest, Paul uses the metaphor to explain how earnestly Epaphras prays for the Colossians. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [praying zealously for you] or [spending much effort on his prayers for you]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **so that**
UST {He prays} that
(ἵνα)

The phrase **so that** could introduce: (1) the content of Epaphras' prayers. Alternate translation: [asking that]; (2) the purpose or goal of Epaphras' prayers. Alternate translation: [in order that]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

ULT **you may stand complete and fully assured in all the will of God**
UST God will make you able to be what God has called you to be and to be sure of everything that God wants {you to do}
(σταθῆτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληροφορημένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ Θεοῦ)

Here Paul speaks as if the Colossians can **stand complete and fully assured in all the will of God**. By this, he means that they should consistently do God's will, just as if God's will served as a foundation underneath them. The words **complete and fully assured** explain the way in which they are supposed to **stand** or continue to obey. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable metaphor or express the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [you may be complete and fully assured as you consistently do all the will of God]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **complete**
UST to be what God has called you to be
(τέλειοι)

The word **complete** in this context means that a person is what he or she is supposed to be and is able to do what he or she is called to do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word that has this meaning, such as "perfect" or "excellent," or translate **complete** with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [fit for what God has called you to be]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **fully assured**
UST to be sure of
(πεπληροφορημένοι)

The phrase **fully assured** describes people who are confident or sure of what they believe and do. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a short phrase. Alternate translation: [convinced about what you know] or [without doubts]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **in all the will of God**
UST everything that God wants {you to do}
(ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ Θεοῦ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **will**, you could express the idea by using a verb such as "wants" or "desires." Alternate translation: [in whatever God desires]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a servant	{and} who serves
of Christ	the Messiah
of Christ Jesus	the Messiah Jesus
prayers	He prays
complete	to be what God has called you to be
of God	God
the will of God	everything that God wants {you to do}

Colossians 4:13

ULT	UST
For I testify for him that he has much hard labor on behalf of you and of the ones in Laodicea and of the ones in Hierapolis.	*{You know that he prays this way for you} because I can personally affirm this about him. {I tell you} that he works very hard for you, for the people {who live} in the city of Laodicea, and for the people {who live} in the city of Hierapolis.*

ULT **For**
UST {You know that he prays this way for you} because
(γὰρ)

The word **For** introduces further support for Paul's statements about Epaphras in the previous verse. In 4:12, Paul says that Epaphras is "always striving" for them, and he supports that claim here by giving his own testimony about how hard Epaphras has worked for the Colossians and for other believers who live near them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a word or phrase that introduces support for a previous statement, or you could refer back to what Paul is supporting. Alternate translation: [you could be sure that he does this, because]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **he has much hard labor**
UST he works very hard
(ἔχει πολὺν πόνον)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **labor**, you could express the idea by using a verb such as "labor." Alternate translation: [he labors diligently]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **of the ones in Laodicea and of the ones in Hierapolis**
UST for the people {who live} in the city of Laodicea, and for the people {who live} in the city of Hierapolis
(τῶν ἐν Λαοδικίᾳ, καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεραπόλει)

Here Paul leaves out to whom the pronoun **the ones** refers, since in his language it was clear that **the ones** refers to people who live in the cities he mentions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify that **the ones** refers to believers who live in these two towns. Alternate translation: [of believers who live in Laodicea, and of believers who live in Hierapolis] or [of believers who live in Laodicea and Hierapolis]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **Laodicea … Hierapolis**
UST {who live} in the city of Laodicea … Hierapolis
(Λαοδικίᾳ & Ἱεραπόλει)

Laodicea and **Hierapolis** were towns near Colossae. In fact, they were all in the same valley. If it would be helpful to your readers to clarify that these are nearby towns, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [nearby Laodicea … nearby Hierapolis] or [Laodicea … Hierapolis, churches near you]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
I testify	I can personally affirm this about

Colossians 4:14

ULT	UST
Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, and also Demas.	*Luke the doctor, whom I love, and Demas send their regards to you.*

ULT **greets**
UST send their regards to
(ἀσπάζεται)

As was customary in this culture, Paul concludes the letter by extending greetings from people who are with him and who know the people to whom he is writing. Your language may have a particular way of sharing greetings in a letter. If so, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: [asks to be remembered to] or [says hello to]

ULT **Luke … Demas**
UST Luke … Demas
(Λουκᾶς & Δημᾶς)

Demas is the name of a man.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **Luke, the beloved physician, greets you, and also Demas**
UST Luke the doctor, whom I love, and Demas send their regards to you
(ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Λουκᾶς, ὁ ἰατρὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς, καὶ Δημᾶς)

Paul has not included the verb "greet" with **and also Demas**, because it was unnecessary in his language. If including "greet" is necessary in your language, you could: (1) move **and also Demas** before **greets you**. Alternate translation: [Luke the beloved physician and also Demas greet you]; (2) include it with the phrase **and also Demas**. Alternate translation: [Luke the beloved physician greets you, and also Demas greets you]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Luke, the … physician	Luke the doctor
beloved	whom I love

Colossians 4:15

ULT	UST
Greet the brothers in Laodicea, and Nympha, and the church in her house.	*Give our regards to the fellow believers who live in Laodicea, to Nympha, and to the group of believers {that meets} in Nympha's home.*

ULT Greet
UST Give our regards to … to … to
(ἀσπάσασθε)

As was customary in this culture, Paul not only extends greetings from people who are with him and who know the people to whom he is writing (as he has done in 4:10–14). He also asks the Colossians to extend greetings for him to other people that both he and the Colossians know. Your language may have a particular way of sharing greetings in a letter. If so, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: [Remember me to] or [Say hello for me to]

ULT the brothers
UST the fellow believers
(τοὺς & ἀδελφοὺς)

The word **brothers** does not refer to only male people. Instead, it refers to both men and women who are part of the group of believers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a word that does not refer to natural gender or you could use both male and female genders. Alternate translation: [the brothers and sisters]

Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT Nympha
UST Nympha
(Νύμφαν)

Nympha is the name of a woman.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT in her house
UST {that meets} in Nympha's home
(κατ' οἶκον αὐτῆς)

The phrase **in her house** is a way to indicate that the church used Nympha's house as their meeting place. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or state this explicitly. Alternate translation: [that gathers in her house]

Support Reference: Idiom

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
house	{that meets} in … home
church	group of believers

Colossians 4:16

ULT	UST
And when this letter has been read among you, make sure that it would be read also in the church of Laodicea and that you also would read the one from Laodicea.	*After the person who reads this letter to you finishes it, send {it to Laodicea} so that someone can read it to the group of believers there, too. Also, {ask for} the letter I sent to the believers in Laodicea so that you too can read it.*

ULT **has been read … it would be read … would read**
UST the person who reads … finishes it … someone can read it … can read it
(ἀναγνωσθῇ & ἀναγνωσθῇ & ἀναγνῶτε)

In this culture, letters sent to a group were normally read out loud by one person to everyone else in the group. The words that are translated by **read** in this verse refer to this practice. If you have a way to refer to this practice, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [has been heard … it is heard … hear]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **this letter has been read among you … it would be read**
UST the person who reads this letter to you finishes it … someone can read it
(ἀναγνωσθῇ παρ᾽ ὑμῖν ἡ ἐπιστολή & ἀναγνωσθῇ)

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active forms by supplying an indefinite subject such as “person” or by expressing the idea with a different verb such as “hear.” Alternate translation: [you have heard this letter … they hear it]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **make sure that it would be read also in the church of Laodicea and that you also would read the one from Laodicea**
UST send {it to Laodicea} so that someone can read it to the group of believers there, too. Also, {ask for} the letter I sent to the believers in Laodicea so that you too can read it
(ποιήσατε ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ Λαοδικαίων ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθῇ, καὶ τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικίας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνῶτε)

With these commands, Paul is asking the churches to exchange letters. He wants the Colossians to hear the letter he sent to Laodicea, and he wants the Laodiceans to hear the letter he sent to the Colossians. If you have a specific form to refer to sending and receiving letters, you could use it hear. Alternate translation: [send it off to Laodicea to be read in the church there, and request the letter I sent to them so that you could read it too]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **the one from Laodicea**
> UST the letter I sent to the believers in Laodicea
> (τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικίας)

The phrase **the one from Laodicea** refers to a letter that Paul has already sent or is about to send to the church in Laodicea. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an expression that clarifies that this is a letter from Paul, not one written to Paul. Alternate translation: [the letter I addressed to Laodicea]

Support Reference: Idiom

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
church	to the group of believers there

Colossians 4:17

ULT	UST
And say to Archippus, "Look to the ministry that you have received in the Lord so that you may fulfill it."	*{You must} tell Archippus to make sure that he completes the task that God gave him to do when God united him to the Messiah.*

ULT **And say**
UST {You must} tell
(καὶ εἴπατε)

In addition to asking the Colossians to greet others for him (4:15), Paul also asks them to **say** something to Archippus. If you have a specific form in your language for instructions on relaying a message, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [And relay this message]

ULT **to Archippus**
UST Archippus
(Ἀρχίππῳ)

Archippus is the name of a man.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **Look to the ministry that you have received in the Lord so that you may fulfill it**
UST to make sure that he completes the task that God gave him to do when God united him to the Messiah
(βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν ἣν παρέλαβες ἐν Κυρίῳ, ἵνα αὐτὴν πληροῖς)

The instruction from Paul to Archippus is written as a direct quote. If your language does not use this form, you could write it as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: [that he must look to the ministry that he has received in the Lord, so that he may fulfill it]

Support Reference: Direct and Indirect Quotations

ULT **say to Archippus, "Look to the ministry that you have received in the Lord so that you may fulfill it**
UST {You must} tell Archippus to make sure that he completes the task that God gave him to do when God united him to the Messiah
(εἴπατε Ἀρχίππῳ, βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν ἣν παρέλαβες ἐν Κυρίῳ, ἵνα αὐτὴν πληροῖς)

The words **Look**, **you have received**, and **you may fulfill** all refer to Archippus alone and are singular. However, the word **say** refers to the Colossians and is plural.

Support Reference: Forms of 'You' — Singular

ULT **Look to the ministry**
UST to make sure … the task
(βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν)

Here Paul speaks as if Archippus' **ministry** were something he can **look to**. By this, he means that he wants Archippus to focus on carrying out his ministry just as if it were something he could stare at. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this idea with a comparable metaphor or plainly. Alternate translation: [Focus on the ministry]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the ministry … you have received**
UST the task … God gave him to do
(τὴν διακονίαν & παρέλαβες)

Paul does not clarify or even hint at what **the ministry** is or from whom Archippus **received** it. If it is possible, leave this information unclear in your translation. If you must include some extra information, you could clarify that "God" gave him the **ministry** of serving the church. Alternate translation: [the task of serving the church … God gave you]

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **in the Lord**
UST when God united him to the Messiah
(ἐν Κυρίῳ)

Paul uses the spatial metaphor **in the Lord** to describe the union of Archippus with Christ. In this case, being **in the Lord** or united to the Lord identifies the situation in which he **received** his **ministry**. He received this **ministry** when he was united to **the Lord**. Alternate translation: [in union with the Lord]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **so that**
UST that
(ἵνα)

The phrase **so that** introduces a goal or purpose. Here, it is the purpose for which Archippus should **look to** or stay focused on his ministry. Use a word or phrase that introduces the goal or purpose of a previous statement. Alternate translation: [in order that]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
ministry	task
you have received	God gave him to do

ULT	UST
the Lord	when God united him to the Messiah
in the Lord	when God united him to the Messiah
you may fulfill	he completes

Colossians 4:18

ULT	UST
This greeting {is} by my {own} hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace {be} with you.	*I, Paul, send my regards {to you}. I am writing {these last words} myself {instead of having my scribe write them}. You must not forget that I am in prison. {I pray that God will} be gracious to you.*

ULT **This greeting {is} by my {own} hand**
UST I … send my regards {to you}. I am writing {these last words} myself {instead of having my scribe write them}
(ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ)

Paul concludes his letter by writing a final greeting to the Colossians. Your language may have a particular way of sharing greetings in a letter. If so, you could use that form here. Alternate translation: [I ask to be remembered by my own hand] or [I say hello by my own hand]

ULT **{is} by my {own} hand**
UST I am writing {these last words} myself {instead of having my scribe write them}
(τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ)

In this culture, it was normal for a scribe to write down what the author of the letter was saying. Paul here indicates that he himself is writing these last words. The phrase **by my {own} hand** means that it was his own hand that took up the pen and wrote. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind **by my {own} hand** by using a comparable expression or include any extra information needed to make it clear. Alternate translation: [is in my handwriting] or [I write myself]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **Paul**
UST Paul
(Παύλου)

Here Paul speaks of himself in the third person. He does this to sign his name to the letter, which shows that the letter is from Paul himself and carries his authority. If your language has a specific form for signing letters or documents, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [I am Paul]

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **my chains**
UST that I am in prison
(μου τῶν δεσμῶν)

Paul speaks of his **chains**, by which he means his imprisonment. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a comparable expression or state the idea plainly. Alternate translation: [that I am in jail] or [remember my imprisonment]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **Grace {be} with you**
UST {I pray that God will} be gracious to you
(ἡ χάρις μεθ’ ὑμῶν)

As was customary in his culture, Paul closes his letter with a blessing for the Colossians. Use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. Alternate translation: [May you experience kindness within you] or [I pray that you will have grace]

Support Reference: Blessings

ULT **Grace {be} with**
UST {I pray that God will} be gracious to you
(ἡ χάρις μεθ’)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea behind **Grace**, you could express the idea in another way. Alternate translation: [May God be gracious to]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Paul	Paul
chains	that … am in prison
Grace	{I pray that God will} be gracious



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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.

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**.

Colossians References:

1:2; 1:4; 1:4; 1:6; 1:8; 1:9; 1:9; 1:10; 1:10; 1:11; 1:13; 1:14; 1:15; 1:20; 1:21; 1:23; 1:23; 1:25; 1:27; 1:27; 1:29; 1:29; 2:1; 2:2; 2:3; 2:5; 2:7; 2:7; 2:8; 2:8; 2:9; 2:10; 2:11; 2:12; 2:13; 2:18; 2:18; 2:20; 2:22; 2:22; 2:23; 2:23; 2:23; 3:3; 3:4; 3:4; 3:5; 3:8; 3:9; 3:10; 3:10; 3:12; 3:13; 3:14; 3:14; 3:16; 3:16; 3:17; 3:22; 3:24; 3:25; 3:25; 4:2; 4:5; 4:6; 4:11; 4:12; 4:13; 4:18

Active or Passive

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

- Active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- Passive: **The house** was built in 2010.

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

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.

Colossians References:

1:5; 1:9; 1:11; 1:16; 1:16; 1:21; 1:23; 1:25; 1:26; 1:26; 2:2; 2:3; 2:7; 2:7; 2:10; 2:11; 2:12; 2:12; 2:18; 2:19; 2:20; 3:1; 3:3; 3:4; 3:10; 3:15; 3:18; 3:21; 4:3; 4:11; 4:16

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.

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.

Colossians References:

1:1; 1:19; 1:20; 1:21; 1:22; 1:24; 1:25; 1:26; 1:26; 1:28; 1:28; 1:28; 2:1; 2:1; 2:4; 2:4; 2:5; 2:7; 2:16; 2:18; 2:21; 3:1; 3:2; 3:6; 3:7; 3:10; 3:17; 3:18; 3:19; 3:20; 3:20; 3:22; 4:1; 4:4; 4:7; 4:7; 4:9; 4:10; 4:13; 4:16; 4:16; 4:18

Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

An **extended metaphor** is an explicit metaphor that uses multiple images and multiple ideas at the same time. This is in contrast to a **simple metaphor**, which uses only a single Image and a single Idea. The difference between an extended metaphor and a **complex metaphor** is that an extended metaphor is explicitly stated by a writer/speaker, but a complex metaphor is not.

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, briers 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 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 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 asa farmer stops**
> **caringforagrapevinegarden 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.

Colossians References:

2:11; 2:19

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.

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:

1. Add a verb if that is natural in your language.
2. Mention God as the subject of a blessing if that is natural in your language.
3. 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.”

Colossians References:

1:2; 4:18

Connect — Background Information

Time Relationship

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Background Clause

Description

A background clause is one that describes something that is ongoing. Then, in the same sentence, another clause indicates an event that begins to happen during that time. These events are also simultaneous events, but they have the further relationship of background event and main event because the event that is already happening serves as the background for the other event, the one that is in focus. The background event simply provides the time frame or other context for the main event or events.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate a shift in time in different ways. You (the translator) need to understand how these shifts in time are indicated in the original languages in order to communicate them clearly in your own language. Background clauses often indicate a time that began long before the event that is in focus. Translators need to understand how both the source language and the target language communicate background events. Some English words that indicate background events are “now,” “when,” “while,” and “during.” Those words can also indicate simultaneous events. To tell the difference, ask yourself if all of the events seem to be equal in importance and started at about the same time. If so, they are probably simultaneous events. But if an event(s) is ongoing and another event(s) just started, then the ongoing event(s) is probably background to the other event(s). Some common phrases that indicate background events are “in those days” and “at that time.”

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> **When** Solomon was old, he also worshiped their gods. (OBS Story 18 Frame 3)

Solomon began to worship foreign gods at a time when he was old. Being old is the background event. Worshiping other gods is the main event.

> And his parents went **every year** to Jerusalem to the Feast of the Passover. And when he was 12 years old, they went up according to the custom of the feast. (Luke 2:41-42 ULT)

The first event—going to Jerusalem—is ongoing and started long ago. We know this because of the words "every year." Going to Jerusalem is the background event. Then an event begins that started during the time "when he was twelve years old." So the main event is the specific time Jesus and his family traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover festival **when he was twelve years old.**

> And it came about that, **while** they were there, the days were fulfilled for her to give birth. (Luke 2:6 ULT)

Being in Bethlehem is the background event. The birth of the baby is the main event.

> And in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—**while** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **during** the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. (Luke 3:1-2 ULT)

This example begins with five background clauses (marked by commas), signalled as background by the words "while" and "during." Then the main event happens: "the word of God came to John."

Translation Strategies

If the way that the Background Clauses are marked is also clear in your language, then translate the Background Clauses as they are.

(1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that what follows is a Background Clause, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.
(2) If your language marks Background Clauses in a different way than using connecting words (such as by using different verb forms), then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> And in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—**while** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **during** the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. (Luke 3:1-2 ULT)

(1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that what follows is a background clause, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.

> **It happened during the time that** Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, **and during the time that** Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, **and during the time that** his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, **and during the time that** Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, **and also during the time that** Annas and Caiaphas were high priests—**that** the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

(2) If your language marks background clauses in a different way than using connecting words, such as with different verb forms, then use that way.

> Pontius Pilate **was governing** Judea, and Herod **was ruling over** Galilee, and his brother Philip **was ruling over** the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias **was ruling over** Abilene, and Annas and Caiaphas **were being** high priests—the word of God **came** to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

Example of Differences in Time Relationship Connecting Words:

Category	Example
Background setting	Yahweh's word was rare **in those days**;
Background repeated	there was no frequent prophetic vision.
Introduction of main event	**At that time**, **when** Eli
Background	**whose** eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see well,
Simultaneous background	was lying down in his own bed.
Simultaneous background	The lamp of God **had not yet** gone out,
Simultaneous background	**and** Samuel was lying down to sleep in the temple of Yahweh,
Simultaneous background	where the ark of God was.
Main event	**Yahweh called to Samuel**,
Sequential event	who said, "Here I am." (1 Sam 3:1-4 ULT)

In the above example, the first two lines talk about a condition that was going on for a long time. This is the general, long-term background. We know this from the phrase "in those days." After the introduction of the main event ("At that time,"), there are several lines of simultaneous background. The first one is introduced by "when," and then three more follow, with the last connected by "and." The background clause introduced by "where" explains a little more about the background clause before it. Then the main event happens, followed by more events. Translators will need to think about the best way to show these relationships in their language.

Colossians References:

2:13

Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions

Conditional Relationships

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.

Contrary-to-Fact Conditions

Description

A Contrary-to-Fact Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical, but the speaker is already certain that it is NOT true.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Usually there are no special words that indicate a Contrary-to-Fact Condition. The writer assumes that the reader knows that it is NOT a true condition. For this reason it often requires knowledge of implied information to know that it is not true. If this kind of condition is difficult for translators to communicate, they may want to consider using the same strategies that they used for Rhetorical Questions or Implied Information.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> But **if Baal 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)

Baal is not God. Elijah is not suggesting that Baal might be God, and he does not want the people to follow Baal. But Elijah used a conditional statement to show them that what they were doing was wrong. In the example above, we see two conditions that have the same construction. The first one, “If Yahweh is God,” is a Factual Condition because Elijah is

certain that it is true. The second one, “if Baal is God,” is a Contrary-to-Fact Condition because Elijah is certain that it is not true. You will need to consider if people would say both of these in the same way in your language or if they would say them in different ways.

> But his wife replied to him, “**If Yahweh had desired to kill us**, he would not have taken from our hand the whole burnt offering and the offering. He would not have shown us all these things, and at this time would he have not allowed us to hear about this.” (Judges 13:23 ULT)

Manoah’s wife thinks that the second part of her conditional statement is not true, therefore the first part is also not true. God received their burnt offering; therefore, He does not want to kill them.

>

> “**If only we had died** by Yahweh’s hand in the land of Egypt, sitting by a pot of meat and eating bread to the full.” (Exodus 16b:3 ULT)

Of course the people speaking here did not die in Egypt, and so this is a Contrary-to-Fact condition that is used to express a wish.

> “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)

The English reader knows that these last two examples are Contrary-to-Fact conditions because of the past-tense verbs used in the first part (they are not things that might happen). The last example also has a second part that uses “would have.” These words also signal something that did not happen.

Translation Strategies

If Contrary-to-Fact conditions are clear in your language, then use them as they are.

(1) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker believes something that is false, then restate the condition as something that others believe.
(2) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker is suggesting that the first part is true, then restate it as a statement that it is not true.
(3) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen but the speaker wanted it to happen, restate it as a wish.
(4) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen, restate it as a negative statement.
(5) Often Factual and Contrary-to-Fact conditions are used to make reasoned arguments for a change in behavior. If translators are struggling to know the best way to translate them, it could be helpful to discuss how this is done in their language community. If someone is trying to convince people to change their behavior, how do they do that? It may be possible to adapt similar strategies when translating these conditions.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker believes something that is false, then restate the condition as something that others believe.

> But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

> > If you believe that Baal is God, then worship him!

(2) If the condition leads the reader to think that the speaker is suggesting that the first part is true, then restate it as a statement that it is not true.

> > If Baal is not God, then you should not worship him!

But his wife replied to him, "**If Yahweh had desired to kill us**, he would not have taken from our hand the whole burnt offering and the offering. He would not have shown us all these things, and at this time would he have not allowed us to hear about this." (Judges 13:23 ULT)

> > "**Yahweh does not want to kill us**, or he would not have received the burnt offering and the offering we gave him."

(3) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen but the speaker wanted it to happen, restate it as a wish.

> "**If only we had died** by Yahweh's hand in the land of Egypt, sitting by a pot of meat and eating bread to the full." (Exodus 16b:3 ULT)
>
> > "**I wish we had died** by Yahweh's hand in the land of Egypt…"

(4) If the condition is expressing something that did not happen, restate it as a negative statement.

> "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)

> > “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! The mighty deeds which were done in you **were not done** in Tyre and Sidon. But **if they had been done there, those people would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes.”

(5) Often Factual and Contrary-to-Fact Conditions are used to make reasoned arguments for a change in behavior. If translators are struggling to know the best way to translate them, it could be helpful to discuss how this is done in their language community. If someone is trying to convince people to change their behavior, how do they do that? It may be possible to adapt similar strategies when translating these conditions.

> But **if Baal is God**, worship him! (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

> > Is Baal the one who is truly God? Should you worship him?

> “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)

> > “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! You think that you are better than Tyre and Sidon, but you are not! **They would have repented** long ago in sackcloth and ashes at seeing the mighty deeds that you have seen! **You should be like them**!”

Colossians References:

2:20

Connect — Contrast Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

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.

Colossians References:

1:22; 2:5; 3:8

Connect — Factual Conditions

Conditional Relationships

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?”

Colossians References:

1:23; 2:5; 2:20; 3:1

Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Goal (or Purpose) Relationship

Description

A Goal Relationship is a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first event. In order for something to be a goal relationship, someone must do the first event with the intention that it will cause the second event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, the goal or purpose may be stated either first or second. But in some languages, the goal or purpose must always occur in the same position (either first or second) in order for that logical relationship to be understood. You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between the two parts and communicate those accurately in your language. This may require changing the order of the two events. It may also require specific words to indicate that one is the goal or purpose of the other. Words commonly used to indicate a goal relationship in English are “in order to,” “in order that” or “so that.” It is important that the translator recognize the words that signal a goal relationship and translate that relationship in a natural way.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> She became angry and falsely accused Joseph **so that he was arrested and sent to prison**. (Story 8 Frame 5 OBS)

The goal or purpose of the woman’s false accusation was to get Joseph arrested and sent to prison.

> Meanwhile Gideon, his son, was threshing out wheat at the winepress **in order to hide from the presence of Midian**. (Judges 6:11b ULT)

Here the prepositional phrase begins with “in order to.”

> Now if I have found favor in your eyes, show me your ways **so that I may know you and continue to find favor in your eyes**. Remember that this nation is your people. (Exodus 33:13 ULT)

Moses wants God to show him God’s ways for the goal or purpose of Moses knowing God and continuing to find favor with God.

> Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her! (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

The goal or purpose of Boaz instructing the men to pull out the grain from their bundles and leave it was for Ruth to gather (glean) it.

> The shepherds said to each other, “Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULT)

The purpose of going to Bethlehem was to see the thing that had happened. Here the purpose is not marked and might be misunderstood.

> “… if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments.” (Matthew 19:17b ULT)

The goal of keeping the commandments is to enter into life.

> Do not turn from it to the right or to the left **so that you may bewise** in everything in which you walk. (Joshua 1:7c ULT)

The purpose of not turning away from the instructions that Moses gave to the Israelites was so that they would be wise.

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

The purpose of the vine growers killing the heir was so they could take his inheritance. They state both events as a plan, joining them only with "and." Then the word "so" marks the reporting of the first event, but the second event (the goal or purpose) is not stated.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses Goal or Purpose relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the construction of the Goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.
(2) If the order of the statements makes the Goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the construction of the goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.

> "Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her!" (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

> > "Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **so that she can glean it**, and do not rebuke her!"

> The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15 ULT)
>
> > The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem **so that we can see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us."

(2) If the order of the statements makes the goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

> "… if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17bULT)
>
> > "… keep the commandments if you want **to enter into life**." or: "… keep the commandments **so that you can enter into life**."

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.'

> So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

(1) and (2)

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

> > But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **so that we can take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him **so that they could take over his inheritance**.

Colossians References:

1:11; 1:12; 1:16; 1:28; 2:2; 3:10; 3:10; 3:21; 4:3; 4:3; 4:4; 4:8; 4:12; 4:17

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

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.

Colossians References:

1:18; 1:19; 1:22; 2:1; 2:9; 3:3; 3:9; 3:10; 3:12; 3:18; 3:20; 3:22; 3:24; 4:1; 4:4; 4:6

Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

Time Relationships

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Sequential Clause

Description

A sequential clause is a time relation that connects two events in which one happens and then the other happens.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate sequences of events in different ways; some use ordering, some use connecting words, some even use relative tense (Relative tense is a tense that refers to a time in relation to a reference point in the context.) Connecting words that may indicate sequence are words such as “then,” “later,” “after,” “afterward,” “before,” “first,” and “when.” Translators need to be certain that they communicate the order of the events in a way that is natural in their language. This may require ordering clauses differently than in the original languages.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> **When** Joseph came to his brothers, they kidnapped him and sold him to some slave traders. (OBS Story 8 Frame 2)

First Joseph came to his brothers, and then they kidnapped and sold him. We know this because of the connecting word “**when**.” The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> It was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but **after** I ate it, my stomach became bitter. (Revelation 10:10b ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs first, and the event of the last clause occurs later. We know this because of the connecting word "**after**." The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs after the event of the second clause. First the land they dread will be desolate, and then the child will know to refuse evil and choose good. We know this because of the connecting word "**before**." However, stating the clauses in this order may communicate the wrong order of events in your language. The translator may have to change the order so that the clauses come in the order that they happen. Or it may be possible to keep the order of the original language text and mark the ordering of sequence so that it is clear to the readers. You (the translator) need to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)

Here the general connector "**and**" connects four events. These are sequential events—each happens after the one before it. We know this because that is the only way that these events would happen. So in English, the general connector "and" is enough to make the sequence clear for events such as these. You will need to decide if this also communicates this sequence clearly and correctly in your language.

Translation Strategies

If the sequence of events is clear in your language, then translate the sequence as it is.

(1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.
(2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.

> Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)
>
> > Then Mary arose in those days. **Then** she quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah. **Then** she entered into the house of Zechariah, **and then** she greeted Elizabeth.

> For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)
>
> > For the time will come when the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, **but even before that time**, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate.

(2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

> For the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good.

For more about sequences of events, see Sequence of Events.

Colossians References:

1:17; 1:21; 1:22

Connect — Simultaneous Time Relationship

Time Relationships

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Simultaneous Clause

Description

A simultaneous clause is a time relationship that connects two or more events that occur at the same time.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate in many different ways that events occur simultaneously. These ways may vary based on whether or not something is causing the events to occur simultaneously. Connecting words that may indicate simultaneous events are words such as “while,” “as,” and “during.” Often the Bible does not state a relationship between the events but simply says they occurred at the same time. It is important that you (the translator) know when a time relationship is implied and when it is not implied so that you can communicate it clearly. A simultaneous clause communicates that events happened at the same time but it does not indicate that one event caused the other. That would be a reason-and-result relationship.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> Joseph served his master well, **and** God blessed Joseph. (OBS Story 8 Frame 4)

Two events happened while Joseph was a slave to a wealthy government official: Joseph served well, and God blessed Joseph. There is no indication of a reason-and-result (cause and effect) relationship between the two, or that the first event happened, and then the second event happened.

> But in truth I say to you that there were many widows in Israel **during** the days of Elijah. (Luke 4:25b ULT)

The connecting word "**during**" tells us clearly that two things happened at the same time, but one event did not cause the other.

> And the people were waiting for Zechariah, **and** they were wondering at his delaying in the temple. (Luke 1:21 ULT)

The people were both waiting and wondering at the same time. The general connector "**and**" indicates this.

> **While** they were looking intensely into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing. (Acts 1:10 ULT)

Three events happened at the same time — the disciples looking, Jesus going up, and two men standing. The connector words "**while**" and "**as**" tell us this.

Translation Strategies

If the way that the simultaneous clauses are marked also is clear in your language, then translate the simultaneous clauses as they are.

(1) If the connecting word does not make it clear that the simultaneous clauses are happening at the same time, use a connecting word that communicates this more clearly.
(2) If it is not clear which clause the simultaneous clause is connected to, and that they are happening at the same time, mark all of the clauses with a connecting word.
(3) If your language marks events as simultaneous in a different way than using connecting words, then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Below, each Bible verse will be restated in three different ways, according to the translation strategies in the list above. Each restatement will have the same number as the translation strategy that it is using.

> And the people were waiting for Zechariah, **and** they were wondering at his delaying in the temple. (Luke 1:21 ULT)

(1) Now **while** the people were waiting for Zechariah, they were wondering at his delaying in the temple.

(2) Now **while** the people were waiting for Zechariah, they were **also** wondering at his delaying in the temple.

(3) Now the people were waiting for Zechariah, wondering at his delaying in the temple.

> **While** they were looking intently into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing. (Acts 1:10 ULT)

(1) And **during the time** they were looking intently into heaven **while** he was going up, suddenly, two men stood by them in white clothing.

(2) And **while** they were looking intently into heaven **as** he was going up, suddenly, **at that same time** two men stood by them in white clothing.

(3) They were looking intently into heaven; he was going up **when** they saw two men standing by them in white clothing.

Colossians References:

2:5; 3:4; 3:7; 3:16; 4:2; 4:3; 4:5

Connecting Words and Phrases

Description

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.

Colossians References:

1:24; 2:5; 2:6; 2:10; 2:16; 2:21; 3:1; 3:5; 3:12; 3:25; 4:13

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "**I** do not know at what time **I** will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that **he** did not know at what time **he** would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

> And he commanded him to tell no one, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, “**Go, show yourself to the priest …**”

> And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, “The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.” (Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming,**
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, “**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, ‘Look. here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**”
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, ‘**Look, here it is!**’ or, ‘**There it is!**’

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

(1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
(2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

> And he commanded him to tell no one, but, “**Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

> > He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them**.

(2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

> And he commanded him **to tell no one,** but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)
>
> > He commanded him, “**Tell no one**. But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_quotations.

Colossians References:

4:17

Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

Description

In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

When the phrase that modifies a noun is a relative clause (a phrase that starts with a word such as “who” or“which”), some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that the added phrase is making a distinction:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister who was very thankful**.
    - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase “who was thankful” could distinguish this sister of Mary’s from another sister who was not usually thankful.

With the comma, the phrase is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
    - This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary’s sister. It tells us about how Mary’s sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

Examples From the Bible

Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

> The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

The words “holy” and “most holy” distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

> A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to **the woman who bore him**. (Proverbs 17:25 ULT)

The phrase “who bore him” distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

> … for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word “righteous” simply reminds us that God’s judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

> You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)

The phrases “to your needy and to your poor” give further information about “your brother.” They do not refer to a separate group of people.

> How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase “who is 90 years old” is a reminder of Sarah’s age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age.

> I will wipe away mankind **whom I have created** from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULT)

The phrase “whom I have created” is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

> I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying “worthless idols,” David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.

Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose. (2) Use one of your language’s ways for expressing that this is just added information. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

> I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

> > **Becauseidols are worthless**, I hate those who serve them.
>
> … for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)
>
> > … for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.
>
> Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)
>
> > Can Sarah bear a son **even whenshe is 90 years old**?
>
> > You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)

> > You must surely open your hand to any of **your needy and poor brothers** in your land.

(2) Use one of your language's ways for expressing that this is just added information.

> You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)
>
> > You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.

> > **Receiving my love**, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.

> You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)

> > You must surely open your hand to your brother **who is needy and poor** in your land.

Colossians References:

4:11; 4:11

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.

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!"

Colossians References:

1:2; 1:9; 1:22; 1:23; 1:29; 2:2; 2:3; 2:10; 2:14; 2:19; 3:7; 3:8; 3:16; 4:1; 4:3; 4:8

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis[^1] 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

1. 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.

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

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

Relative Ellipsis

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

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

> He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes**
> Sirion **skip** like a young ox.
>
> Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

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 **sinners in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)
>
> > So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinners 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.

Colossians References:

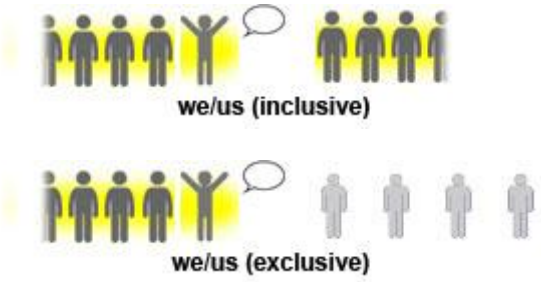
1:6; 3:13; 3:14; 4:6; 4:10; 4:11; 4:13; 4:14

Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’

Description

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

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.

Colossians References:

1:3; 1:7; 1:8; 1:9; 1:28; 4:3; 4:8

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.

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.

Colossians References:

1:1; 1:2; 2:2; 4:18

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.

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.

Colossians References:

2:21; 4:17

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

> Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?
> So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife**;
> **the one who touches her** will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

The phrases in bold above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

> The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

> People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

> Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

The phrase “a good man” does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who is good. The phrase “a man who makes evil plans” does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

(1) Use the word “the” in the noun phrase.
(2) Use the word “a” in the noun phrase.
(3) Use the word “any,” as in “any person” or “anyone.”
(4) Use the plural form, as in “people.”
(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.”

Colossians References:

3:11; 3:25

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 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 mouthand 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 mouthand 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**.

Colossians References:

1:11; 2:5; 2:8

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.

Meaning of names

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

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

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

> His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

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

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.

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

Examples From the Bible

> Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** … fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

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

> She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that "Beer Lahai Roi" means "Well of the Living One who sees me."

> And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

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

> **Saul** was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)
>
> But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

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

Translation Strategies

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

> Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** … fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)
>
> > You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites.**
>
> At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)

> > At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

> And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)
>
> > She called his name **Moses (which sounds like ‘drawn out’),** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.”

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

> She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)
>
> > She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or

when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called “Saul” before Acts 13 and “Paul” after Acts 13. You could translate his name as “Paul” all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

> … a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)
>
> > … a young man named **Paul** 1

The footnote would look like:

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

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

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

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

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

The footnote would look like:

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

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

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

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

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

> > It came about in Iconium that **Paul**[1] and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Colossians References:

front:intro; 1:7; 4:7; 4:9; 4:10; 4:11; 4:12; 4:14; 4:15; 4:17

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.

1. The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.
2. The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.
3. 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.

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

1. Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.
2. 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.

Colossians References:

1:3; 1:6; 1:9; 1:23; 1:28; 3:11; 4:12

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.

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.

Colossians References:

2:23; 3:13; 4:10

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.”)

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**

Colossians References:

1:26; 2:1; 2:5; 2:5; 2:7; 2:8; 2:12; 2:20; 2:22; 2:23; 3:1; 3:1; 3:2; 3:8; 3:9; 3:10; 3:12; 3:13; 3:13; 3:16; 3:17; 3:17; 3:20; 3:22; 3:22; 3:23; 3:23; 3:23; 4:5; 4:7; 4:8; 4:9; 4:9; 4:10; 4:12; 4:15; 4:16

Imperatives — Other Uses

Description

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. In the Bible, sometimes imperative sentences have other uses.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use an imperative sentence for some of the functions that they are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Speakers often use imperative sentences to tell or ask their listeners to do something. In Genesis 26, God spoke to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but to live where God would tell him to live.

> Now Yahweh appeared to him and said, "**Do not go down** to Egypt; **live** in the land that I tell you to live in." (Genesis 26:2 ULT)

Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

Imperatives that make things happen

God can make things happen by commanding that they happen. Jesus healed a man by commanding that the man be healed. The man could not do anything to obey the command, but Jesus caused him to be healed by commanding it. (In this context, the command "Be clean" means to "be healed" so that others around would know that it was safe to touch the man again.)

> "I am willing. **Be clean**." Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

In Genesis 1, God commanded that there should be light, and by commanding it, he caused it to exist. Some languages, such as the Hebrew of the Bible, have commands that are in the

third person. English does not do that, and so it must turn the third-person command into a general, second-person command, as in the ULT:

> God said, "**Let there be** light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Languages that have third-person commands can follow the original Hebrew, which translates into English as something like "light must be."

Imperatives that function as blessings

In the Bible, God blesses people by using imperatives. This indicates what his will is for them.

> God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

Imperatives that function as conditions

An imperative sentence can also be used to tell the **condition** under which something will happen. The proverbs mainly tell about life and things that often happen. The purpose of Proverbs 4:6 below is not primarily to give a command, but to teach what people can expect to happen **if** they love wisdom.

> **Do not abandon** wisdom and she will watch over you;
> **love** her and she will keep you safe. (Proverbs 4:6 ULT)

The purpose of Proverbs 22:6, below, is to teach what people can expect to happen if they teach their children the way they should go.

> **Teach** a child the way he should go,
> and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction.
> (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Imperatives that function as good results

An imperative sentence can also describe a desirable result. In Proverbs 3:3-4, several imperatives give instructions, then the final imperative describes the good outcome of following those instructions.

> Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness leave you;
> tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart,
> and **find favor** and good insight in the eyes of God and man!
> (Proverbs 3:3-4 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.
(2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like "so" to show that what happened was a result of what was said.
(3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words "if" and "then."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.

> **Be clean**. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)
>
> > **You are now clean.**
> > **I now cleanse you.**
>
> God said, "**Let there be** light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)
>
> > God said, "**There is now** light" and there was
> > light.

> God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28 ULT)
>
> > God blessed them and said to them, "**My will for you is that you be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **I want you to have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

> Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness leave you;
> tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart,
> **and find favor** and good insight in the eyes of God and man!
> (Proverbs 3:3-4 ULT)
>
> > Do not let covenant faithfulness and
> > trustworthiness leave you;
> > tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of
> > your heart,
> > **then you will find favor** and good insight in the
> > eyes of God and man!

(2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like "so" to show that what happened was a result of what was said.

> God said, "**Let there be** light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

> > God said, ‘Let there be light,’ **so** there was light.
> > God said, “Light must be;” **as a result**, there was light.

(3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

> Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translated as:

> “**If** you teach a child the way he should go,
> **then** when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction.”

Colossians References:

3:15; 3:16

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.

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!

Colossians References:

1:9; 1:20; 2:1; 2:6; 2:20; 3:5; 3:13; 3:13; 3:17; 4:7

Kinship

Description

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. (Exodus3:1a 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

> 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, “nevéstka” 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.

Colossians References:

4:10

Litotes

Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by negating a word or phrase that means the opposite of the meaning that he intends. For example, someone could intend to communicate that something is extremely good by describing it as "not bad." The difference between a litotes and a **double negative** is that a litotes heightens the positive meaning beyond what a plain positive statement would do, and a double negative does not. In the example above, the literal meaning of "not bad," taken as a plain double negative, would be "acceptable" or even "good." But if the speaker intended it as a litotes, then the meaning is "very good" or "extremely good."

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

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

Examples From the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

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

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

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

> For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)
>
> > "For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good**."

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

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

Colossians References:

1:9

Merism

Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

> "I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)
>
> I am **the alpha and the omega**, **the first and the last**, **the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

> … I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** …, (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

Heaven and earth is a merism that includes everything that exists.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use merism. The readers of those languages may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

Examples From the Bible

> **From the rising of the sun to its setting**, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

This bolded phrase is a merism because it speaks of the east and the west and everywhere in between. It means “everywhere.”

> He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13)

The bolded phrase is merism because it speaks of old people and young people and everyone in between. It means “everyone.”

Translation Strategies

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

(1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.
(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

> I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)
>
> > I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything**.

> **From the rising of the sun to its setting**, Yahweh’s name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)
>
> > **In all places**, people should praise Yahweh’s name.

(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

> I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)
>
> > I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth**.

> He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13 ULT)
>
> > He will bless **all those** who honor him, regardless of whether they are **young or old**.

Colossians References:

1:16; 1:16; 1:20

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.

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**.

Colossians References:

1:6; 1:9; 1:10; 1:10; 1:12; 1:13; 1:13; 1:13; 1:15; 1:15; 1:16; 1:17; 1:18; 1:18; 1:18; 1:19; 1:22; 1:23; 1:24; 1:24; 1:27; 1:27; 2:1; 2:2; 2:3; 2:6; 2:6; 2:7; 2:7; 2:8; 2:8; 2:9; 2:10; 2:10; 2:12; 2:12; 2:13; 2:13; 2:13; 2:14; 2:14; 2:14; 2:15; 2:17; 2:18; 2:18; 2:18; 2:19; 2:20; 2:20; 3:1; 3:1; 3:3; 3:3; 3:4; 3:5; 3:5; 3:6; 3:7; 3:7; 3:8; 3:9; 3:10; 3:11; 3:11; 3:11; 3:12; 3:14; 3:14; 3:15; 3:15; 3:16; 3:16; 3:18; 3:20; 3:25; 4:1; 4:3; 4:5; 4:5; 4:6; 4:7; 4:12; 4:12; 4:17; 4:17

Metonymy

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A metonym is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something that it is associated with.

> … 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**.

Colossians References:

1:5; 1:5; 1:14; 1:19; 1:20; 1:22; 1:25; 2:11; 2:16; 2:23; 3:6; 3:15; 3:16; 3:16; 3:22; 4:3; 4:3; 4:11; 4:18

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.

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**.

Colossians References:

1:18; 2:12

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.

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.

Colossians References:

1:6; 1:23

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.

> 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**.

Colossians References:

1:5; 1:11; 1:12; 1:12; 1:13; 1:13; 1:14; 1:20; 1:22; 1:23; 1:24; 1:25; 1:25; 1:27; 1:27; 2:2; 2:2; 2:2; 2:3; 2:5; 2:11; 2:13; 2:17; 2:17; 2:18; 2:18; 2:19; 2:22; 2:23; 3:12; 3:14; 3:16; 3:22; 3:24; 4:3

Predictive Past

Description

The predictive past is a figure of speech that uses the past tense to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is sometimes done in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is also called the 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:

Readers who are not aware of the past tense being used in prophecy to refer to future events may find it confusing.

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 in the future, but he used the past tense when he said “the Lord came.”

Translation Strategies

If the past tense 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) If it refers to something in the immediate future, use a form that would show that.
(3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

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**.

(2) If it refers to something that would happen very soon, use a form that shows that.

> 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 about to deliver** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers.”

(3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

> 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** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers.”

Colossians References:

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.

> Now there was **a man from thePharisees 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.

Colossians References:

2:13; 2:13; 2:22; 3:5; 3:6; 3:7; 3:10; 3:10; 3:15; 4:3; 4:6; 4:9; 4:10; 4:11

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question that a speaker asks when he is more interested in expressing his attitude about something than in getting information about it. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express surprise, to rebuke or scold the hearer, or to teach. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other purposes as well.

Description

A rhetorical question is a question that strongly expresses the speaker's attitude toward something. Often the speaker is not looking for information at all. Or, if he is asking for information, it is not usually the information that the question appears to ask for. The speaker is more interested in expressing his attitude than in getting information.

> But those who stood by said, "**Are you insulting the high priest of God?**"(Acts 23:4 ULT)

The people who asked Paul this question were not asking if he was insulting God's high priest. Rather, they used this question to accuse Paul of insulting the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. These rhetorical questions might be used for the purposes: of expressing attitudes or feelings, rebuking people, teaching something by reminding people of something they know and encouraging them to apply it to something new, or introducing something they want to talk about.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use rhetorical questions; for them a question is always a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions, but for purposes that are different or more limited than in the Bible.
- Because of these differences between languages, some readers might misunderstand the purpose of a rhetorical question in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

> Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

Jezebel used the question above **to remind** King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. The rhetorical question made her point more strongly than if she had merely stated it, because it forced Ahab to admit the point himself. She did this in order **to rebuke** him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that, since he was the king of Israel, he had the power to take the man's property.

> **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

God used the question above **to remind** his people of something they already knew: a young woman would never forget her jewelry or a bride forget her veils. He then **rebuked** his people for forgetting him who is so much greater than those things.

> But you, why do you judge your brother? And you also, why do you despise your brother? (Romans 14:10 ULT)

Paul used these rhetorical questions **to rebuke** the Romans for doing what they should not do.

> Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

Job used the question above **to show deep emotion**. This rhetorical question expresses how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

> And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

Elizabeth used the question above **to show how surprised and happy she was** that the mother of her Lord came to her.

> Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Jesus used the question above **to remind** the people of something they already knew: a good father would never give his son something bad to eat. By introducing this point, Jesus could go on **to teach them** about God with his next rhetorical question:

> Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11 ULT)

Jesus used this question **to teach** the people in an emphatic way that God gives good things to those who ask him.

> **What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to?** It is like a mustard seed that a man took and threw into his garden … (Luke 13:18b-19a ULT)

Jesus used the question above **to introduce what he was going to talk about**. He was about to compare the kingdom of God to something. In this case, he compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed.

Translation Strategies

In order to translate a rhetorical question accurately, first be sure that the question you are translating truly is a rhetorical question and is not an information question. Ask yourself, "Does the person asking the question already know the answer to the question?" If so, it is a rhetorical question. Or, if no one answers the question, did the person who asked it expect to receive an answer? If not, it is a rhetorical question.

When you are sure that the question is rhetorical, then be sure that you understand the purpose for the rhetorical question. Is it to encourage or rebuke or shame the hearer? Is it to bring up a new topic? Is it to express surprise or other emotion? Is it to do something else?

When you know the purpose of the rhetorical question, then think of the most natural way to express that purpose in the target language. It might be as a question, or a statement, or an exclamation.

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

(1) Add the answer after the question.
(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the answer after the question.

> **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)
>
> > Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?
> > **Of course not!** Yet my people have forgotten me
> > for days without number!

> Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

> > Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? **None of you would do that!**

(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

> **What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to?** It is like a mustard seed. (Luke 13:18-19a ULT)
>
> > **This is what the kingdom of God is like.** It is like a mustard seed …

> **Are you insulting the high priest of God?** (Acts 23:4b ULT) (Acts 23:4 ULT)
>
> > **You should not insult God's high priest!**

> **Why did I not die when I came out from the womb?** (Job 3:11a ULT)
>
> > **I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!**

> **And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?** (Luke 1:43 ULT)
>
> > **How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!**

(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

> **Do you not still rule** the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)
>
> > You still rule the kingdom of Israel, **do you not?**

(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the orignal speaker communicated in his.

> Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)
>
> > If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone**?

> **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils**? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)
>
> > **What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils**? Yet my

> people have forgotten me for days without number!

> But you, **why do you judge your brother**? And you also, **why do you despise your brother**? (Romans 14:10 ULT)
>
> > Do you think it is good to judge your brother? Do you think it is good to despise your brother?

Colossians References:

2:20

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."

> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus' enemies would attack his disciples.

> For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God's word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people's attention.

- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

> Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

> Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.
(2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.
(3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves.** (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.
>
> > See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.
>
> For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)
>
> > For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

(2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.
>
> > See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.

> How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)
>
> > How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!
>
> If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** … (Matthew 17:20)
>
> > If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

(3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)
>
> > See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.
>
> How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)
>
> > How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

Colossians References:

3:13

Statements — Other Uses

Description

Normally statements are used to give information. Sometimes they are used in the Bible for other functions.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use a statement for some of the functions that statements are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Statements are normally used to give **information**. All of the sentences in John 1:6-8 below are statements, and their function is to give information.

> There was a man who was sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness in order to testify about the light, that all might believe through him. John was not the light, but came that he might testify about the light. (John 1:6-8 ULT)

A statement can also be used as a **command** to tell someone what to do. In the examples below, the high priest used statements with the verb “will” to tell people what to do.

> He commanded them, saying, “This is what you **must** do. A third of you who come on the Sabbath **will** keep watch over the king’s house, and a third **will** be at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guardhouse.” (2 Kings 11:5 ULT)

A statement can also be used to give **instructions**. The speaker below was not just telling Joseph about something Joseph would do in the future; he was telling Joseph what he needed to do.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

A statement can also be used to make a **request**. The man with leprosy was not just saying what Jesus was able to do. He was also asking Jesus to heal him.

> Behold, a leper came to him and bowed before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, **you are able to make me clean**." (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

A statement can also be used to **perform** something. By telling Adam that the ground was cursed because of him, God actually cursed it.

> … **cursed is the ground** because of you; (Genesis 3:17b ULT)

By telling a man that his sins were forgiven, **Jesus forgave** the man's sins.

> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "**Son, your sins are forgiven**." (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a sentence type** that would express that function.
(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **add a sentence type** that would express that function.
(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a verb form** that would express that function.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a sentence type that would express that function.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

The phrase “you will call his name Jesus” is an instruction. It can be translated using the sentence type of a normal instruction.

> > She will give birth to a son. **Name him Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, add a sentence type that would express that function.

> Lord, if you are willing, **you are able to make me clean**. (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

The function of “you are able” is to make a request. In addition to the statement, a request can be added.

> > Lord, you are able to make me clean. If you are willing, **please do so**.
> > OR:
> > Lord, if you are willing, **please heal me**. I know that you are able to do so.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a verb form that would express that function.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)
>
> > She will give birth to a son, and **you must call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins.
>
> Son, your sins are forgiven. (Mark 2:5 ULT)
>
> > Son, I forgive your sins.
> > OR:
> > Son, God hereby forgives your sins.

Colossians References:

3:24

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 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)
>
> > **Arepresentative 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

Colossians References:

2:2; 2:12; 4:8

Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULT based the ULT New Testament on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. The ULT Old Testament is based on the Westminster Leningrad Codex, which is considered to be the best representative of the ancient copies. Because people who use the ULT may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULT translators have sometimes included information about some of the differences between them, either in the ULT footnotes or in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULT and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULT. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

> [10] See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. [11] [1]

> [1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest copies. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([ ]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

> 53 [Then everyone went to his own house … 11 She said, “No one, Lord.” Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.”] [2]
>
> [2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Psalm 100:3 ULT follows the Westminster Leningrad Codex. It says:

> Know that Yahweh, he {is} God; he, he made us, **and not we**,

There are some other ancient copies that say:

> Know that Yahweh, he {is} God; he, he made us, **and we are his**,

There is an unfoldingWord® Translation Note at that place to tell the translator about this other reading and that either one is an acceptable choice.

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 a footnote about the alternate reading such as the one that the ULT provides or one in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

> 14 He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of
> you, and understand. 15 There is nothing from outside the man that can
> defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the
> man are the things that defile the man.” 16 [1]

> [1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

> 14 He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of
> you, and understand. 15 There is nothing from outside the man that can
> defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the
> man are the things that defile the man.” 16 [1]
>
> > [1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

> 14 He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of
> you, and understand. 15There is nothing from outside the man that can
> defile him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the

> man are the things that defile the man. 16 If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.” [1]
>
> > [1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Colossians References:

front:intro; 1:14; 3:6; 4:8

Third-Person Imperatives

Description

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

Colossians References:

2:16; 2:18

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?”

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**

Colossians References:

1:15; 1:16; 1:23; 1:26; 2:15; 2:17; 2:19; 2:20; 2:23; 2:23; 3:4; 3:4; 3:5; 3:5; 3:5; 3:5; 3:8; 3:8; 3:11; 3:11; 3:12; 3:12; 3:12; 3:16; 3:16; 3:18; 3:19; 3:20; 3:21; 3:21; 3:22; 3:22; 4:3; 4:12; 4:12

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)

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.”)

Colossians References:

1:2; 1:12; 1:13; 1:16

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)

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, **hisbrother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **hisbrother**.’ (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.”

Colossians References:

1:28; 2:8; 2:18; 2:22; 3:9; 3:23; 4:15

When to Keep Information Implicit

Description

Sometimes it is better not to state assumed knowledge or implicit information explicitly. This page gives some direction about when not to do this.

Translation Principles

- If a speaker or author intentionally left something unclear, do not try to make it more clear.
- If the original audience did not understand what the speaker meant, do not make it so clear that your readers would find it strange that the original audience did not understand.
- If you need to explicitly state some assumed knowledge or implicit information, try to do it in a way that does not make your readers think that the original audience needed to be told those things.
- Do not make implicit information explicit if it confuses the message or leads the reader to forget what the main point is.
- Do not make assumed knowledge or implicit information explicit if your readers already understand it.

Examples From the Bible

> From the eater came forth food;
> and from the strong one came forth sweetness. (Judges 14:14 ULT)

This was a riddle. Samson purposely said this in a way that it would be hard for his enemies to know what it meant. Do not make it clear that the eater and the strong thing was a lion and that the sweet thing to eat was honey.

> Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” They reasoned among themselves saying, “It is because we did not take bread.” (Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Some possible implicit information here is that the disciples should beware of the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But Jesus’ disciples did not understand this. They thought that Jesus was talking about real yeast and bread. So it would not be appropriate to

state explicitly that the word “yeast” here refers to false teaching. The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant until they heard what Jesus said in Matthew 16:11.

> “How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that he was not telling them to beware of yeast in bread, but to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16:11-12 ULT)

Only after Jesus explained that he was not talking about bread did they realize that he was talking about the false teaching of the Pharisees. Therefore, it would be wrong to explicitly state the implicit information in Matthew 16:6.

Translation Strategies

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies applied.

Colossians References:

4:10; 4:17



unfoldingWord® Translation Words - Colossians

v91

admonish, warned, aware

Definition:

The term “admonish” means to firmly warn or advise someone.

- Usually “admonish” means to advise someone not to do something.
- In the body of Christ, believers are taught to admonish each other to avoid sin and to live holy lives.
- The word “admonish” could be translated as “encourage not to sin” or “urge someone to not sin.”

Bible References:

- Nehemiah 9:32-34

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2094, H5749, G35600, G38670, G55370

Colossians References:

1:28; 3:16

adversary, enemy

Definition:

An “adversary” is a person (or group of people) who is opposed to someone else. The term “enemy” has a similar meaning.

- Your adversary can be a person who tries to oppose or harm another person.
- When two nations fight, each can be called an “adversary” of the other.
- In the Bible, the devil is referred to as an “adversary” and an “enemy.”
- The term “adversary” may be translated as “opponent” or “enemy,” but it suggests a stronger form of opposition.

(See also: Satan)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 5:14
- Isaiah 9:11
- Job 6:23
- Lamentations 4:12
- Luke 12:59
- Matthew 13:25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0341, H6146, H6887, H6862, H6965, H7790, H7854, H8130, H8324, G04760, G04800, G21890, G21900, G52270

Colossians References:

1:21

age, aged, old, old age, years old

Definition:

In this sense, the term “age” refers to the number of years a person has lived. In the Bible the terms “aged” and “old” are both used to describe someone who has lived a for many years.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “at a very old age” could be translated as “at many years old” or “when he was very old” or “when he had lived a very long time.”
- The term “aged” could also be translated as “old” or “very old” depending on context.

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G01650, G01660

Colossians References:

1:26

age, era, time

Definition:

Used in this sense the term “age” refers to a time period.

- Other words used to express an extended period of time include “era” and “season.”
- Jesus refers to “this age” as the present time when evil, sin, and disobedience toward God fill the earth.
- There will be a future age when righteousness will reign in a new heaven and a new earth.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “age” could be translated as “era” or “time period” or “time.”
- The phrase “this present evil age” means “during this time right now when people are very evil.”
- The phrase “end of the age” (used in Jesus’ words in Matthew 28:20) means “end of this period of history” or “end of this present age” and refers to the end of this present age at Jesus’ second coming.

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2165, H6256, H6471, G21190, G21210, G22350, G25400, G35680, G41830, G42180, G44550, G51190, G55500, G55510, G56100

Colossians References:

4:5

angel, archangel

Definition:

An angel is a powerful spirit being whom God created. Angels exist to serve God by doing whatever he tells them to do. The term “archangel” refers to the angel who rules or leads all the other angels.

- The word “angel” literally means “messenger.”
- The term “archangel” literally means “chief messenger.” The only angel referred to in the Bible as an “archangel” is Michael.
- In the Bible, angels gave messages to people from God. These messages included instructions about what God wanted the people to do.
- Angels also told people about events that were going to happen in the future or events that had already happened.
- Angels have God’s authority as his representatives and sometimes in the Bible they spoke as if God himself was speaking.
- Other ways that angels serve God are by protecting and strengthening people.
- A special phrase, “angel of Yahweh,” has more than one possible meaning: (1) It may mean “angel who represents Yahweh” or “messenger who serves Yahweh.” (2) It may refer to Yahweh himself, who looked like an angel as he talked to a person. Either one of these meanings would explain the angel’s use of “I” as if Yahweh himself was talking.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “angel” could include “messenger from God” or “God’s heavenly servant” or “God’s spirit messenger.”
- The term “archangel” could be translated as “chief angel” or “head ruling angel” or “leader of the angels.”
- Also consider how these terms are translated in a national language or another local language.
- The phrase “angel of Yahweh” should be translated using the words for “angel” and “Yahweh.” This will allow for different interpretations of that phrase. Possible translations could include “angel from Yahweh” or “angel sent by Yahweh” or “Yahweh, who looked like an angel.”

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: chief, head, messenger, Michael, ruler, servant)

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 24:16

- Acts 10:3-6
- Acts 12:23
- Colossians 2:18-19
- Genesis 48:16
- Luke 2:13
- Mark 8:38
- Matthew 13:50
- Revelation 1:20
- Zechariah 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 2:12 God placed large, powerful **angels** at the entrance to the garden to keep anyone from eating the fruit of the tree of life.
- 22:3 The **angel** responded to Zechariah, “I was sent by God to bring you this good news.”
- 23:6 Suddenly, a shining **angel** appeared to them (the shepherds), and they were terrified. The **angel** said, “Do not be afraid, because I have some good news for you.”
- 23:7 Suddenly, the skies were filled with **angels** praising God.
- 25:8 Then **angels** came and took care of Jesus.
- 38:12 Jesus was very troubled and his sweat was like drops of blood. God sent an **angel** to strengthen him.
- 38:15 “I could ask the Father for an army of **angels** to defend me.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0047, H0430, H4397, H4398, H8136, G00320, G07430, G24650

Colossians References:

2:18

apostle, apostleship

Definition:

The “apostles” were men sent by Jesus to preach about God and his kingdom. The term “apostleship” refers to the position and authority of those who were chosen as apostles.

- The word “apostle” means “someone who is sent out for a special purpose.” The apostle has the same authority as the one who sent him.
- Jesus’ twelve closest disciples became the first apostles. Other men, such as Paul and James, also became apostles.
- By God’s power, the apostles were able to boldly preach the gospel and heal people, and were able to force demons to come out of people.

Translation Suggestions:

- The word “apostle” can also be translated with a word or phrase that means “someone who is sent out” or “sent-out one” or “person who is called to go out and preach God’s message to people.”
- It is important to translate the terms “apostle” and “disciple” in different ways.
- Also consider how this term was translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: authority, disciple, James (son of Zebedee), Paul, the twelve)

Bible References:

- Jude 1:17-19
- Luke 9:12-14

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 26:10 Then Jesus chose twelve men who were called his **apostles**. The **apostles** traveled with Jesus and learned from him.
- 30:1 Jesus sent his **apostles** to preach and to teach people in many different villages.
- 38:2 Judas was one of Jesus’ **apostles**. He was in charge of the **apostles’** money bag, but he loved money and often stole from the bag.
- 43:13 The disciples devoted themselves to the **apostles’** teaching, fellowship, eating together, and prayer.
- 46:8 Then a believer named Barnabas took Saul to the **apostles** and told them how Saul had preached boldly in Damascus.

Word Data:

- Strong's: G06510, G06520, G24910, G53760, G55700

Colossians References:

1:1

authority

Definition:

The term “authority” usually refers to a position of influence, responsibility, or rule over another person.

- Kings and other governing rulers have authority over the people they are ruling.
- The word “authorities” can refer to people, governments, or organizations that have authority over others.
- The word “authorities” can also refer to spirit beings who have power over people who have not submitted themselves to God’s authority.
- Masters have authority over their servants or slaves. Parents have authority over their children.
- Governments have the authority or right to make laws that govern their citizens.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “authority” can also be translated as “control” or “right” or “qualifications.”
- Sometimes “authority” is used with the meaning of “power.”
- When “authorities” is used to refer to people or organizations who rule people, it could also be translated as “leaders” or “rulers” or “powers.”
- The phrase “by his own authority” could also be translated as “with his own right to lead” or “based on his own qualifications.”
- The expression, “under authority” could be translated as “responsible to obey” or “having to obey others’ commands.”

(See also: dominion, king, ruler, power)

Bible References:

- Colossians 2:10
- Esther 9:29
- Genesis 41:35
- Jonah 3:6-7
- Luke 12:5
- Luke 20:1-2
- Mark 1:22
- Matthew 8:9
- Matthew 28:19

- Titus 3:1

Word Data:

- Strong's: H8633, G08310, G14130, G18490, G18500, G20030, G27150, G52470

Colossians References:

1:13; 1:16; 2:10; 2:15

baptize, baptized, baptism

Definition:

In the New Testament, the terms “baptize” and “baptism” usually refer to ritually bathing a Christian with water to show that he has been cleansed from sin and has been united with Christ.

Translation Suggestions:

- Christians have different views about how a person should be baptized with water. It is probably best to translate this term in a general way that allows for different ways of applying the water.
- Depending on the context, the term “baptize” could be translated as “purify,” “pour out on,” “plunge (or dip) into,” “wash.” For example, “baptize you with water” could be translated as “plunge you into water.”
- The term “baptism” could be translated as “purification,” “a pouring out,” “a dipping,” “a cleansing.”
- Also consider how this term is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: **John (the Baptist)**, **repent**, Holy Spirit)

Bible References:

- **Acts 2:38**
- **Acts 8:36**
- **Acts 9:18**
- **Acts 10:48**
- **Luke 3:16**
- **Matthew 3:14**
- **Matthew 28:18-19**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **24:3** When people heard John’s message, many of them repented from their sins, and John **baptized** them. Many religious leaders also came to be **baptized** by John, but they did not repent or confess their sins.
- **24:6** The next day, Jesus came to be **baptized** by John.

- 24:7 John said to Jesus, “I am not worthy to **baptize** you. You should **baptize** me instead.”
- 42:10 “So go, make disciples of all people groups by **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
- 43:11 Peter answered them, “Every one of you should repent and be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your sins.”
- 43:12 About 3,000 people believed what Peter said and became disciples of Jesus. They were **baptized** and became part of the church at Jerusalem.
- 45:11 As Philip and the Ethiopian traveled, they came to some water. The Ethiopian said, “Look! There is some water! May I be **baptized**?”
- 46:5 Saul immediately was able to see again, and Ananias **baptized** him.
- 49:14 Jesus invites you to believe in him and be **baptized**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G09070

Colossians References:

2:12

Barnabas

Definition:

Barnabas was one of the early Christians who lived during the time of the apostles.

- Barnabas was from the Israelite tribe of Levi and was from the island of Cyprus.
- When Saul (Paul) became a Christian, Barnabas urged the other believers to accept him as a fellow believer.
- Barnabas and Paul traveled together to preach the good news about Jesus in different cities.
- His name was Joseph, but he was called "Barnabas," which means "son of encouragement."

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Christian, Cyprus, good news, Levite, Paul)

Bible References:

- Acts 4:36
- Acts 11:26
- Acts 13:3
- Acts 15:33
- Colossians 4:10-11
- Galatians 2:9-10
- Galatians 2:13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 46:8 Then a believer named **Barnabas** took Saul to the apostles and told them how Saul had preached boldly in Damascus.
- 46:9 **Barnabas** and Saul went there to teach these new believers more about Jesus and to strengthen the church. I
- 46:10 One day, while the Christians at Antioch were fasting and praying, the Holy Spirit said to them, "Set apart for me **Barnabas** and Saul to do the work I have called them to do." So the church in Antioch prayed for **Barnabas** and Saul and placed their hands on them.

Word Data:

- Strong's: G09210

Colossians References:

4:10

bear, bearer, bore, borne, produce, produced

Definition:

Used in this sense, the term “bear” means to “produce” or “give birth to.”

- A common expression in the Bible is “bear fruit,” which means “produce fruit”
- When speaking of a woman who will bear a child, this means “give birth to” a child
- Depending on context, this term could be translated as “produce” or “give birth to.”

(Translation suggestions: fruit)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3205, H3209, H3211, H5375, G01420, G03990, G04300, G09410, G10800, G41600, G47220, G50410, G50880, G53420, G54090

Colossians References:

3:13

beloved

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

(See also: love)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 4:14
- 1 John 3:2
- 1 John 4:7
- Mark 1:11
- Mark 12:6
- Revelation 20:9
- Romans 16:8
- Song of Songs 1:14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0157, H1730, H2532, H3033, H3039, H4261, G00250, G00270, G52070

Colossians References:

1:7; 4:7; 4:9; 4:14

bind, bond, bound

Definition:

The term “bind” means to tie something or fasten it securely. Something that is tied or joined together is called a “bond.” The term “bound” is the past tense of this term.

- To be “bound” means to have something tied or wrapped around something else.
- In a figurative sense, a person can be “bound” to a vow, which means he is “required to fulfill” what he promised to do.
- The term “bonds” refers to anything that binds, confines, or imprisons someone. It usually refers to physical chains, fetters or ropes that keep a person from being free to move.
- In Bible times, bonds such as ropes or chains were used to attach prisoners to the wall or floor of a stone prison.
- The term “bind” can also be used to talk about wrapping cloth around a wound to help it heal.
- A dead person would be “bound” with cloth in preparation for burial.
- The term “bond” is used figuratively to refer to something, such as sin, that controls or enslaves someone.
- A bond can also be a close relationship between people in which they support each other emotionally, spiritually and physically. This applies to the bond of marriage.
- For example, a husband and wife are “bound” or tied to each other. It is a bond that God does not want broken.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “bind” could also be translated as “tie” or “tie up” or “wrap (around).”
- Figuratively, it could be translated as to “restrain” or to “prevent” or to “keep from (something).”
- A special use of “bind” in Matthew 16 and 18 means “forbid” or “not permit.”
- The term “bonds” could be translated as “chains” or “ropes” or “shackles.”
- Figuratively the term “bond” could be translated as “knot” or “connection” or “close relationship.”
- The phrase “bond of peace” means “being in harmony, which brings people in closer relationship to each other” or “the tying together that peace brings.”
- To “bind up” could be translated as “wrap around” or “put a bandage on.”
- To “bind” oneself with a vow could be translated as “promise to fulfill a vow” or “commit to fulfill a vow.”
- Depending on the context, the term “bound” could also be translated as “tied” or “tied up” or “chained” or “obligated (to fulfill)” or “required to do.”

(See also: fulfill, peace, **prison**, servant, **vow**)

Bible References:

- **Leviticus 8:7**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0247, H0481, H0519, H0615, H0631, H0632, H0640, H1366, H1367, H1379, H2280, H2706, H3256, H3533, H3729, H4147, H4148, H4205, H4562, H5650, H5656, H5659, H6029, H6123, H6616, H6696, H6872, H6887, H7194, H7405, H7573, H7576, H8198, H8244, H8379, G02540, G03310, G03320, G11950, G11960, G11980, G11990, G12100, G13970, G13980, G14010, G14020, G26110, G26150, G37340, G37840, G38140, G40190, G40290, G43850, G48860, G48870, G52650

Colossians References:

3:14; 4:3; 4:18

blameless

Definition:

The term “blameless” literally means “without blame.” It is used to refer to a person who obeys God wholeheartedly, but it does not mean that the person is sinless.

- Abraham and Noah were considered blameless before God.
- A person who has a reputation for being “blameless” behaves in a way that honors God.
- According to one verse, a person who is blameless is “one who fears God and turns away from evil.”

Translation Suggestions:

- This could also be translated as “with no fault to his character” or “completely obedient to God” or “avoiding sin” or “keeping away from evil.”

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:10
- 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13
- 2 Peter 3:14
- Colossians 1:22
- Genesis 17:1-2
- Philippians 2:15
- Philippians 3:6

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5352, H5355, H8535, G02730, G02740, G02980, G02990, G03380, G04100, G04230

Colossians References:

1:22

bury, buried, burial

Definition:

The term “bury” refers to putting an object (usually a dead body) into a hole or other burial place and then covering it with dirt or stones, etc. The term “burial” is the act of burying something, or it can be used to describe a place where something has been buried.

- Often people bury a dead body by placing it into a deep hole in the ground and then covering it with dirt.
- Sometimes the dead body is placed in a box-like structure, such as a coffin, before burying it.
- In Bible times, dead people were often buried in a cave or similar place. After Jesus died, his body was wrapped in cloths and placed in a stone tomb that was sealed with a large boulder.
- The terms “burial place” or “burial room” or “burial chamber” or “burial cave” always refer to a place where a dead body is buried.
- Other things can also be buried, such as when Achan buried silver and other things that he had stolen from Jericho.
- The phrase “buried his face” usually means “covered his face with his hands.”
- Sometimes the word “hide” can mean “bury” as when Achan hid things in the ground that he had stolen from Jericho. This meant he buried them in the ground.

(See also: **Jericho**, **tomb**)

Bible References:

- **2 Kings 9:9-10**
- **Genesis 35:4-5**
- **Jeremiah 25:33**
- **Luke 16:22**
- **Matthew 27:7**
- **Psalm 79:1-3**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6900, H6912, H6913, G17790, G17800, G22900, G49160, G50270

Colossians References:

2:12

call, called, call out, called out

Definition:

The terms “call” and “call out,” in this sense, mean to speak loudly.

- To “call out” to someone means to shout, to announce, or to proclaim. It can also mean to ask someone for help, especially God.
- In some contexts the terms “call” and “call out” mean to loudly ask for help.

Translation Suggestions:

- The expression “call out to you” could be translated as “ask you for help” or “pray to you urgently.”
- To “call out” could be translated as “say loudly” or “shout” or “say with a loud voice.” Make sure the translation of this does not sound like the person is angry.

(See also: pray, cry, call to summon, call name)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H2199, H4744, H6817, H7121, H7123, H7769, H7773, G01540, G03630, G14580, G15280, G19410, G19510, G20280, G20460, G25640, G28210, G28220, G28400, G29190, G30040, G31060, G33330, G33430, G36030, G36860, G36870, G43160, G43410, G43770, G47790, G48670, G54550, G55370, G55810

Colossians References:

3:15; 4:11

chosen, choose, chosen people, Chosen One, elect

Definition:

The term “the elect” literally means “chosen ones” or “chosen people” and refers to those whom God has appointed or selected to be his people. “Chosen One” or “Chosen One of God” is a title that refers to Jesus, who is the chosen Messiah.

- The term “choose” means to select something or someone or to decide something. It is often used to refer to God appointing people to belong to him and to serve him.
- To be “chosen” means to be “selected” or “appointed” to be or do something.
- God chose people to be holy, to be set apart by him for the purpose of bearing good spiritual fruit. That is why they are called “the chosen (ones)” or “the elect.”
- The term “chosen one” is sometimes used in the Bible to refer to certain people such as Moses and King David whom God had appointed as leaders over his people. It is also used to refer to the nation of Israel as God’s chosen people.
- The phrase “the elect” is an older term that literally means “the chosen ones” or “the chosen people.” This phrase in the original language is plural when referring to believers in Christ.
- In older English Bible versions, the term “elect” is used in both the Old and New Testaments to translate the word for “chosen one(s).” More modern versions use “elect” only in the New Testament, to refer to people who have been saved by God through faith in Jesus. Elsewhere in the Bible text, they translate this word more literally as “chosen ones.”

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate “elect” with a word or phrase that means “chosen ones” or “chosen people.” This could also be translated as “people whom God chose” or “the ones God appointed to be his people.”
- The phrase “who were chosen” could also be translated as “who were appointed” or “who were selected” or “whom God chose.”
- “I chose you” could be translated as “I appointed you” or “I selected you.”
- In reference to Jesus, “Chosen One” could also be translated as “God’s chosen One” or “God’s specially appointed Messiah” or “the One God appointed (to save people).”

(See also: appoint, Christ)

Bible References:

- 2 John 1:1
- Colossians 3:12
- Ephesians 1:3-4

- **Isaiah 65:22-23**
- **Luke 18:7**
- **Matthew 24:19-22**
- **Romans 8:33**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0970, H0972, H0977, H1262, H1305, H4005, H6901, G01380, G01400, G15860, G15880, G15890, G19510, G37240, G44000, G44010, G47580, G48990, G55000

Colossians References:

3:12

Christ, Messiah

Definition:

The terms “Messiah” and “Christ” mean “Anointed One” and refer to Jesus, God’s Son.

- Both “Messiah” and “Christ” are used in the New Testament to refer to God’s Son, whom God the Father appointed to rule as king over his people, and to save them from sin and death.
- In the Old Testament, the prophets wrote prophecies about the Messiah hundreds of years before he came to earth.
- Often a word meaning “anointed (one)” is used in the Old Testament to refer to the Messiah who would come.
- Jesus fulfilled many of these prophecies and did many miraculous works that proves he is the Messiah; the rest of these prophecies will be fulfilled when he returns.
- The word “Christ” is often used as a title, as in “the Christ” and “Christ Jesus.”
- “Christ” also came to be used as part of his name, as in “Jesus Christ.”

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated using its meaning, “the Anointed One” or “God’s Anointed Savior.”
- Many languages use a transliterated word that looks or sounds like “Christ” or “Messiah.” (See: How to Translate Unknowns)
- The transliterated word could be followed by the definition of the term as in, “Christ, the Anointed One.”
- Be consistent in how this is translated throughout the Bible so that it is clear that the same term is being referred to.
- Make sure the translations of “Messiah” and “Christ” work well in contexts where both terms occur in the same verse (such as John 1:41).

(See also: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Son of God, David, Jesus, anoint)

Bible References:

- 1 John 5:1-3
- Acts 2:35
- Acts 5:40-42
- John 1:40-42
- John 3:27-28

- John 4:25
- Luke 2:10-12
- Matthew 1:16

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 17:7 The **Messiah** was God's Chosen One who would save the people of the world from sin.
- 17:8 As it happened, the Israelites would have to wait a long time before the **Messiah** came, almost 1,000 years.
- 21:1 From the very beginning, God planned to send the **Messiah**.
- 21:4 God promised King David that the **Messiah** would be one of David's own descendants.
- 21:5 The **Messiah** would start the New Covenant.
- 21:6 God's prophets also said that the **Messiah** would be a prophet, a priest, and a king.
- 21:9 The prophet Isaiah prophesied that the **Messiah** would be born from a virgin.
- 43:7 "But God raised him to life again to fulfill the prophecy which says, 'You will not let your **Holy One** rot in the grave.'"
- 43:9 "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both Lord and **Messiah**!"
- 43:11 Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus **Christ** so that God will forgive your sins."
- 46:6 Saul reasoned with the Jews, proving that Jesus was the **Messiah**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4899, G33230, G55470

Colossians References:

1:1; 1:2; 1:3; 1:4; 1:7; 1:24; 1:27; 1:28; 2:2; 2:5; 2:6; 2:8; 2:11; 2:17; 2:20; 3:1; 3:3; 3:4; 3:11; 3:15; 3:24; 4:3; 4:12

church, Church

Definition:

In the New Testament, the term “church” refers to all people who believe in Jesus. Sometimes “church” refers to a part of that larger group who regularly met together in a certain place, such as the “church at Ephesus.”

- This term literally refers to an assembly or congregation of people who were “called out” of the general population to meet together for a special purpose.
- Often the believers in a particular city would meet together in someone’s home to pray together and to hear and discuss scripture. These local churches were given the name of the city such as the “church at Ephesus.”
- In the Bible, “church” does not refer to a building.

Translation Suggestions:

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

(See also: **assembly**, **believe**, **Christian**)

Bible References:

- **1 Corinthians 5:12**
- **1 Thessalonians 2:14**
- **1 Timothy 3:5**
- **Acts 9:31**
- **Acts 14:23**
- **Acts 15:41**
- Colossians 4:15
- **Ephesians 5:23**
- **Matthew 16:18**

- **Philippians 4:15**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **43:12** About 3,000 people believed what Peter said and became disciples of Jesus. They were baptized and became part of the **church** at Jerusalem.
- **46:9** Most of the people in Antioch were not Jews, but for the first time, very many of them also became believers. Barnabas and Saul went there to teach these new believers more about Jesus and to strengthen the **church**.
- **46:10** So the **church** in Antioch prayed for Barnabas and Saul and placed their hands on them. Then they sent them off to preach the good news of Jesus in many other places.
- **47:13** The good news of Jesus kept spreading, and the **Church** kept growing.
- **50:1** For almost 2,000 years, more and more people around the world have been hearing the good news about Jesus the Messiah. The **Church** has been growing.

Word Data:

- Strong's: G15770

Colossians References:

1:18; 1:24; 4:15; 4:16

circumcise, circumcised, circumcision, uncircumcised, uncircumcision

Definition:

The term “circumcise” means to cut off the foreskin of a man or male child. A circumcision ceremony may be performed in connection with this.

- God commanded Abraham to circumcise every male among his family and servants as a sign of God’s covenant with them.
- God also commanded Abraham’s descendants to continue to do this for every baby boy born into their households.
- The phrase, “circumcision of the heart” refers figuratively to the “cutting away” or removal of sin from a person.
- In a spiritual sense, “the circumcised” refers to people whom God has purified from sin through the blood of Jesus and who are his people.
- The term “uncircumcised” refers to those who have not been circumcised physically. It can also refer figuratively to those who have not been circumcised spiritually, who do not have a relationship with God.

The terms “uncircumcised” and “uncircumcision” refer to a male who has not been physically circumcised. These terms are also used figuratively.

- Egypt was a nation that also required circumcision. So when God talks about Egypt being defeated by the “uncircumcised,” he is referring to people whom the Egyptians despised for not being circumcised.

- The Bible refers to people who have an “uncircumcised heart” or who are “uncircumcised in heart.” This a figurative way of saying that these people are not God’s people, and are stubbornly disobedient to him.

- If a word for circumcision is used or known in the language, “uncircumcised” could be translated as “not circumcised.”

- The expression “the uncircumcision” could be translated as “people who are not circumcised” or “people who do not belong to God,” depending on the context.

- Other ways to translate figurative senses of this term could include “not God’s people” or “rebellious like those who don’t belong to God” or “people who have no sign of belonging to God.”

- The expression “uncircumcised in heart” could be translated as “stubbornly rebellious” or “refusing to believe.” However, if possible it is best to keep the expression or a similar one since spiritual circumcision is an important concept.

Translation Suggestions:

- If the culture of the target language performs circumcisions on males, the word used to refer to this should be used for this term.
- Other ways to translate this term would be, “cut around” or “cut in a circle” or “cut off the foreskin.”
- In cultures where circumcision is not known, it may be necessary to explain it in a footnote or glossary.
- Make sure the term used to translate this does not refer to females. It may be necessary to translate this with a word or phrase that includes the meaning of “male.”

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: **Abraham**, **covenant**)

Bible References:

- **Genesis 17:11**
- **Genesis 17:14**
- **Exodus 12:48**
- **Leviticus 26:41**
- **Joshua 5:3**
- **Judges 15:18**
- **2 Samuel 1:20**
- **Jeremiah 9:26**
- **Ezekiel 32:25**
- **Acts 10:44-45**
- **Acts 11:3**
- **Acts 15:1**
- **Acts 11:3**
- **Romans 2:27**
- **Galatians 5:3**
- **Ephesians 2:11**
- **Philippians 3:3**
- Colossians 2:11

- Colossians 2:13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 5:3 “You must **circumcise** every male in your family.”
- 5:5 That day Abraham **circumcised** all the males in his household.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4135, H4139, H5243, H6188, H6189, H6190, G02030, G05640, G19860, G40590, G40610

Colossians References:

2:11; 2:13; 3:11; 4:11

Colossae, Colossians

Definition:

In New Testament times, Colossae was a city located in the Roman province of Phrygia, an area of land that is now southwestern Turkey. The Colossians were the people who lived in Colossae.

- Located about 100 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea, Colossae was on an important trade route between the city of Ephesus and the Euphrates River.
- While in prison in Rome, Paul wrote a letter to the "Colossians" to correct false teachings among the believers at Colossae.
- When he wrote this letter, Paul had not visited the church at Colossae, but had heard about the believers there from his coworker, Epaphras.
- Epaphras was probably the Christian worker who started the church at Colossae.
- The book of Philemon was a letter by Paul addressed to a slave owner in Colossae.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Ephesus, Paul)

Bible References:

- Colossians 1:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: G28570

Colossians References:

1:2

companion, fellow worker, friend

Definition:

The term “companion” refers to a person who goes with someone else or who is associated with someone else, such as in a friendship or marriage. The term “fellow worker” refers to someone who works with another person.

- Companions go through experiences together, share meals together, and support and encourage each other.
- Depending on the context, this term could also be translated with a word or phrase that means, “friend” or “fellow traveler” or “supporting-person who goes with” or “person who works with.”

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 37:16
- Hebrews 1:9
- Proverbs 2:17
- Psalms 38:11-12

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0251, H0441, H2269, H2270, H2273, H2278, H3674, H3675, H4828, H7453, H7462, H7464, G28440, G33530, G48980, G49040

Colossians References:

4:11

compassion, compassionate

Definition:

The term “compassion” refers to a feeling of concern for people, especially for those who are suffering. A “compassionate” person cares about other people and helps them.

- The word “compassion” refers to caring about people in need, as well as taking action to help them.
- The Bible says that God is compassionate, that is, he is full of love and mercy.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways of translating “compassion” could include, “deep caring” or “pity” or “helpful mercy.”
- The term “compassionate” could also be translated as “caring and helpful” or “deeply loving and merciful.”

Bible References:

- Daniel 1:8-10
- Hosea 13:14
- James 5:9-11
- Jonah 4:1-3
- Mark 1:41
- Romans 9:14-16

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2550, H7349, H7355, H7356, G16530, G33560, G36270, G46970, G48340, G48350

Colossians References:

3:12

confirm, confirmation

Definition:

The term “confirm” refers to verifying that something is true or legally certifying that a transaction has occurred.

- When a king is “confirmed” it means that the decision to make him king has been agreed upon and supported by the people.
- To confirm what someone wrote means to verify that what was written is true.
- The “confirmation” of the gospel means teaching people about the good news of Jesus in such a way that it shows that it is true.
- To give an oath “as confirmation” means to solemnly state or swear that something is true or trustworthy.
- Ways to translate “confirm” could include, “state as true” or “prove to be trustworthy” or “agree with” or “assure” or “promise,” depending on the context.

(See also: covenant, oath, trust)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 16:15-18
- 2 Corinthians 1:21
- 2 Kings 23:3
- Hebrews 6:16-18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H1396, H3045, H3559, H4390, H4672, H5414, H5975, H6213, H6965, G09500, G09510, G33150, G49720

Colossians References:

2:7

corrupt, corrupted, corruption, incorruptibility, depraved

Definition:

The terms “corrupt” and “corruption” refer to a state of affairs in which people have become ruined, immoral, or dishonest.

- The term “corrupt” literally means to be “bent” or “broken” morally.
- A person who is corrupt has turned away from truth and is doing things that are dishonest or immoral.
- To corrupt someone means to influence that person to do dishonest and immoral things.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term to “corrupt” could be translated as to “influence to do evil” or to “cause to be immoral.”
- A corrupt person could be described as a person “who has become immoral” or “who practices evil.”
- This term could also be translated as “bad” or “immoral” or “evil.”
- The term “corruption” could be translated as “the practice of evil” or “evil” or “immorality.”

(See also: evil)

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 20:42-44
- Galatians 6:6-8
- Genesis 6:12
- Matthew 12:33-35
- Psalm 14:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2610, H3891, H4889, H7843, H7844, G08610, G13110, G27040, G53510, G53560

Colossians References:

2:22

courage, courageous, valor

Definition:

The term “courage” refers to boldly facing or doing something that is difficult, frightening, or dangerous.

- The term, “courageous” describes someone who shows courage, who does the right thing even when feeling afraid or pressured to give up.
- A person shows courage when he faces emotional or physical pain with strength and perseverance or when he faces the threat of emotional or physical pain with emotional strength.
- The expression “take courage” means “do not be afraid” or “be assured that things will turn out well.”
- When Joshua was preparing to go into the dangerous land of Canaan, Moses exhorted him to be “strong and courageous.”
- The term “courageous” could also be translated as “brave” or “unafraid” or “bold.”
- Depending on the context, to “have courage” could also be translated as “be emotionally strong” or “be confident” or “stand firm.”
- To “speak with courage” could be translated as “speak boldly” or “speak without being afraid” or “speak confidently.”

Translation Suggestions

(See also: encourage, confidence, fear, strength)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0553, H2428, H2865, G21140, G21150, G21740, G22930, G22940, G38700, G38740, G43890, G51110

Colossians References:

2:2; 4:8

create, created, creation, creator

Definition:

The term “create” means to make something or to cause something to be. Whatever is created is called a “creation.” God is called the “Creator” because he caused everything in the entire universe to come into existence.

- When this term is used to refer to God creating the world, it means he made it out of nothing.
- When human beings “create” something, it means they made it out of things that already existed.
- Sometimes “create” is used in a figurative way to describe something abstract, such as creating peace, or creating a pure heart in someone.
- The term “creation” can refer to the very beginning of the world when God first created everything. It can also be used to refer generally to everything that God created. Sometimes the word “creation” refers more specifically to just the people in the world.

Translation Suggestions:

- Some languages may have to directly say that God created the world “out of nothing” to make sure this meaning is clear.
- The phrase, “since the creation of the world” means “since the time when God created the world.”
- A similar phrase, “at the beginning of creation” could be translated as “when God created the world at the beginning of time,” or “when the world was first created.”
- To preach the good news to “all creation” means to preach the good news to “all people everywhere on earth.”
- The phrase “Let all creation rejoice” means “Let everything that God created rejoice.”
- Depending on the context, “create” could be translated as “make” or “cause to be” or “make out of nothing.”
- The term “the Creator” could be translated as “the One who created everything” or “God, who made the whole world.”
- Phrases like “your Creator” could be translated as “God, who created you.”

(See also: God, good news, world)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 11:9-10
- 1 Peter 4:17-19
- Colossians 1:15

- **Galatians 6:15**
- **Genesis 1:1**
- **Genesis 14:19-20**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3335, H4639, H6213, H6385, H7069, G20410, G26020, G26750, G29360, G29370, G29390, G41600, G54800

Colossians References:

1:15; 1:16; 1:23; 3:10

cross

Definition:

In Bible times, a cross was an upright wooden post stuck into the ground, with a horizontal wooden beam attached to it near the top.

- During the time of the Roman Empire, the Roman government would execute criminals by tying or nailing them to a cross and leaving them there to die.
- Jesus was falsely accused of crimes he did not commit and the Romans put him to death on a cross.
- Note that this is a completely different word from the verb "cross" that means to go over to the other side of something, such as a river or lake.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated using a term in the target language that refers to the shape of a cross.
- Consider describing the cross as something on which people were killed, using phrases such as "execution post" or "tree of death."
- Also consider how this word is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: crucify, Rome)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 1:17
- Colossians 2:15
- Galatians 6:12
- John 19:18
- Luke 9:23
- Luke 23:26
- Matthew 10:38
- Philippians 2:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 40:1 After the soldiers mocked Jesus, they led him away to crucify him. They made him carry the **cross** on which he would die.
- 40:2 The soldiers brought Jesus to a place called "the Skull" and nailed his arms and feet to the **cross**.

- 40:5 The Jewish leaders and the other people in the crowd mocked Jesus. They said to him, “If you are the Son of God, come down from the **cross** and save yourself! Then we will believe you.”
- 49:10 When Jesus died on the **cross**, he received your punishment.
- 49:12 You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died on the **cross** instead of you, and that God raised him to life again.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G47160

Colossians References:

1:20; 2:14

day

Definition:

The term “day” generally refers to the time it takes for the alternating periods of light and darkness in the sky to complete one cycle (that is, 24 hours). However, in the Bible the same term is often used to refer to a shorter period of time (such as the time between sunrise and sunset) or a longer period of time that is often not specified.

- “Day” is sometimes used in contrast to “night.” In these cases, the term refers to the period of time when the sky is light.
- The term may also refer to a specific point in time, such as “today.”
- Sometimes the term “day” is used figuratively to refer to a longer period of time, such as the “day of Yahweh” or “last days.” Some languages will use a different expression to translate these figurative uses or will translate “day” non-figuratively.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term literally as “day” or “daytime” using the word in your language that refers to the part of the day when there is light.
- Other translations of “day” could include “daytime,” “time,” “season,” “occasion” or “event,” depending on the context.

(See also: **time**, **judgment day**, **last day**)

Bible References:

- **Acts 20:6**
- **Daniel 10:4**
- **Ezra 6:15**
- **Ezra 6:19**
- **Matthew 9:15**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H3118, H6242, G22500

Colossians References:

1:6; 1:9

deceive, lie, deception, illusion

Definition:

The term “deceive” means to cause someone to believe something that is not true, often by telling a “lie.” The act of deceiving someone is called “lying,” “deceit,” or “deception.”

- Someone who causes others to believe something false is a “deceiver.” For example, Satan is called a “deceiver.” The evil spirits that he controls are also deceivers.
- To “lie” is to say something that is not true.
- A person, action, or message that is not truthful can be described as “deceptive.”
- The terms “deceit” and “deception” have the same meaning, but there are some small differences in how they are used.
- The descriptive terms “deceitful” and “deceptive” have the same meaning and are used in the same contexts.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “deceive” could include “lie to” or “cause to have a false belief” or “cause someone to think something that is not true.”
- The term “deceived” could also be translated as “caused to think something false” or “lied to” or “tricked” or “fooled” or “misled.”
- “Deceiver” could be translated as “liar” or “one who misleads” or “someone who deceives.”
- Depending on the context, the terms “deception” or “deceit” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “falsehood” or “lying” or “trickery” or “dishonesty.”
- The terms “deceptive” or “deceitful” could be translated as “untruthful” or “misleading” or “lying” to describe a person who speaks or acts in a way that causes other people to believe things that are not true.

(See also: **true**)

Bible References:

- **1 John 1:8**
- **1 Timothy 2:14**
- **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**
- **Genesis 3:12-13**
- **Genesis 31:26-28**
- **Leviticus 19:11-12**
- **Matthew 27:64**

- **Micah 6:11**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0898, H2048, H3577, H3584, H3868, H4123, H4820, H4860, H5230, H5377, H5558, H6121, H6231, H6601, H7411, H7423, H7683, H7686, H7952, H8267, H8496, H8582, H8591, H8649, G05380, G05390, G13860, G13870, G13880, G18180, G38840, G41050, G41060, G41080, G54220, G54230

Colossians References:

2:8

deliver, deliverer, deliverance, delivered

Definition:

To “deliver” someone means to rescue that person. The term “deliverer” refers to someone who rescues or frees people from slavery, oppression, or other dangers. The term “deliverance” refers to what happens when someone rescues or frees people from slavery, oppression, or other dangers.

- In the Old Testament, God appointed deliverers to protect the Israelites by leading them in battle against other people groups who came to attack them.
- These deliverers were also called “judges” and the Old Testament book of Judges records the time in history when these judges were governing Israel.
- God is also called a “deliverer.” Throughout the history of Israel, he delivered or rescued his people from their enemies.

Translation Suggestions:

- In the context of helping people escape from their enemies, the term “deliver” can be translated as “rescue” or “liberate” or “save.”
- When the term “deliverer” refers to the judges who led Israel, it could also be translated as “judge” or “leader.”

(See also: judge, save)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 1:10
- Acts 7:35
- Galatians 1:4
- Judges 10:12

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 16:3 Then God provided a **deliverer** who rescued them from their enemies and brought peace to the land.
- 16:16 They (Israel) finally asked God for help again, and God sent them another **deliverer**.
- 16:17 Over many years, God sent many **deliverers** who saved the Israelites from their enemies.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1350, H2020, H2502, H3205, H3444, H3467, H4042, H4422, H4672, H5337, H5414, H5462, H6299, H6403, H6413, H6475, H6561, H7725, H7804, H8199, G03250, G05250, G06290, G10800, G13250, G15600, G16590, G18070, G19290, G26730, G30860, G38600, G45060, G49910, G50880, G54830

Colossians References:

1:13

dominion

Definition:

The term “dominion” refers to power, control, or authority over people, animals, or land.

- Jesus Christ is said to have dominion over all the earth, as prophet, priest, and king.
- Satan’s dominion has been defeated forever by Jesus Christ’s death on the cross.
- At creation, God said that man is to have dominion over fish, birds, and all creatures on the earth.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “authority” or “power” or “control.”
- The phrase “have dominion over” could be translated as “rule over” or “manage.”

(See also: authority, power)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 5:10-11
- Colossians 1:13
- Jude 1:25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1166, H4474, H4475, H4896, H4910, H4915, H7287, H7300, H7980, H7985, G26340, G29040, G29610, G29630

Colossians References:

1:16

earth, land

Definition:

The term “earth” refers to the world on which human beings and other living things live. In the Bible, this term is sometimes translated as “land” when used in a general way to refer to the ground or the soil, or when used in a specific way to refer to a particular geographical area, usually a country or nation.

- In the Bible, the term “earth” is often paired with the term “heaven” as a way of indicating the abode of humankind on the earth in contrast with the abode of God in heaven.
- This term is usually translated “land” when paired with the name of a people group to denote the territory belonging to those people, such as “the land of Canaan.”
- The term “earthly” is sometimes used to refer to things that are physical and/or visible in contrast to things that are non-physical and/or invisible.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term can be translated by the word or phrase that the local language or nearby national languages use to refer to the planet earth on which we live.
- Depending on the context, “earth” could also be translated as “world” or “land” or “dirt” or “soil.”
- Ways to translate “earthly” could include “physical” or “things of this earth” or “visible.”

(See also: world, heaven)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 1:38-40
- 2 Chronicles 2:11-12
- Daniel 4:35
- Luke 12:51
- Matthew 6:10
- Matthew 11:25
- Zechariah 6:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0127, H0772, H0776, H0778, H2789, H3007, H3335, H6083, H7494, G10930, G19190, G27090, G28860, G36250, G45780, G55170

Colossians References:

1:16; 1:20; 3:2; 3:5

envy, covet, jealous, jealousy

Definition:

The terms “envy” and “envious” refer to being jealous of someone because of what that person possesses or because of that person’s admirable qualities or abilities. The term “covet” means to strongly desire to have something.

- Envy is normally a negative feeling of resentment because of another person’s success, good fortune, possessions, or abilities.
- Coveting is a strong desire to have someone else’s property, or even someone else’s spouse.
- In some contexts the terms “jealous” and “jealousy” can mean “envy.”

Translation Suggestions

- When the terms “jealous” and “jealousy” refer to being wrongfully “envious” of someone the terms “envious” or “envy” could be used if the context permits.

(See also: **jealous**)

Bible References:

- **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**
- **1 Peter 2:1**
- **Exodus 20:17**
- **Mark 7:20-23**
- **Proverbs 3:31-32**
- **Romans 1:29**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0183, H1214, H1215, H2530, H3415, H5869, H7065, H7068, G08660, G19370, G22050, G22060, G37130, G37880, G41230, G41240, G41900, G53540, G53550, G53660

Colossians References:

3:5

evil, wicked, wickedness, unpleasant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “evil” can refer either to the concept of moral wickedness or emotional unpleasantness. The context will usually make it clear which meaning is intended in the specific instance of the term.

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

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

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:11
- 1 Timothy 6:10
- 3 John 1:10
- Genesis 2:17
- Genesis 6:5-6
- Job 1:1
- Job 8:20
- Judges 9:57
- Luke 6:22-23
- Matthew 7:11-12
- Proverbs 3:7
- Psalms 22:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 2:4 “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand good and **evil** like he does.”
- 3:1 After a long time, many people were living in the world. They had become very **wicked** and violent.
- 3:2 But Noah found favor with God. He was a righteous man living among **wicked** people.
- 4:2 God saw that if they all kept working together to do **evil**, they could do many more sinful things.
- 8:12 “You tried to do **evil** when you sold me as a slave, but God used the **evil** for good!”
- 14:2 They (Canaanites) worshiped false gods and did many **evil** things.
- 17:1 But then he (Saul) became a **wicked** man who did not obey God, so God chose a different man who would one day be king in his place.
- 18:11 In the new kingdom of Israel, all the kings were **evil**.
- 29:8 The king was so angry that he threw the **wicked** servant into prison until he could pay back all of his debt.
- 45:2 They said, “We heard him (Stephen) speak **evil** things about Moses and God!”
- 50:17 He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, **evil**, pain, or death.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0205, H0605, H1100, H1681, H1942, H2154, H2162, H2254, H2617, H3399, H3415, H4209, H4849, H5753, H5766, H5767, H5999, H6001, H6090, H7451, H7455, H7489, H7561, H7562, H7563, H7564, G00920, G01130, G04590, G09320, G09870, G09880, G14260, G25490, G25510, G25540, G25550, G25560, G25570, G25590, G25600, G26350, G26360, G41510, G41890, G41900, G41910, G53370

Colossians References:

1:21; 3:5; 3:8

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

Colossians References:

1:4; 1:23; 2:5; 2:7; 2:12

faithful, faithfulness, trustworthy

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

- In many contexts, “faithful” can be translated as “loyal” or “dedicated” or “dependable.”
- In other contexts, “faithful” can be translated by a word or phrase that means “continuing to believe” or “persevering in believing and obeying God.”
- Ways that “faithfulness” could be translated could include “persevering in believing” or “loyalty” or “trustworthiness” or “believing and obeying God.”

(See also: believe, faith, believe)

Bible References:

- Genesis 24:49
- Leviticus 26:40
- Numbers 12:7
- Joshua 2:14
- Judges 2:16-17
- 1 Samuel 2:9
- Psalm 12:1
- Proverbs 11:12-13
- Isaiah 1:26
- Jeremiah 9:7-9
- Hosea 5:7
- Luke 12:46
- Luke 16:10
- Colossians 1:7

- 1 Thessalonians 5:24
- 3 John 1:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 8:5 Even in prison, Joseph remained **faithful** to God, and God blessed him.
- 14:12 Even so, God was still **faithful** to His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- 15:13 The people promised to remain **faithful** to God and follow his laws.
- 17:9 David ruled with justice and **faithfulness** for many years, and God blessed him. However, toward the end of his life he sinned terribly against God.
- 35:12 “The older son said to his father, ‘All these years I have worked **faithfully** for you!’”
- 49:17 But God is **faithful** and says that if you confess your sins, he will forgive you.
- 50:4 “If you remain **faithful** to me to the end, then God will save you.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0529, H0530, H0539, H0540, H0571, H0898, H2181, H4603, H4604, H4820, G05690, G05710, G41030

Colossians References:

1:2; 1:7; 4:7; 4:9

fear, afraid, frighten

Definition:

The terms “fear” often refers to the unpleasant emotion a person feels when experiencing a potential threat to their safety or well-being. In the Bible, however, the term “fear” can also mean an attitude of worship, respect, awe, or obedience toward another person, usually someone powerful such as God or a king.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “fear” can be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: “be afraid;” “deeply respect,” or “deep respect;” “revere,” or “reverence;” or perhaps “be in awe of.”
- The sentence “The fear of God fell on all of them” might be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: “Suddenly they all felt a deep awe and respect for God;” or “Immediately, they all felt very amazed and revered God deeply;” or “Right then, they all felt very afraid of God (because of his great power).”
- The phrase “fear Yahweh” could be translated as “reverence Yahweh” or “deeply respect Yahweh.”
- The phrase “fear not” could also be translated as “do not be afraid” or “stop being afraid.”

(See also: awe, Yahweh, Lord, marvel, power)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:18
- Acts 2:43
- Acts 19:15-17
- Genesis 50:21
- Isaiah 11:3-5
- Job 6:14
- Jonah 1:9
- Luke 12:5
- Matthew 10:28
- Proverbs 10:24-25

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0367, H0926, H1204, H1481, H1672, H1674, H1763, H2119, H2296, H2727, H2729, H2730, H2731, H2844, H2849, H2865, H3016, H3025, H3068, H3372, H3373, H3374, H4032, H4034, H4035, H4116, H4172, H6206, H6342, H6343, H6345, H6427, H7264, H7267, H7297, H7374, H7461, H7493, H8175, G08700, G11670, G11680, G11690, G16300, G17190, G21240, G21250, G29620, G53980, G53990, G54000, G54010

Colossians References:

3:22

festival, feast, celebrate

Definition:

In general, a festival is a celebration held by a community of people.

- The word for “festival” in the Old Testament literally means “appointed time.”
- The festivals celebrated by the Israelites were specially appointed times or seasons that God had commanded them to observe.
- In some English translations, the word “feast” is used instead of festival because the celebrations included having a large meal together.
- There were several main festivals that the Israelites celebrated every year:
  - Passover
  - Festival of Unleavened Bread
  - Firstfruits
  - Festival of Weeks (Pentecost)
  - Festival of Trumpets
  - Day of Atonement
  - Festival of Shelters
- The purpose of these festivals was to thank God and to remember the amazing things he had done to rescue, protect, and provide for his people.

(See also: feast)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 23:31
- 2 Chronicles 8:13
- Exodus 5:1
- John 4:45
- Luke 22:1

Word Data:

• Strong’s: H1974, H2166, H2282, H2287, H6213, H4150, G14560, G18580, G18590

Colossians References:

2:16

firstborn

Definition:

The term “firstborn” refers to an offspring of people or animals that is born first, before the other offspring are born.

- In the Bible, “firstborn” usually refers to the first male offspring that is born.
- In Bible times, the firstborn son was given a place of prominence and twice as much of his family inheritance as the other sons.
- Often it was the firstborn male of an animal that was sacrificed to God.
- This concept can also be used figuratively. For example, the nation of Israel is called God’s firstborn son because God gave it special privileges over other nations.
- Jesus, the Son of God is called God’s firstborn because of his importance and authority over everyone else.

Translation Suggestions:

- When “first-born” occurs in the text alone, it could also be translated as “firstborn male” or “firstborn son,” since that is what is implied. (See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information)
- Other ways to translate this term could include “the son who was born first” or “the eldest son” or “the number one son.”
- When used figuratively to refer to Jesus, this could be translated with a word or phrase that means “the son who has authority over everything” or “the Son who is first in honor.”
- Caution: Make sure the translation of this term in reference to Jesus does not imply that he was created.

(See also: inherit, sacrifice, son)

Bible References:

- Colossians 1:15
- Genesis 4:3-5
- Genesis 29:26-27
- Genesis 43:33
- Luke 2:6-7
- Revelation 1:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1060, H1062, H1067, H1069, G44160, G52070

Colossians References:

1:15; 1:18

forgive, forgiven, forgiveness, pardon, pardoned

Definition:

To forgive someone means to not hold a grudge against that person even though they did something hurtful. “Forgiveness” is the act of forgiving someone.

- Forgiving someone often means not punishing that person for something he has done wrong.
- This term can be used figuratively to mean “cancel,” as in the expression “forgive a debt.”
- When people confess their sins, God forgives them based on Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross.
- Jesus taught his disciples to forgive others as he has forgiven them.

The term “pardon” means to forgive and not punish someone for his sin.

- This word has the same meaning as “forgive” but may also include the meaning of a formal decision to not punish someone who is guilty.
- In a court of law, a judge can pardon a person found guilty of a crime.
- Even though we are guilty of sin, Jesus Christ pardoned us from being punished in hell, based on his sacrificial death on the cross.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “forgive” could be translated as “pardon” or “cancel” or “release” or “not hold against” (someone).
- The term “forgiveness” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “practice of not resenting” or “declaring (someone) as not guilty” or “the act of pardoning.”
- If the language has a word for a formal decision to forgive, that word could be used to translate “pardon.”

(See also: guilt)

Bible References:

- Genesis 50:17
- Numbers 14:17-19
- Deuteronomy 29:20-21
- Joshua 24:19-20
- 2 Kings 5:17-19
- Psalms 25:11

- Psalms 25:17-19
- Isaiah 55:6-7
- Isaiah 40:2
- Luke 5:21
- Acts 8:22
- Ephesians 4:31-32
- Colossians 3:12-14
- 1 John 2:12

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 7:10 But Esau had already **forgiven** Jacob, and they were happy to see each other again.
- 13:15 Then Moses climbed the mountain again and prayed that God would **forgive** the people. God listened to Moses and **forgave** them.
- 17:13 David repented of his sin and God **forgave** him.
- 21:5 In the New Covenant, God would write his law on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would **forgive** their sins.
- 29:1 One day Peter asked Jesus, "Master, how many times should I **forgive** my brother when he sins against me?"
- 29:8 I **forgave** your debt because you begged me.
- 38:5 Then Jesus took a cup and said, "Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the **forgiveness** of sins."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5546, H5547, H3722, H5375, H5545, H5547, H7521, G85900, G86300, G54830

Colossians References:

1:14; 3:13

foundation, founder, founded

Definition:

Used in this sense, the verb “found” means build, create, or lay a base for. The phrase “founded on” means supported by or based on. A “foundation” is the base of support on which something is built or created.

- The foundation of a house or building must be strong and dependable in order to support the entire structure.
- The term “foundation” can also refer to the beginning of something or to the time when something was first created.
- A “foundation stone” was a stone that was laid as part of the foundation. These stones were tested to make sure they were strong enough to support an entire building.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “before the foundation of the world” could be translated as “before the creation of the world” or “before the time when the world first existed” or “before everything was first created.”
- The term “founded on” could be translated as “securely built on” or “firmly based on.”
- Depending on the context, “foundation” could be translated as “strong base” or “solid support” or “beginning” or “creation.”

(See also: cornerstone, create)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 6:37-38
- 2 Chronicles 3:1-3
- Ezekiel 13:13-14
- Luke 14:29
- Matthew 13:35
- Matthew 25:34

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0134, H0787, H2713, H3245, H3247, H3248, H4143, H4144, H4146, H4328, H4349, H4527, H8356, G23100, G23110, G26020

Colossians References:

1:23

free, freed, freedom, freeman, freewill, liberty

Definition:

The terms “free” or “freedom” refer to not being in slavery, or any other kind of bondage.

Another word for “freedom” is “liberty.”

- The expression to “set someone free” or to “free someone” means to provide a way for someone to no longer be in slavery or captivity.
- In the Bible, these terms are often used figuratively to refer to how a believer in Jesus is no longer under the power of sin.
- Having “liberty” or “freedom” can also refer to no longer being required to obey the Law of Moses, but instead being free to live by the teachings and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “free” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “not bound” or “not enslaved” or “not in slavery” or “not in bondage.”
- The term “freedom” or “liberty” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “the state of being free” or “the condition of not being a slave” or “not being bound.”
- The expression to “set free” could be translated as to “cause to be free” or to “rescue from slavery” or to “release from bondage.”
- A person who has been “set free” has been “released” or “taken out of” bondage or slavery.

(See also: bind, enslave, servant)

Bible References:

- Galatians 4:26
- Galatians 5:1
- Isaiah 61:1
- Leviticus 25:10
- Romans 6:18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1865, H2600, H2666, H2668, H2670, H3318, H4800, H5068, H5069, H5071, H5337, H5352, H5355, H5425, H5674, H5800, H6299, H6362, H7342, H7971, G04250, G05250, G05580, G06290, G06300, G08590, G13440, G14320, G16570, G16580, G16590, G18490, G30890, G39550, G45060, G54830

Colossians References:

3:11

fruit, fruitful, unfruitful

Definition:

The term “fruit” refers to the part of a plant that can be eaten. Something that is “fruitful” produces a lot of fruit. Something that is “unfruitful” does not produce fruit.

- In general, the expression “fruit of” refers to anything that comes from or that is produced by something else. For example, the phrase “the fruit of every tree” refers to the fruit that comes from these trees.
- The expression “fruit of the land” refers generally to everything that the land produces for people to eat. This includes not only fruits such as grapes or dates, but also vegetables, nuts, and grains.

Translation Suggestions:

- When the term “fruit” refers to what a specific plant produces, the specific term for the fruit of that plant can be used, otherwise, use a general word for the edible things that plants produce, if possible. In many languages it may be more natural to use the plural “fruits” whenever it refers to more than one fruit.
- When used literally, the term “fruitful” could be translated as “producing much fruit.”
- The expression “fruit of the land” could also be translated as “food that the land produces” or “food crops that are growing in that region.”
- When used literally, the expression “will be more fruitful” could also be translated as “will produce more fruit.”

(See also: descendant, grain, grape, Holy Spirit, vine, womb)

Bible References:

- Genesis 1:11
- Matthew 7:17

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0004, H1061, H1063, H1069, H2233, H2981, H3581, H3759, H3899, H3978, H4022, H5108, H6509, H6529, H7019, H8393, H8570, G10810, G25900, G25920, G25930, G37030, G50520, G53520

Colossians References:

1:intro; 1:6; 1:10

fulfill, fulfilled, carried out

Definition:

The term “fulfill” means to complete or accomplish something that was expected.

- When a prophecy is fulfilled, it means that God causes to happen what was predicted in the prophecy.
- If a person fulfills a promise or a vow, it means that he does what he has promised to do.
- To fulfill a responsibility means to do the task that was assigned or required.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “fulfill” could be translated as “accomplish” or “complete” or “cause to happen” or “obey” or “perform.”
- The phrase “has been fulfilled” could also be translated as “has come true” or “has happened” or “has taken place.”
- Ways to translate “fulfill,” as in “fulfill your ministry,” could include “complete” or “perform” or “practice” or “serve other people as God has called you to do.”

(See also: prophet, Christ, minister, call)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 2:27
- Acts 3:17-18
- Leviticus 22:17-19
- Luke 4:21
- Matthew 1:22-23
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalms 116:12-15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 24:4 John **fulfilled** what the prophets said, “See I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way.”
- 40:3 The soldiers gambled for Jesus’ clothing. When they did this, they **fulfilled** a prophecy that said, “They divided my garments among them, and gambled for my clothing.”
- 42:7 Jesus said, “I told you that everything written about me in God’s word must be **fulfilled**.”

- 43:5 “This **fulfills** the prophecy made by the prophet Joel in which God said, ‘In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.’”
- 43:7 “This **fulfills** the prophecy which says, ‘You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.’”
- 44:5 “Although you did not understand what you were doing, God used your actions to **fulfill** the prophecies that the Messiah would suffer and die.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1214, H5487, G10960, G41380

Colossians References:

1:25; 4:17

generation

Definition:

The term “generation” in this sense refers to a period of time approximately equal to the lifetime of a person. This could be as long as 100 years. This period of time also came to be measured by the time between the adulthood of one person and the adulthood of his or her offspring, or a 30–40-year time span.

Translation Suggestions

- When referring to the past, “generations” could be translated as “during the times of our ancestors” or “when people lived before us.”
- When referring to the future, “generations” could be translated as “lifespans” or “times of people who will come afterwards” or “when our descendants are living.”
- The phrase “in his own generation” could be translated as “while he lived” or “during his time”
- The expression “from generation to generation” or “from one generation to the next” could be translated as “from the time of people living now and for always” or “as long as people live on the earth” or “from now to all future time periods” or “for all time.”

(See also: descendant, ancestor)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1755, H8435, G01650, G10740

Colossians References:

1:26

Gentile

Definition:

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

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

(See also: Israel, Jacob, Jew)

Bible References:

- Acts 9:13-16
- Acts 14:5-7
- Galatians 2:16
- Luke 2:32
- Matthew 5:47
- Matthew 6:5-7
- Romans 11:25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1471, G14820, G14840, G16720

Colossians References:

1:27

glory, glorious, glorify

Definition:

The term “glory” is a general term for a family of concepts including value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, or majesty. The term “glorify” means to ascribe glory to someone or something, or to show or tell how glorious something or someone is.

- In the Bible, the term “glory” is especially used to describe God, who is more valuable, more worthy, more important, more honorable, more splendid, and more majestic than anyone or anything in the universe. Everything about his character reveals his glory.
- People can glorify God by telling about the wonderful things he has done. They can also glorify God by living in accordance with God’s character, because doing so shows to others his value, worth, importance, honor, splendor, and majesty.
- The expression to “glory in” means to boast about or take pride in something.

Old Testament

- The specific phrase “the glory of Yahweh” in the Old Testament usually refers to some perceptible manifestation of Yahweh’s presence in a particular location.

New Testament

- God the Father will glorify God the Son by revealing to all people the full extent of how glorious Jesus is.
- Everyone who believes in Christ will be glorified with him. This use of the term “glorify” carries a unique meaning. It means that when people who believe in Christ are raised to life, they will be changed physically to be like Jesus as he appeared after his resurrection.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “glory” could include “splendor” or “majesty” or “awesome greatness” or “extreme value.”
- The term “glorious” could be translated as “full of glory” or “extremely valuable” or “brightly shining” or “awesomely majestic.”
- The expression “give glory to God” could be translated as “honor God’s greatness” or “praise God because of his splendor” or “tell others how great God is.”
- The expression “glory in” could also be translated as “praise” or “take pride in” or “boast about” or “take pleasure in.”
- “Glorify” could also be translated as “give glory to” or “bring glory to” or “cause to appear great.”
- The phrase “glorify God” could also be translated as “praise God” or “talk about God’s greatness” or “show how great God is” or “honor God (by obeying him).”

- The term “be glorified” could also be translated as “be shown to be very great” or “be praised” or “be exalted.”

(See also: **honor**, **majesty**, **exalt**, **obey**, **praise**)

Bible References:

- **Exodus 24:17**
- **Numbers 14:9-10**
- **Isaiah 35:2**
- **Luke 18:43**
- **Luke 2:9**
- **John 12:28**
- **Acts 3:13-14**
- **Acts 7:1-3**
- **Romans 8:17**
- **1 Corinthians 6:19-20**
- **Philippians 2:14-16**
- **Philippians 4:19**
- Colossians 3:1-4
- **1 Thessalonians 2:5**
- **James 2:1-4**
- **1 Peter 4:15-16**
- **Revelation 15:4**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “**Glory** to God in heaven and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **25:6** Then Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their **glory** and said, “I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me.”
- **37:1** When Jesus heard this news, he said, “This sickness will not end in death, but it is for the **glory** of God.”
- **37:8** Jesus responded, “Did I not tell you that you would see God’s **glory** if you believe in me?”

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0117, H0142, H0155, H0215, H1342, H1921, H1926, H1935, H1984, H3367, H3513, H3519, H3520, H6286, H6643, H7623, H8597, G13910, G13920, G17400, G17410, G27440, G48880

Colossians References:

1:11; 1:27; 3:4

God

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate "God" could include "Deity" or "Creator" or "Supreme Being" or "Supreme Creator" or "Infinite Sovereign Lord" or "Eternal Supreme Being."
- Consider how God is referred to in a local or national language. There may also already be a word for "God" in the language being translated. If so, it is important to make sure that this word fits the characteristics of the one true God as described above.
- Many languages capitalize the first letter of the word for the one true God, to distinguish it from the word for a false god. Another way to make this distinction would be to use different terms for "God" and "god." NOTE: In the biblical text, when a person who does not worship Yahweh speaks about Yahweh and uses the word "god," it is acceptable to render the term without a capital letter in reference to Yahweh (see Jonah 1:6, 3:9).
- The phrase "I will be their God and they will be my people" could also be translated as "I, God, will rule over these people and they will worship me."

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

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

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:7
- 1 Samuel 10:7-8

- 1 Timothy 4:10
- Colossians 1:16
- Deuteronomy 29:14-16
- Ezra 3:1-2
- Genesis 1:2
- Hosea 4:11-12
- Isaiah 36:6-7
- James 2:20
- Jeremiah 5:5
- John 1:3
- Joshua 3:9-11
- Lamentations 3:43
- Micah 4:5
- Philippians 2:6
- Proverbs 24:12
- Psalms 47:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 1:1 **God** created the universe and everything in it in six days.
- 1:15 **God** made man and woman in his own image.
- 5:3 "I am **God** Almighty. I will make a covenant with you."
- 9:14 **God** said, "I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, 'I AM has sent me to you.' Also tell them, 'I am Yahweh, the **God** of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name forever.'"
- 10:2 Through these plagues, **God** showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's gods.
- 16:1 The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the true **God**.
- 22:7 "You, my son, will be called the prophet of the **Most High God** who will prepare the people to receive the Messiah!"
- 24:9 There is only one **God**. But John heard **God** the Father speak, and saw Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit when he baptized Jesus.
- 25:7 "Worship only the Lord your **God** and only serve him."
- 28:1 "There is only one who is good, and that is **God**."

- 49:9 But **God** loved everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with **God** forever.
- 50:16 But some day **God** will create a new heaven and a new earth that will be perfect.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0136, H0305, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0433, H2486, H2623, H3068, H3069, H3863, H4136, H6697, G01120, G05160, G09320, G09350, G10960, G11400, G20980, G21240, G21280, G21500, G21520, G21530, G22990, G23040, G23050, G23120, G23130, G23140, G23150, G23160, G23170, G23180, G23190, G23200, G33610, G37850, G41510, G52070, G53770, G54630, G55370, G55380

Colossians References:

1:1; 1:6; 1:10; 1:15; 1:25; 1:27; 2:2; 2:9; 2:12; 2:19; 3:1; 3:3; 3:6; 3:12; 3:16; 4:3; 4:12

God the Father, heavenly Father, Father

Definition:

The terms “God the Father” and “heavenly Father” refer to Yahweh, the one true God. Another term with the same meaning is “Father,” used most often when Jesus was referring to him.

- God exists as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each one is fully God, and yet they are only one God. This is a mystery that mere humans cannot fully understand.
- God the Father sent God the Son (Jesus) into the world and he sends the Holy Spirit to his people.
- Anyone who believes in God the Son becomes a child of God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit comes to live in that person. This is another mystery that human beings cannot fully understand.

Translation Suggestions:

- In translating the phrase “God the Father,” it is best to translate “Father” with the same word that the language naturally uses to refer to a human father.
- The term “heavenly Father” could be translated by “Father who lives in heaven” or “Father God who lives in heaven” or “God our Father from heaven.”
- Usually “Father” is capitalized when it, refers to God.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: ancestor, God, heaven, Holy Spirit, Jesus, Son of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 8:4-6
- 1 John 2:1
- 1 John 2:23
- 1 John 3:1
- Colossians 1:1-3
- Ephesians 5:18-21
- Luke 10:22
- Matthew 5:16
- Matthew 23:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 24:9 There is only one God. But John heard **God the Father** speak, and saw Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit when he baptized Jesus.
- 29:9 Then Jesus said, “This is what my **heavenly Father** will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
- 37:9 Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “**Father**, thank you for hearing me.”
- 40:7 Then Jesus cried out, “It is finished! **Father**, I give my spirit into your hands.”
- 42:10 “So go, make disciples of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of **the Father**, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
- 43:8 “Jesus is now exalted to the right hand of **God the Father**.”
- 50:10 “Then the righteous ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of **God their Father**.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0001, H0002, G39620

Colossians References:

1:2; 1:3; 1:12; 3:17

god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry

Definition:

A false god is something that people worship instead of the one true God. The term "goddess" refers specifically to a female false god.

- These false gods or goddesses do not exist. Yahweh is the only God.
- People sometimes make objects into idols to worship as symbols of their false gods.
- In the Bible, God's people frequently turned away from obeying him in order to worship false gods.
- Demons often deceive people into believing that the false gods and idols they worship have power.
- Baal, Dagon, and Molech were three of the many false gods that were worshiped by people in Bible times.
- Asherah and Artemis (Diana) were two of the goddesses that ancient peoples worshiped.

An idol is an object that people make so they can worship it. Something is described as "idolatrous" if it involves giving honor to something other than the one true God.

- People make idols to represent the false gods that they worship.
- These false gods do not exist; there is no God besides Yahweh.
- Sometimes demons work through an idol to make it seem like it has power, even though it does not.
- Idols are often made of valuable materials like gold, silver, bronze, or expensive wood.
- An "idolatrous kingdom" means a "kingdom of people who worship idols" or a "kingdom of people who worship earthly things."
- The term "idolatrous figure" is another word for a "carved image" or an "idol."

Translation Suggestions:

- There may already be a word for "god" or "false god" in the language or in a nearby language.
- The term "idol" could be used to refer to false gods.
- In English, a lower case "g" is used to refer to false gods, and upper case "G" is used to refer to the one true God. Other languages also do that.
- Another option would be to use a completely different word to refer to the false gods.
- Some languages may add a word to specify whether the false god is described as male or female.

(See also: God, Asherah, Baal, Molech, demon, image, kingdom, worship)

Bible References:

- Genesis 35:2
- Exodus 32:1
- Psalms 31:6
- Psalms 81:8-10
- Isaiah 44:20
- Acts 7:41
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 15:20
- Acts 19:27
- Romans 2:22
- Galatians 4:8-9
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 10:2 Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's **gods**.
- 13:4 Then God gave them the covenant and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other **gods**."
- 14:2 They (Canaanites) worshiped false **gods** and did many evil things.
- 16:1 The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite **gods** instead of Yahweh, the true God.
- 18:13 But most of Judah's kings were evil, corrupt, and they worshiped idols. Some of the kings even sacrificed their children to false **gods**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0367, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0457, H1322, H1544, H1892, H2553, H3649, H4656, H4906, H5236, H5566, H6089, H6090, H6091, H6456, H6459, H6673, H6736, H6754, H7723, H8163, H8251, H8267, H8441, H8655, G14930, G14940, G14950, G14960, G14970, G22990, G27120

Colossians References:

3:5

good news, gospel

Definition:

The term “gospel” literally means “good news” and refers to a message or announcement that tells people something that benefits them and makes them glad.

- In the Bible, this term usually refers to the message about God’s salvation for people through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.
- In most English Bibles, “good news” is usually translated as “gospel” and is also used in phrases such as, the “gospel of Jesus Christ,” the “gospel of God” and the “gospel of the kingdom.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Different ways to translate this term could include, “good message” or “good announcement” or “God’s message of salvation” or “the good things God teaches about Jesus.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate the phrase, “good news of” could include, “good news/message about” or “good message from” or “the good things God tells us about” or “what God says about how he saves people.”

(See also: kingdom, sacrifice, save)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:5
- Acts 8:25
- Colossians 1:23
- Galatians 1:6
- Luke 8:1-3
- Mark 1:14
- Philippians 2:22
- Romans 1:3

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 23:6 The angel said, “Do not be afraid, because I have some **good news** for you. The Messiah, the Master, has been born in Bethlehem!”
- 26:3 Jesus read, “God has given me his Spirit so that I can proclaim **good news** to the poor, freedom to captives, recovery of sight for the blind, and release to the oppressed. This is the year of the Lord’s favor.”

- 45:10 Philip also used other Scriptures to tell him the **good news of Jesus**.
- 46:10 Then they sent them off to preach the **good news about Jesus** in many other places.
- 47:1 One day, Paul and his friend Silas went to the town of Philippi to proclaim the **good news about Jesus**.
- 47:13 The **good news about Jesus** kept spreading, and the Church kept growing.
- 50:1 For almost 2,000 years, more and more people around the world have been hearing the **good news about Jesus** the Messiah.
- 50:2 When Jesus was living on earth he said, “My disciples will preach the **good news** about the kingdom of God to people everywhere in the world, and then the end will come.”
- 50:3 Before he returned to heaven, Jesus told Christians to proclaim the **good news** to people who have never heard it.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G20970, G20980, G42830

Colossians References:

1:5; 1:23

good, right, pleasant, better, best, goodness

Definition:

The term “good” generally refers to a positive evaluation of the quality of something or someone, often in a moral or emotional sense. However, the term conveys various nuances throughout the Bible depending on the context.

- Something that is “good” could be emotionally pleasant, morally right, excellent, helpful, suitable, or profitable.
- In the Bible, the general meaning of “good” is often contrasted with “evil.”

Translation Suggestions:

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

(See also: righteous, prosper, evil)

Bible References:

- Galatians 5:22-24
- Genesis 1:12
- Genesis 2:9
- Genesis 2:17
- James 3:13
- Romans 2:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 1:4 God saw that what he had created was **good**.

- 1:11 God planted the tree of the knowledge of **good** and evil.
- 1:12 Then God said, “It is not **good** for man to be alone.”
- 2:4 “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand **good** and evil like he does.”
- 8:12 “You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, but God used the evil for **good**!”
- 14:15 Joshua was a **good** leader because he trusted and obeyed God.
- 18:13 Some of these kings were **good** men who ruled justly and worshiped God.
- 28:1 “**Good** teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me ‘**good**?’ There is only one who is **good**, and that is God.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0117, H0145, H0155, H0202, H0239, H0410, H1580, H1926, H1935, H2532, H2617, H2623, H2869, H2895, H2896, H2898, H3190, H3191, H3276, H3474, H3788, H3966, H4261, H4399, H5232, H5750, H6287, H6643, H6743, H7075, H7368, H7399, H7443, H7999, H8231, H8232, H8233, H8389, H8458, G00140, G00150, G00180, G00190, G05150, G07440, G08650, G09790, G13800, G20950, G20970, G21060, G21070, G21080, G21090, G21140, G21150, G21330, G21400, G21620, G21630, G21740, G22930, G25650, G25670, G25700, G25730, G28870, G29860, G31400, G36170, G37760, G41470, G46320, G46740, G48510, G52230, G52240, G53580, G55420, G55430, G55440

Colossians References:

1:10

grace, gracious

Definition:

The word “grace” refers to help or blessing that is given to someone who has not earned it.

The term “gracious” describes someone who shows grace to others.

- God’s grace toward sinful human beings is a gift that is freely given.
- The concept of grace also refers to being kind and forgiving to someone who has done wrong or hurtful things.
- The expression to “find grace” is an expression that means to receive help and mercy from God. Often it includes the meaning that God is pleased with someone and helps him.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways that “grace” could be translated include “divine kindness” or “God’s favor” or “God’s kindness and forgiveness for sinners” or “merciful kindness.”
- The term “gracious” could be translated as “full of grace” or “kind” or “merciful” or “mercifully kind.”
- The expression “he found grace in the eyes of God” could be translated as “he received mercy from God” or “God mercifully helped him” or “God showed his favor to him” or “God was pleased with him and helped him.”

Bible References:

- Acts 4:33
- Acts 6:8
- Acts 14:4
- Colossians 4:6
- Colossians 4:18
- Genesis 43:28-29
- James 4:7
- John 1:16
- Philippians 4:21-23
- Revelation 22:20-21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2580, H2587, H2589, H2603, H8467, G21430, G54850, G55430

Colossians References:

1:2; 1:6; 3:16; 4:6; 4:18

Greek, Grecian, Hellenist

Definition:

The term “Greek” refers to the language spoken in the country of Greece, it is also a person from the country of Greece. Greek was also spoken throughout the Roman Empire. The adjective “Grecian” means “Greek-speaking.”

- Since most non-Jewish people in the Roman Empire spoke Greek, Gentiles are often referred to as “Greeks” in the New Testament, especially when contrasted with Jews.
- The phrase “Grecian Jews” or “Hellenists” referred to Jews who spoke Greek in contrast to the “Hebraic Jews” who spoke only Hebrew, or perhaps Aramaic. The term “Hellenists” comes from the pronunciation of the Greek word for a Greek-speaker.
- Other ways to translate “Grecian” could include, “Greek-speaking” or “culturally Greek” or “Greek.”
- When referring to non-Jews, “Greek” could be translated as “Gentile.”

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Aram, Gentile, Greece, Hebrew, Rome)

Bible References:

- Acts 6:1
- Acts 9:29
- Acts 11:20
- Acts 14:1-2
- Colossians 3:11
- Galatians 2:3-5
- John 7:35

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3125, G16720, G16730, G16740, G16750, G16760

Colossians References:

3:11

heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

Definition:

The term that is translated as “heaven” usually refers to where God lives. The same word can also mean “sky,” depending on the context.

- The term “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars. It also includes the heavenly bodies, such as far-off planets, that we cannot directly see from the earth.
- The term “sky” refers to the blue expanse above the earth that has clouds and the air we breathe. Often the sun and moon are also said to be “up in the sky.”
- In some contexts in the Bible, the word “heaven” could refer to either the sky or the place where God lives.

Translation Suggestions:

- For “kingdom of heaven” in the book of Matthew, it is best to keep the word “heaven” since this is distinctive to Matthew’s gospel.
- The terms “heavens” or “heavenly bodies” could also be translated as “sun, moon, and stars” or “all the stars in the universe.”
- The phrase, “stars of heaven” could be translated as “stars in the sky” or “stars in the galaxy” or “stars in the universe.”

(See also: kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:22-24
- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Deuteronomy 9:1
- Ephesians 6:9
- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 7:11
- John 3:12
- John 3:27
- Matthew 5:18
- Matthew 5:46-48

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 4:2 They even began building a tall tower to reach **heaven**.
- 14:11 He (God) gave them bread from **heaven**, called “manna.”
- 23:7 Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “Glory to God in **heaven** and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- 29:9 Then Jesus said, “This is what my **heavenly** Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
- 37:9 Then Jesus looked up to **heaven** and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.”
- 42:11 Then Jesus went up to **heaven**, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1534, H6160, H6183, H7834, H8064, H8065, G09320, G20320, G33210, G37700, G37710, G37720

Colossians References:

1:5; 1:16; 1:20; 1:23; 4:1

Holy Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit

Definition:

These terms all refer to the Holy Spirit, who is God. The one true God exists eternally as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit is also referred to as “the Spirit” and “Spirit of Yahweh” and “Spirit of truth.”
- Because the Holy Spirit is God, he is absolutely holy, infinitely pure, and morally perfect in all his nature and in everything he does.
- Along with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit was active in creating the world.
- When God’s Son, Jesus, returned to heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to his people to lead them, teach them, comfort them, and enable them to do God’s will.
- The Holy Spirit guided Jesus and he guides those who believe in Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could simply be translated with the words used to translate “holy” and “spirit.”
- Ways to translate this term could also include “Pure Spirit” or “Spirit who is Holy” or “God the Spirit.”

(See also: holy, spirit, God, Lord, God the Father, Son of God, gift)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 10:10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8
- Acts 8:17
- Galatians 5:25
- Genesis 1:1-2
- Isaiah 63:10
- Job 33:4
- Matthew 12:31
- Matthew 28:18-19
- Psalms 51:10-11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 1:1 But **God's Spirit** was there over the water.
- 24:8 When Jesus came up out of the water after being baptized, **the Spirit of God** appeared in the form of a dove and came down and rested on him.
- 26:1 After overcoming Satan's temptations, Jesus returned in the power of **the Holy Spirit** to the region of Galilee where he lived.
- 26:3 Jesus read, "God has given me **his Spirit** so that I can proclaim good news to the poor, freedom to captives, recovery of sight for the blind, and release to the oppressed."
- 42:10 "So go, make disciples of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and **the Holy Spirit** and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."
- 43:3 They were all filled with the **Holy Spirit** and they began to speak in other languages.
- 43:8 "And Jesus has sent the **Holy Spirit** just as he promised he would do. The **Holy Spirit** is causing the things that you are are now seeing and hearing."
- 43:11 Peter answered them, "Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your sins. Then he will also give you the gift of the **Holy Spirit**."
- 45:1 He (Stephen) had a good reputation and was full of the **Holy Spirit** and of wisdom.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3068, H6944, H7307, G00400, G41510

Colossians References:

1:8

holy, holiness, unholy, sacred

Definition:

The terms “holy” and “holiness” refer to the character of God that is totally set apart and separated from everything that is sinful and imperfect.

- Only God is absolutely holy. He makes people and things holy.
- A person who is holy belongs to God and has been set apart for the purpose of serving God and bringing him glory.
- An object that God has declared to be holy is one that he has set apart for his glory and use, such as an altar that is for the purpose of offering sacrifices to him.
- People cannot approach him unless he allows them to, because he is holy and they are merely human beings, sinful and imperfect.
- In the Old Testament, God set apart the priests as holy for special service to him. They had to be ceremonially cleansed from sin in order to approach God.
- God also set apart as holy certain places and things that belonged to him or in which he revealed himself, such as his temple.

Literally, the term “unholy” means “not holy.” It describes someone or something that does not honor God.

- This word is used to describe someone who dishonors God by rebelling against him.
- A thing that is called “unholy” could be described as being common, profane or unclean. It does not belong to God.

The term “sacred” describes something that relates to worshiping God or to the pagan worship of false gods.

- In the Old Testament, the term “sacred” was often said to describe the stone pillars and other objects used in the worship of false gods. This could also be translated as “religious.”
- “Sacred songs” and “sacred music” refer to music that was sung or played for God’s glory. This could be translated as “music for worshiping Yahweh” or “songs that praise God.”
- The phrase “sacred duties” referred to the “religious duties” or “rituals” that a priest performed to lead people in worshiping God. It could also refer to the rituals performed by a pagan priest to worship a false god

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “holy” might include “set apart for God” or “belonging to God” or “completely pure” or “perfectly sinless” or “separated from sin.”

- To “make holy” is often translated as “sanctify” in English. It could also be translated as “set apart (someone) for God’s glory.”
- Ways to translate “unholy” could include “not holy” or “not belonging to God” or “not honoring to God” or “not godly.”
- In some contexts, “unholy” could be translated as “unclean.”

(See also: Holy Spirit, consecrate, sanctify, set apart)

Bible References:

- Genesis 28:22
- 2 Kings 3:2
- Lamentations 4:1
- Ezekiel 20:18-20
- Matthew 7:6
- Mark 8:38
- Acts 7:33
- Acts 11:8
- Romans 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 12:3-5
- Colossians 1:22
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 1:16 He (God) blessed the seventh day and made it **holy**, because on this day he rested from his work.
- 9:12 “You are standing on **holy** ground.”
- 13:2 “If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a **holy** nation.”
- 13:5 “Always be sure to keep the Sabbath day **holy**.”
- 22:5 “So the baby will be **holy**, the Son of God.”
- 50:2 As we wait for Jesus to return, God wants us to live in a way that is **holy** and that honors him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H2455, H2623, H4676, H4720, H6918, H6922, H6942, H6944, H6948, G00370, G00380, G00400, G00400, G00410, G00420, G04620, G18590, G21500, G24120, G24130, G28390, G37410, G37420

Colossians References:

1:22; 3:12

hope, hoped

Definition:

Hope is strongly desiring something to happen. Hope can imply either certainty or uncertainty regarding a future event.

- In the Bible, the term "hope" also has the meaning of "trust," as in "my hope is in the Lord." It refers to a sure expectation of receiving what God has promised his people.
- Sometimes the ULT translates the term in the original language as "confidence." This happens mostly in the New Testament in situations where people who believe in Jesus as their Savior have the assurance (or confidence or hope) of receiving what God has promised.
- To have "no hope" means to have no expectation of something good happening. It means that it is actually very certain that it will not happen.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, the term to "hope" could also be translated as to "wish" or to "desire" or to "expect."
- The expression "nothing to hope for" could be translated as "nothing to trust in" or "no expectation of anything good"
- To "have no hope" could be translated as "have no expectation of anything good" or "have no security" or "be sure that nothing good will happen."
- The expression "have set your hopes on" could also be translated as "have put your confidence in" or "have been trusting in."
- The phrase "I find hope in your Word" could also be translated as "I am confident that your Word is true" or "Your Word helps me trust in you" or "When I obey your Word, I am certain to be blessed."
- Phrases such as "hope in" God could also be translated a, "trust in God" or "know for sure that God will do what he has promised" or "be certain that God is faithful."

(See also: **bless**, **confidence**, good, **obey**, **trust**, word of God)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 29:14-15**
- **1 Thessalonians 2:19**
- **Acts 24:14-16**
- **Acts 26:6**
- **Acts 27:20**
- Colossians 1:5

- Job 11:20

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0982, H0983, H0986, H2620, H2976, H3175, H3176, H3689, H4009, H4268, H4723, H7663, H7664, H8431, H8615, G00910, G05600, G16790, G16800, G20700

Colossians References:

1:5; 1:23; 1:27

house

Definition:

The term “house” refers to a small building, shelter, or tent, usually the place where a family sleeps.

- When referring to a building where people live and sleep the term “house” could be translated as “dwelling place” or “dwelling structure” or with another term that expresses the meaning.

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1004, H1005, H1035, H1397, G36140, G36240

Colossians References:

4:15

image of God, image

Definition:

The term “image” refers to something that looks like something else or that is like someone in character or essence. The phrase “image of God” is used in different ways, depending on the context.

- At the beginning of time, God created human beings “in his image,” that is, “in his likeness.” This means that people have certain characteristics that reflect the image of God, such as the ability to feel emotion, the ability to reason and communicate, and a spirit that lives eternally.
- The Bible teaches that Jesus, God’s Son, is “the image of God,” that is, he is God himself. Unlike human beings, Jesus was not created. From all eternity God the Son has had all the divine characteristics because he has had the same essence with God the Father.

Translation Suggestions:

- When referring to Jesus, “image of God” could be translated as “exact likeness of God” or “same essence as God” or “same being as God.”
- When referring to human beings, “God created them in his image” could be translated with a phrase that means “God created them to be like him” or “God created them with characteristics like his own.”

(See also: image, Son of God, Son of God)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 4:3-4
- Colossians 3:9-11
- Genesis 1:26-27
- Genesis 9:6
- James 3:9-10
- Romans 8:28-30

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4541, H1544, H2553, H6456, H6459, H6754, H6816, H8403, G05040, G01790

Colossians References:

1:15; 3:10

in Christ, in Jesus, in the Lord, in him

Definition:

The phrase “in Christ” and related terms refer to the state or condition of being in relationship with Jesus Christ through faith in him.

- Other related terms include “in Christ Jesus, in Jesus Christ, in the Lord Jesus, in the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Possible meanings for the term “in Christ” could include “because you belong to Christ” or “through the relationship you have with Christ” or “based on your faith in Christ.”
- These related terms all have the same meaning of being in a state of believing in Jesus and being his disciple.
- Note: Sometimes the word “in” belongs with the verb. For example, “share in Christ” means to “share in” the benefits that come from knowing Christ. To “glory in” Christ means to be glad and give praise to God for who Jesus is and what he has done. To “believe in” Christ means to trust him as Savior and know him.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “in Christ” and “in the Lord” (and related phrases) could include:
  - “who belong to Christ”
  - “because you believe in Christ”
  - “because Christ has saved us”
  - “in service to the Lord”
  - “relying on the Lord”
  - “because of what the Lord has done.”
- People who “believe in” Christ or who “have faith in” Christ believe what Jesus taught and are trusting him to save them because of his sacrifice on the cross that paid the penalty for their sins. Some languages may have one word that translates verbs like “believe in” or “share in” or “trust in.”

(See also: Christ, Lord, Jesus, believe, faith)

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:5
- 2 Corinthians 2:17

- 2 Timothy 1:1
- Galatians 1:22
- Galatians 2:17
- Philemon 1:6
- Revelation 1:10
- Romans 9:1

Word Data:

- Strong's: G15190, G29620, G55470

Colossians References:

1:2; 1:4; 1:28; 2:5; 3:18; 3:20; 4:7; 4:17

inherit, inheritance, heir

Definition:

The term “inherit” refers to receiving something valuable from a parent after a parent dies. The term can also refer to receiving something valuable from some other person because of a special relationship with that person. An “inheritance” is the things that are received, and an “heir” is a person who receives an inheritance.

- A physical inheritance that is received may be money, land, or other kinds of property.
- God promised Abraham and his descendants that they would inherit the land of Canaan, that it would belong to them forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- As always, consider first whether there are already terms in the target language for the concept of an heir or an inheritance, and use those terms.
- Depending on the context, other ways that the term “inherit” could be translated might include “receive” or “possess” or “come into possession of.”
- Ways to translate “inheritance” could include “promised gift” or “secure possession.”
- The term “heir” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “privileged child who receives the father’s possessions.”
- The term “heritage” could be translated as “inherited blessings.”

(See also: heir, Canaan, Promised Land, possess)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- 1 Peter 1:4
- 2 Samuel 21:3
- Acts 7:4-5
- Deuteronomy 20:16
- Galatians 5:21
- Genesis 15:7
- Hebrews 9:15
- Jeremiah 2:7
- Luke 15:11
- Matthew 19:29

- Psalm 79:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 4:6 When Abram arrived in Canaan God said, “Look all around you. I will give to you and your descendants all the land that you can see as an **inheritance**.”
- 27:1 One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to **inherit** eternal life?”
- 35:3 “There was a man who had two sons. The younger son told his father, ‘Father, I want my **inheritance** now!’ So the father divided his property between the two sons.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2490, H2506, H3423, H3425, H4181, H5157, H5159, G28160, G28170, G28190, G28200

Colossians References:

1:12; 3:24

instruct, instruction, instructor

Definition:

The terms “instruct” and “instruction” refer to giving specific directions about what to do.

- To “give instructions” means to tell someone specifically what he is supposed to do.
- When Jesus gave the disciples the bread and fish to distribute to the people, he gave them specific instructions about how to do it.
- Depending on the context, the term “instruct” could also be translated as “tell” or “direct” or “teach” or “give instructions to.”
- The term “instructions” could be translated as “directions” or “explanations” or “what he has told you to do.”
- When God gives instructions, this term is sometimes translated as “commands” or “orders.”

(See also: **command**, **decree**, **teach**)

Bible References:

- **Exodus 14:4**
- **Genesis 26:5**
- **Hebrews 11:22**
- **Matthew 10:5**
- **Matthew 11:1**
- **Proverbs 1:30**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0241, H0376, H0559, H0631, H1004, H1696, H1697, H3256, H3289, H3384, H4148, H4156, H4687, H4931, H4941, H6098, H6310, H6490, H6680, H7919, H8451, G12560, G12990, G13190, G13210, G13780, G17810, G17850, G27270, G27530, G35590, G35600, G38110, G38520, G38530, G42640, G43670, G48220

Colossians References:

4:10

Jesus, Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus

Definition:

Jesus is God's Son. The name "Jesus" means "Yahweh saves." The term "Christ" is a title that means "anointed one" and is another word for Messiah.

- The two names are often combined as "Jesus Christ" or "Christ Jesus." These names emphasize that God's Son is the Messiah, who came to save people from being punished eternally for their sins.
- In a miraculous way, the Holy Spirit caused the eternal Son of God to be born as a human being. His mother was told by an angel to call him "Jesus" because he was destined to save people from their sins.
- Jesus did many miracles that revealed that he is God and that he is the Christ, or the Messiah.

Translation Suggestions:

- In many languages "Jesus" and "Christ" are spelled in a way that keeps the sounds or spelling as close to the original as possible. For example, "Jesucristo," "Jezus Christus," "Yesus Kristus", and "Hesukristo" are some of the ways that these names are translated into different languages.
- For the term "Christ," some translators may prefer to use only some form of the term "Messiah" throughout.
- Also consider how these names are spelled in a nearby local or national language.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Christ, God, God the Father, high priest, kingdom of God, Mary, Savior, Son of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:11
- 1 John 2:2
- 1 John 4:15
- 1 Timothy 1:2
- 2 Peter 1:2
- 2 Thessalonians 2:15
- 2 Timothy 1:10
- Acts 2:23

- Acts 5:30
- Acts 10:36
- Hebrews 9:14
- Hebrews 10:22
- Luke 24:20
- Matthew 1:21
- Matthew 4:3
- Philippians 2:5
- Philippians 2:10
- Philippians 4:21-23
- Revelation 1:6

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 22:4 The angel said, “You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You are to name him **Jesus** and he will be the Messiah.”
- 23:2 “Name him **Jesus** (which means, ‘Yahweh saves’), because he will save the people from their sins.”
- 24:7 So John baptized him (Jesus), even though **Jesus** had never sinned.
- 24:9 There is only one God. But John heard God the Father speak, and saw **Jesus** the Son and the Holy Spirit when he baptized **Jesus**.
- 25:8 **Jesus** did not give in to Satan’s temptations, so Satan left him.
- 26:8 Then **Jesus** went throughout the region of Galilee, and large crowds came to him. They brought many people who were sick or handicapped, including those who could not see, walk, hear, or speak, and **Jesus** healed them.
- 31:3 Then **Jesus** finished praying and went to the disciples. He walked on top of the water across the lake toward their boat!
- 38:2 He (Judas) knew that the Jewish leaders denied that **Jesus** was the Messiah and that they were plotting to kill him.
- 40:8 Through his death, **Jesus** opened a way for people to come to God.
- 42:11 Then **Jesus** was taken up to heaven, and a cloud hid him from their sight. **Jesus** sat down at the right hand of God to rule over all things.
- 50:17 **Jesus** and his people will live on the new earth, and he will reign forever over everything that exists. He will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, evil, pain, or death. **Jesus** will rule his kingdom with peace and justice, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G24240, G55470

Colossians References:

1:1; 1:2; 1:3; 1:4; 2:6; 3:17; 4:12

Jew, Jewish

Definition:

Jews are people who are descendants of Abraham's grandson Jacob. The word "Jew" comes from the word "Judah."

- People began to call the Israelites "Jews" after they returned to Judah from their exile in Babylon.
- Jesus the Messiah was Jewish. However, the Jewish religious leaders rejected Jesus and demanded that he be killed.

(See also: **Abraham**, **Jacob**, **Israel**, **Babylon**, **Jewish leaders**)

Bible References:

- **Acts 2:5**
- **Acts 10:28**
- **Acts 14:5-7**
- Colossians 3:11
- **John 2:14**
- **Matthew 28:15**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **20:11** The Israelites were now called **Jews** and most of them had lived their whole lives in Babylon.
- **20:12** So, after seventy years in exile, a small group of **Jews** returned to the city of Jerusalem in Judah.
- **37:10** Many of the **Jews** believed in Jesus because of this miracle.
- **37:11** But the religious leaders of the **Jews** were jealous, so they gathered together to plan how they could kill Jesus and Lazarus.
- **40:2** Pilate commanded that they write, "King of the **Jews**" on a sign and put it on the cross above Jesus' head.
- **46:6** Right away, Saul began preaching to the **Jews** in Damascus, saying, "Jesus is the Son of God!"

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3054, H3061, H3062, H3064, H3066, G24500, G24510, G24520, G24530, G24540

Colossians References:

3:11

John Mark

Definition:

John Mark, also known as "Mark," was one of the men who traveled with Paul on his missionary journeys. He is most likely the author of the Gospel of Mark.

- John Mark accompanied his cousin Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey.
- When Peter was put in prison in Jerusalem, the believers there were praying for him at John Mark's mother's house.
- Mark was not an apostle, but was taught by both Paul and Peter and worked together with them in ministry.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Barnabas, Paul)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:11-13
- Acts 12:24-25
- Acts 13:5
- Acts 13:13
- Acts 15:36-38
- Acts 15:39-41
- Colossians 4:10-11

Word Data:

- Strong's: G24910, G31380

Colossians References:

4:10

joy, joyful, rejoice, glad

Definition:

joy

The term “joy” refers to a feeling of delight or deep satisfaction. The related term “joyful” describes a person who feels very glad and is full of deep happiness.

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

rejoice

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

Bible References:

- Nehemiah 8:10
- Psalm 48:2

- **Isaiah 56:6-7**
- **Jeremiah 15:15-16**
- **Matthew 2:9-10**
- **Luke 15:7**
- **Luke 19:37-38**
- **John 3:29**
- **Acts 16:32-34**
- **Romans 5:1-2**
- **Romans 15:30-32**
- **Galatians 5:23**
- **Philippians 4:10-13**
- **1 Thessalonians 1:6-7**
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16**
- **Philemon 1:4-7**
- **James 1:2**
- **3 John 1:1-4**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **33:7** “The rocky ground is a person who hears God’s word and accepts it with **joy**.”
- **34:4** “The kingdom of God is also like hidden treasure that someone hid in a field… Another man found the treasure and then buried it again. He was so filled with **joy**, that he went and sold everything he had and used the money to buy that field.”
- **41:7** The women were full of fear and great **joy**. They ran to tell the disciples the good news.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1523, H1524, H1525, H2302, H2304, H2305, H2654, H2898, H4885, H5937, H5947, H5965, H5970, H6342, H6670, H7440, H7442, H7444, H7445, H7797, H7832, H8055, H8056, H8057, H8342, H8643, G00200, G00210, G21650, G21670, G27440, G46400, G47960, G49130, G54630, G54790

Colossians References:

1:11; 1:24; 2:5

judge, judgment

Definition:

The terms “judge” and “judgment” often refer to making a decision about whether or not something is good, wise, or right. However, these terms can also refer to actions performed by a person as the result of a decision, usually in the context of deciding that something is bad, wrong, or evil.

- The terms “judge” and “judgment” can also mean “to cause harm to” (usually because God has decided a person or nation’s actions are wicked).
- The “judgment of God” often refers to his decision to condemn something or someone as sinful.
- God’s judgment usually includes punishing people for their sin.
- The term “judge” can also mean “condemn.” God instructs his people not to judge each other in this way.
- Another meaning is “arbitrate between” or “judge between,” as in deciding which person is right in a dispute between them.
- In some contexts, God’s “judgments” are what he has decided is right and just. They are similar to his decrees, laws, or precepts.
- “Judgment” can refer to wise decision-making ability. A person who lacks “judgment” does not have the wisdom to make wise decisions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate to “judge” could include to “decide” or to “condemn” or to “punish” or to “decree.”
- The term “judgment” could be translated as “punishment” or “decision” or “verdict” or “decree” or “condemnation.”
- In some contexts, the phrase “in the judgment” could also be translated as “on judgment day” or “during the time when God judges people.”

(See also: **decree**, **judge**, **judgment day**, **just**, **law**, **law**)

Bible References:

- **1 John 4:17**
- **1 Kings 3:9**
- **Acts 10:42-43**
- **Isaiah 3:14**
- **James 2:4**

- Luke 6:37
- Micah 3:9-11
- Psalm 54:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 19:16 The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would **judge** them as guilty, and he would punish them.
- 21:8 A king is someone who rules over a kingdom and **judges** the people. The Messiah would come would be the perfect king who would sit on the throne of his ancestor David. He would reign over the whole world forever, and who would always **judge** honestly and make the right decisions.
- 39:4 The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted to the other religious leaders, “We do not need any more witnesses! You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your **judgment**?”
- 50:14 But God will **judge** everyone who does not believe in Jesus. He will throw them into hell, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0148, H0430, H1777, H1778, H1779, H1780, H1781, H1782, H2940, H4055, H4941, H6414, H6415, H6416, H6417, H6419, H6485, H8196, H8199, H8201, G01440, G03500, G09680, G11060, G12520, G13410, G13450, G13480, G13490, G29170, G29190, G29200, G29220, G29230, G42320

Colossians References:

2:16

kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven

Definition:

The terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” both refer to God’s rule and authority over his people and over all creation.

- The Jews often used the term “heaven” to refer to God, to avoid saying his name directly. (See: metonymy)
- In the New Testament book that Matthew wrote, he referred to God’s kingdom as “the kingdom of heaven,” probably because he was writing primarily for a Jewish audience.
- The kingdom of God refers to God ruling people spiritually as well as ruling over the physical world.
- The Old Testament prophets said that God would send the Messiah to rule with righteousness. Jesus, the Son of God, is the Messiah who will rule over God’s kingdom forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “kingdom of God” can be translated as “God’s rule (as king)” or “when God reigns as king” or “God’s rule over everything.”
- Depending on the context, the term “kingdom of heaven” could also be translated as “God’s rule from heaven as king” or “God in heaven reigning” or “heaven’s reign” or “heaven ruling over everything.” If it is not possible to translate this simply and clearly, the phrase “kingdom of God” could be translated instead.
- Some translators may prefer to capitalize “Heaven” to show that it refers to God. Others may include a note in the text, such as “kingdom of heaven (that is, ‘kingdom of God’).”
- A footnote at the bottom of the page of a printed Bible may also be used to explain the meaning of “heaven” in this expression.

(See also: God, heaven, king, kingdom, King of the Jews, reign)

Bible References:

- 2 Thessalonians 1:5
- Acts 8:12-13
- Acts 28:23
- Colossians 4:11
- John 3:3
- Luke 7:28
- Luke 10:9

- Luke 12:31-32
- Matthew 3:2
- Matthew 4:17
- Matthew 5:10
- Romans 14:17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 24:2 He (John) preached to them, saying, “Repent, for the **kingdom of God** is near!”
- 28:6 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “It is extremely hard for rich people to enter into the **kingdom of God**! Yes, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the **kingdom of God**.”
- 29:2 Jesus said, “The **kingdom of God** is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.”
- 34:1 Jesus told many other stories about the **kingdom of God**. For example, he said, “The **kingdom of God** is like a mustard seed that someone planted in his field.”
- 34:3 Jesus told another story, “The **kingdom of God** is like yeast that a woman mixes into some bread dough until it spreads throughout the dough.”
- 34:4 “The **kingdom of God** is also like hidden treasure that someone hid in a field… Another man found the treasure and then buried it again.”
- 34:5 “The **kingdom of God** is also like a perfect pearl of great value.”
- 42:9 He proved to his disciples in many ways that he was alive, and he taught them about the **kingdom of God**.
- 49:5 Jesus said that the **kingdom of God** is more valuable than anything else in the world.
- 50:2 When Jesus was living on earth he said, “My disciples will preach the good news about the **kingdom of God** to people everywhere in the world, and then the end will come.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G09320, G23160, G37720

Colossians References:

1:13; 4:11

know, knew, knowledge, known, unknown, distinguish

Definition:

Used in this sense the term “know” and “knowledge” mean generally to understand something. It can also mean to be aware of a fact. The expression “to make known” means to tell information.

- The term “knowledge” refers to information that people know. It can apply to knowing physical concepts or abstract concepts.
- To “know about” God means to understand facts about him because of what he has revealed to us.
- To “know the Law” means to be aware of what God has commanded or to understand what God has instructed in the laws he gave to Moses.
- Sometimes “knowledge” is used as a synonym for “wisdom,” which includes living in a way that is pleasing to God.
- The “knowledge of God” is sometimes used as a synonym for the “fear of Yahweh.”

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “know” could include “understand” or “be familiar with” or “be aware of” or “be acquainted with.”
- In the context of understanding the difference between two things, the term is usually translated as “distinguish.” When used in this way, the term is often followed by the preposition “between.”
- The term “make known” could be translated as “cause people to know” or “reveal” or “tell about” or “explain.”
- To “know about” something could be translated as “be aware of” or “be familiar with.”
- The expression “know how to” means to understand the process or method of getting something done. It could also be translated as “be able to” or “have the skill to.”
- The term “knowledge” could also be translated as “what is known” or “wisdom” or “understanding,” depending on the context.
- Some languages have two different words for “know,” one for knowing facts and one for knowing a person and having a relationship with that person. The word for knowing facts should be used when translating this sense of the word “know.”

(See also: know-relationship, law, reveal, understand, wise)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1844, H1847, H3045, H3046, H3318, G00500, G00560, G03190, G10970, G11070, G11080, G11100, G14920, G19210, G19220, G19870, G42670

Colossians References:

1:9; 1:10; 1:27; 2:1; 2:2; 2:3; 3:10; 3:24; 4:1; 4:6; 4:7; 4:8; 4:9

labor, labors, labored, laboring, laborer, work, hard work

Definition:

The term “labor” refers to doing hard work of any kind.

- In general, labor is any task which uses energy. It is often implied that the task is difficult.
- A laborer is a person who does any type of labor.
- Ways to translate “labor” could include “work” or “toil” or “hard work” or “difficult work” or to “work hard.”

(See also: hard)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3021, H4399, H4522, H4639, H5647, H5656, H5998, H6001, H6089, G20380, G20400, G20410, G28720, G28730

Colossians References:

1:29; 3:23

lord, Lord, master, sir

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “lord” generally refers to someone who has ownership or authority over other people. In the Bible, however, the term is used to address many different kinds of people, including God.

- This word is sometimes translated as “master” when addressing Jesus or when referring to someone who owns slaves.
- Some English versions translate this as “sir” in contexts where someone is politely addressing someone of higher status.

When “Lord” is capitalized, it is a title that refers to God. (Note, however, that when it is used as a form of addressing someone or it occurs at the beginning of a sentence it may be capitalized and have the meaning of “sir” or “master.”)

- In the Old Testament, this term is also used in expressions such as “Lord God Almighty” or “Lord Yahweh” or “Yahweh our Lord.”
- In the New Testament, the apostles used this term in expressions such as “Lord Jesus” and “Lord Jesus Christ,” which communicate that Jesus is God.
- The term “Lord” in the New Testament is also used alone as a direct reference to God, especially in quotations from the Old Testament. For example, the Old Testament text has “Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh” and the New Testament text has “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”
- In the ULT and UST, the title “Lord” is only used to translate the actual Hebrew and Greek words that mean “Lord.” It is never used as a translation of God’s name (Yahweh), as is done in many translations.
- Some languages translate “Lord” as “Master” or “Ruler” or some other term that communicates ownership or supreme rule.
- In the appropriate contexts, many translations capitalize the first letter of this term to make it clear to the reader that this is a title referring to God.
- For places in the New Testament where there is a quote from the Old Testament, the term “Lord God” could be used to make it clear that this is a reference to God.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term can be translated with the equivalent of "master" when it refers to a person who owns slaves. It can also be used by a servant to address the person he works for.
- When it refers to Jesus, if the context shows that the speaker sees him as a religious teacher, it can be translated with a respectful address for a religious teacher, such as "master."
- If the person addressing Jesus does not know him, "lord" could be translated with a respectful form of address such as "sir." This translation would also be used for other contexts in which a polite form of address to a man is called for.
- When referring to God the Father or to Jesus, this term is considered a title, written as "Lord" (capitalized) in English.

(See also: God, Jesus, ruler, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Genesis 39:2
- Joshua 3:9-11
- Psalms 86:15-17
- Jeremiah 27:4
- Lamentations 2:2
- Ezekiel 18:29
- Daniel 9:9
- Daniel 9:17-19
- Malachi 3:1
- Matthew 7:21-23
- Luke 1:30-33
- Luke 16:13
- Romans 6:23
- Ephesians 6:9
- Philippians 2:9-11
- Colossians 3:23
- Hebrews 12:14
- James 2:1
- 1 Peter 1:3
- Jude 1:5
- Revelation 15:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 25:5 But Jesus replied to Satan by quoting from the Scriptures. He said, “In God’s word, he commands his people, ‘Do not test the **Lord** your God.’”
- 25:7 Jesus replied, “Get away from me, Satan! In God’s word he commands his people, ‘Worship only the **Lord** your God and only serve him.’”
- 26:3 This is the year of the **Lord’s** favor.
- 27:2 The law expert replied that God’s law says, “Love the **Lord** your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind.”
- 31:5 Then Peter said to Jesus, “**Master**, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water”
- 43:9 “But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both **Lord** and Messiah!”
- 47:3 By means of this demon she predicted the future for people, she made a lot of money for her **masters** as a fortuneteller.
- 47:11 Paul answered, “Believe in Jesus, the **Master**, and you and your family will be saved.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0113, H0136, H1167, H1376, H4756, H7980, H8323, G02030, G06340, G09620, G12030, G29620

Colossians References:

1:2; 1:3; 1:10; 2:6; 3:13; 3:17; 3:18; 3:20; 3:22; 3:23; 3:24; 4:1; 4:7; 4:17

love, beloved

Definition:

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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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

Colossians References:

1:4; 1:8; 1:13; 2:2; 3:12; 3:14; 3:19

Luke

Definition:

Luke wrote two books of the New Testament: the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

- In his letter to the Colossians, Paul refers to Luke as a doctor. Paul also mentions Luke in two of his other letters.
- It is thought that Luke was a Greek and a Gentile who came to know Christ. In his gospel, Luke includes several accounts that highlight Jesus' love for all peoples, both Jews and Gentiles.
- Luke accompanied Paul on two of his missionary journeys and helped him in his work.
- In some early church writings, it is said that Luke was born in the city of Antioch in Syria.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Antioch, Paul, Syria)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:11-13
- Colossians 4:12-14
- Philemon 1:24

Word Data:

- Strong's: G30650

Colossians References:

4:14

lust, lustful, passion, desire

Definition:

Lust is a very strong desire, usually in the context of wanting something sinful or immoral.

To lust is to have lust.

- In the Bible, “lust” usually referred to sexual desire for someone other than one’s own spouse.
- Sometimes this term was used in a figurative sense to refer to worshiping idols.
- Depending on the context, “lust” could be translated as “wrong desire” or “strong desire” or “wrongful sexual desire” or “strong immoral desire” or to “strongly desire to sin.”
- The phrase to “lust after” could be translated as to “wrongly desire” or to “think immorally about” or to “immorally desire.”

(See also: adultery, false god)

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:16
- 2 Timothy 2:22
- Galatians 5:16
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Genesis 39:7-9
- Matthew 5:28

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0183, H0185, H0310, H1730, H2181, H2183, H2530, H5178, H5375, H5689, H5691, H5869, H7843, G07660, G19370, G19390, G22370, G37150, G38060

Colossians References:

3:5

manager, steward, stewardship

Definition:

The term “manager” or “steward” in the Bible refers to a servant who was entrusted with taking care of his master’s property and business dealings.

- A steward was given a lot of responsibility, which included supervising the work of other servants.
- The term “manager” is a more modern term for a steward. Both terms refer to someone who manages practical affairs for someone else.

Translation Suggestions:

- This could also be translated as “supervisor” or “household organizer” or “servant who manages” or “person who organizes.”

(See also: servant)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 3:4-5
- Genesis 39:4
- Genesis 43:16
- Isaiah 55:10-11
- Luke 8:3
- Luke 16:2
- Matthew 20:8-10
- Titus 1:7

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0376, H4453, H5057, H6485, G20120, G36210, G36230

Colossians References:

1:25

member, body part

Definition:

The term “member” refers to one part of a complex body or group.

- The New Testament describes Christians as “members” of the body of Christ. Believers in Christ belong to a group that is made up of many members.
- Jesus Christ is the “head” of the body and individual believers function as the members of the body. The Holy Spirit gives each member of the body a special role to help the entire body to function well.
- Individuals who participate in groups such as the Jewish Council and the Pharisees are also called “members” of these groups.

(See also: body, Pharisee, council)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 6:15
- 1 Corinthians 12:14-17
- Numbers 16:2
- Romans 12:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1004, H1121, H3338, H5315, H8212, G10100, G31960, G36090

Colossians References:

3:5

might, mighty, mighty works

Definition:

The terms “mighty” and “might” refer to having great strength or power.

- Often the word “might” is another word for “strength.” When talking about God, it can mean “power.”
- The phrase “mighty men” often refers to men who are courageous and victorious in battle. David’s band of faithful men who helped protect and defend him were often called “mighty men.”
- God is also referred to as the “mighty one.”
- The phrase “mighty works” usually refers to the amazing things God does, especially miracles.
- This term is related to the term “almighty,” which is a common description for God, meaning that he has complete power.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “mighty” could be translated as “powerful” or “amazing” or “very strong.”
- The phrase “his might” could be translated as “his strength” or “his power.”
- In Acts 7, Moses is described as a man who was “mighty in word and deed.” This could be translated as “Moses spoke powerful words from God and did miraculous things” or “Moses spoke God’s word powerfully and did many amazing things.”
- Depending on the context, “mighty works” could be translated as “amazing things that God does” or “miracles” or “God doing things with power.”
- The term “might” could also be translated as “power” or “great strength.”
- Do not confuse this term with the English word that is used to express a possibility, as in “It might rain.”

(See also: **Almighty**, **miracle**, **power**, **strength**)

Bible References:

- **Acts 7:22**
- **Genesis 6:4**
- **Mark 9:38-39**
- **Matthew 11:23**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0046, H0047, H0117, H0202, H0386, H0410, H0430, H0533, H0650, H1219, H1368, H1369, H1396, H1397, H1419, H2220, H2389, H2428, H3201, H3524, H3581, H3966, H4101, H5794, H5797, H6099, H6105, H6108, H6184, H7227, H7580, H8623, H8624, G14110, G14150, G14980, G24780, G24790, G29000, G29040, G31670, G31730

Colossians References:

1:11

mind, mindful, remind, reminder, likeminded

Definition:

The term “mind” refers to the part of a person that thinks and makes decisions.

- The mind of each person is the total of his or her thoughts and reasoning.
- To “have the mind of Christ” means to be thinking and acting as Jesus Christ would think and act. It means being obedient to God the Father, obeying the teachings of Christ, being enabled to do this through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- To “change his mind” means someone made a different decision or had a different opinion than he had previously.

Translation Suggestions

- The term “mind” could also be translated as “thoughts” or “reasoning” or “thinking” or “understanding.”
- The expression “keep in mind” could be translated as “remember” or “pay attention to this” or “be sure to know this.”
- The expression “heart, soul, and mind” could also be translated as “what you feel, what you believe, and what you think about.”
- The expression “call to mind” could be translated as “remember” or “think about.”
- The expression “changed his mind and went” could also be translated as “decided differently and went” or “decided to go after all” or “changed his opinion and went.”
- The expression “double-minded” could also be translated as “doubting” or “unable to decide” or “with conflicting thoughts.”

(See also: believe, heart, soul)

Bible References:

- Luke 10:27
- Mark 6:51-52
- Matthew 21:29
- Matthew 22:37
- James 4:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3629, H3820, H3824, H5162, H7725, G12710, G13740, G33280, G35250, G35400, G35630, G49930, G55900

Colossians References:

1:21; 2:18; 3:2

multiply, multiplied, multiplication

Definition:

The term “multiply” means to greatly increase in number. It can also mean to cause something to increase in amount, such as causing pain to multiply.

- God told animals and human beings to “multiply” and fill the earth. This was a command to reproduce many more of their own kind.
- Jesus made the bread and fish multiply in order to feed the 5,000 people. The amount of food kept increasing so that there was more than enough food to feed everyone.
- Depending on the context, this term could also be translated as “increase” or “cause to increase” or “greatly increase in number” or “become greater in number” or “become more numerous.”
- The phrase “greatly multiply your pain” could also be translated as “cause your pain to become more severe” or “cause you to experience much more pain.”
- To “multiply horses” means to “greedily keep acquiring more horses” or to “get large numbers of horses.”

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 8:1
- Genesis 9:7
- Genesis 22:17
- Hosea 4:6-7

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3254, H3527, H6280, H7231, H7233, H7235, H7680, G40520, G41290

Colossians References:

2:7

mystery, hidden truth

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “mystery” refers to something that we cannot know or understand unless God reveals it or explains it to us.

- The New Testament states that the gospel of Christ was a mystery that was not known in past ages.
- One of the specific points described as a mystery is that Jews and Gentiles would be equal in Christ.
- This term could also be translated as “secret” or “hidden truth” or “previously unknown thing.”

(See also: Christ, Gentile, good news, Jew, true)

Bible References:

- Colossians 4:2-4
- Ephesians 6:19-20
- Luke 8:9-10
- Mark 4:10-12
- Matthew 13:11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1219, H7328, G34660

Colossians References:

1:26; 1:27; 2:2; 4:3

new moon

Definition:

The term “new moon” refers to the moon when it looks like a small, crescent-shaped sliver of light. This is the beginning phase of the moon as it moves in its orbit around the planet Earth at sunset. It also refers to the first day a new moon should be visible after the moon has been dark for a few days.

- In ancient times, new moons marked the beginnings of certain time periods, such as months.
- The Israelites celebrated a new moon festival that was marked by the blowing of a ram’s horn.
- The Bible also refers to this time as the “beginning of the month.”

(See also: month, earth, festival, horn, sheep)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 23:31
- 1 Samuel 20:5
- 2 Kings 4:23-24
- Ezekiel 45:16-17
- Isaiah 1:12-13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2320, G33760, G35610

Colossians References:

2:16

ordinance, regulation, requirement, strict law, custom

Definition:

An ordinance is a public regulation or law that gives rules or instructions for people to follow. This term is related to the term “ordain.”

- Sometimes an ordinance is a custom that has become well established through years of practice.
- In the Bible, an ordinance was something that God commanded the Israelites to do. Sometimes he commanded them to do it forever.
- The term “ordinance” could be translated as “public decree” or “regulation” or “law,” depending on the context.

(See also: command, decree, law, ordain, statute)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 4:13-14
- Exodus 27:20-21
- Leviticus 8:31-33
- Malachi 3:6-7

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2706, H4687, H4931, H4941

Colossians References:

2:14

partial, partiality

Definition:

The terms “be partial” and “show partiality” refer to making a choice to treat certain people as more important than other people.

- This is similar to showing favoritism, which means to treat some people better than others.
- Usually partiality or favoritism is shown to people because they are more rich or more popular than other people.
- The Bible instructs his people to not show partiality or favoritism to people who are rich or of high status.
- In his letter to the Romans, Paul teaches that God judges people fairly and with no partiality.
- The book of James teaches that it is wrong to give someone a better seat or better treatment because they are rich.

(See also: favor)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 1:17
- Malachi 2:9
- Mark 12:13-15
- Matthew 22:16
- Romans 2:10-12

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5234, H6440, G09910, G15190, G29830, G42990, G43830

Colossians References:

3:25

patient, patience, impatient

Definition:

The terms “patient” and “patience” refer to persevering through difficult circumstances.

Often patience involves waiting.

- When people are patient with someone, it means they are loving that person and forgiving whatever faults that person has.
- The Bible teaches God’s people to be patient when facing difficulties and to be patient with each other.
- Because of his mercy, God is patient with people, even though they are sinners who deserve to be punished.

(See also: endure, forgive, persevere)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 3:20
- 2 Peter 3:8-9
- Hebrews 6:11-12
- Matthew 18:28-29
- Psalms 37:7
- Revelation 2:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0750, H0753, H2342, H3811, H6960, H7114, G04200, G04630, G19330, G31140, G31150, G31160, G52780, G52810

Colossians References:

1:11; 3:12

Paul, Saul

Definition:

Paul was a leader of the early church who was sent by Jesus to take the good news to many other people groups.

- Paul was a Jew who was born in the Roman city of Tarsus, and was therefore also a Roman citizen.
- Paul was originally called by his Jewish name, Saul.
- Saul became a Jewish religious leader and arrested Jews who became Christians because he thought they were dishonoring God by believing in Jesus.
- Jesus revealed himself to Saul in a blinding light and told him to stop hurting Christians.
- Saul believed in Jesus and began teaching his fellow Jews about him.
- Later, God sent Saul to teach non-Jewish people about Jesus and started churches in different cities and provinces of the Roman empire. At this time he started being called by the Roman name "Paul."
- Paul also wrote letters to encourage and teach Christians in the churches in these cities. Several of these letters are in the New Testament.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: **christian**, **jewish leaders**, **rome**)

Bible References:

- **1 Corinthians 1:3**
- **Acts 8:3**
- **Acts 9:26**
- **Acts 13:10**
- **Galatians 1:1**
- **Philemon 1:8**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **45:6** A young man named **Saul** agreed with the people who killed Stephen and guarded their robes while they threw stones at him.
- **46:1** **Saul** was the young man who guarded the robes of the men who killed Stephen. He did not believe in Jesus, so he persecuted the believers.

- 46:2 While **Saul** was on his way to Damascus, a bright light from heaven shone all around him, and he fell to the ground. **Saul** heard someone say, "**Saul**! **Saul**! Why do you persecute me?"
- 46:5 So Ananias went to **Saul**, placed his hands on him, and said, "Jesus who appeared to you on your way here, sent me to you so that you can regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." **Saul** immediately was able to see again, and Ananias baptized him.
- 46:6 Right away, **Saul** began preaching to the Jews in Damascus, saying, "Jesus is the Son of God!"
- 46:9 Barnabas and **Saul** went there (Antioch) to teach these new believers more about Jesus and to strengthen the church.
- 47:1 As **Saul** traveled throughout the Roman Empire, he began to use his Roman name, "**Paul**."
- 47:14 **Paul** and other Christian leaders traveled to many cities, preaching and teaching people the good news about Jesus.

Word Data:

- Strong's: G39720, G45690

Colossians References:

1:1; 1:23; 4:18

peace, peaceful, peacemaker

Definition:

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

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

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3
- Acts 7:26
- Colossians 1:18-20
- Colossians 3:15
- Galatians 5:23
- Luke 7:50
- Luke 12:51
- Mark 4:39
- Matthew 5:9
- Matthew 10:13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 15:6 God had commanded the Israelites not to make a **peace** treaty with any of the people groups in Canaan.

- 15:12 Then God gave Israel **peace** along all its borders.
- 16:3 Then God provided a deliverer who rescued them from their enemies and brought **peace** to the land.
- 21:13 He (Messiah) would die to receive the punishment for other people's sin. His punishment would bring **peace** between God and people.
- 48:14 David was the king of Israel, but Jesus is the king of the entire universe! He will come again and rule his kingdom with justice and **peace**, forever.
- 50:17 Jesus will rule his kingdom with **peace** and justice, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5117, H7961, H7962, H7965, H7999, H8001, H8002, H8003, H8252, G02690, G15140, G15150, G15160, G15170, G15180, G22720

Colossians References:

1:2; 1:20; 3:15

perfect, complete

Definition:

In the New Testament, the term “perfect” means to be mature in our Christian life. To perfect something means to work at it until it is excellent and without flaws. Old Testament sacrifices needed to be “perfect” or “complete,” that is, without blemish.

- Being perfect and mature means that a Christian is obedient, not sinless.
- The term “perfect” also has the meaning of being “complete” or “whole.”
- The New Testament book of James states that persevering through trials will produce completeness and maturity in the believer.
- When Christians study the Bible and obey it, they will become more spiritually perfect and mature because they will be more like Christ in their character.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “without flaw” or “without error” or “flawless” or “without fault” or “not having any faults.”

(See also: **blemish**)

Bible References:

- **Hebrews 12:2**
- **James 3:2**
- **Matthew 5:46-48**
- **Psalms 19:7-8**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3632, H3634, H4359, H8003, H8503, H8537, H8549, H8552, G01990, G26750, G26760, G36470, G50460, G50470, G50480, G50500

Colossians References:

1:28; 4:12

persevere, perseverance

Definition:

The terms “persevere” and “perseverance” refer to continuing to do something even though it may be very difficult or take a long time.

- To persevere can also mean to keep acting in a Christ-like way even while going through difficult trials or circumstances.
- If a person has “perseverance” it means he is able to keep doing what he should do, even when it is painful or difficult.
- Continuing to believe what God teaches requires perseverance, especially when faced with false teachings.
- Be careful not to use a word like “stubborn” which usually has a negative meaning.

(See also: patient, trial)

Bible References:

- Colossians 1:11
- Ephesians 6:18
- James 5:9-11
- Luke 8:14-15

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G31150, G43430, G52810

Colossians References:

1:11

pray, prayer

Definition:

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

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

(See also: false god, forgive, **praise**)

Bible References:

- **1 Thessalonians 3:9**
- **Acts 8:24**
- **Acts 14:26**
- Colossians 4:4
- **John 17:9**
- **Luke 11:1**
- **Matthew 5:43-45**
- **Matthew 14:22-24**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **6:5** Isaac **prayed** for Rebekah, and God allowed her to get pregnant with twins.
- **13:12** But Moses **prayed** for them, and God listened to his **prayer** and did not destroy them.
- **19:8** Then the prophets of Baal **prayed** to Baal, “Hear us, O Baal!”
- **21:7** Priests also **prayed** to God for the people.

- 38:11 Jesus told his disciples to **pray** that they would not enter into temptation.
- 43:13 The disciples continually listened to the teaching of the apostles, spent time together, ate together, and **prayed** with each other.
- 49:18 God tells you to **pray**, to study his word, to worship him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0559, H0577, H1156, H2470, H3863, H3908, H4994, H6279, H6293, H6419, H6739, H7592, H7878, H7879, H7881, H8034, H8605, G01540, G11620, G11890, G17830, G20650, G21710, G21720, G38700, G43350, G43360

Colossians References:

1:3; 1:9; 4:2; 4:3; 4:12

preach, preaching, preacher, proclaim, proclamation

Definition:

To “preach” means to speak to a group of people, teaching them about God and urging them to obey him. To “proclaim” means to announce or declare something publicly and boldly.

- Often preaching is done by one person to a large group of people. It is usually spoken, not written.
- “Preaching” and “teaching” are similar, but are not exactly the same.
- “Preaching” mainly refers to publicly proclaiming spiritual or moral truth, and urging the audience to respond. “Teaching” is a term that emphasizes instruction, that is, giving people information or teaching them how to do something.
- The term “preach” is usually used with the word “gospel.”
- What a person has preached to others can also be referred to in general as his “teachings.”
- Often in the Bible, “proclaim” means to announce publicly something that God has commanded, or to tell others about God and how great he is.
- In the New Testament, the apostles proclaimed the good news about Jesus to many people in many different cities and regions.
- The term “proclaim” can also be used for decrees made by kings or for denouncing evil in a public way.
- Other ways to translate “proclaim” could include “announce” or “openly preach” or “publicly declare.”
- The term “proclamation” could also be translated as “announcement” or “public preaching.”

(See also: **declare**, good news, Jesus, kingdom of God)

Strong‘s for preach: H1319, H7121, H7150, G12290, G20970, G26050, G27820, G27830, G27840, G29800, G42830

Strong‘s for proclaim: H1319, H1696, H1697, H2199, H3045, H3745, H4161, H5046, H5608, H6963, H7121, H7440, H8085, G51800, G59100, G12290, G18610, G20970, G26050, G27820, G27840, G29800, G31420, G41350

Bible References:

- **2 Timothy 4:1-2**
- **Acts 8:4-5**
- **Acts 10:42-43**

- Acts 14:21-22
- Acts 20:25
- Luke 4:42
- Matthew 3:1-3
- Matthew 4:17
- Matthew 12:41
- Matthew 24:14
- Acts 9:20-22
- Acts 13:38-39
- Jonah 3:1-3
- Luke 4:18-19
- Mark 1:14-15
- Matthew 10:26

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 24:2 He (John) **preached** to them, saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near!”
- 30:1 Jesus sent his apostles to **preach** and to teach people in many different villages.
- 38:1 About three years after Jesus first began **preaching** and teaching publicly, Jesus told his disciples that he wanted to celebrate this Passover with them in Jerusalem, and that he would be killed there.
- 45:6 But in spite of this, they **preached** about Jesus everywhere they went.
- 45:7 He (Philip) went to Samaria where he preached about Jesus and many people were saved.
- 46:6 Right away, Saul began **preaching** to the Jews in Damascus, saying, “Jesus is the Son of God!”
- 46:10 Then they sent them off to **preach** the good news of Jesus in many other places.
- 47:14 Paul and other Christian leaders traveled to many cities, **preaching** and teaching people the good news about Jesus.
- 50:2 When Jesus was living on earth he said, “My disciples will **preach** the good news about the kingdom of God to people everywhere in the world, and then the end will come.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1319, H7121, H7150, H1319, H1696, H1697, H2199, H3045, H3745, H4161, H5046, H5608, H6963, H7121, H7440, H8085, G12290, G20970, G26050,

G27820, G27830, G27840, G29800, G42830, G51800, G59100, G12290, G18610, G20970, G26050, G27820, G27840, G29800, G31420, G41350

Colossians References:

1:23; 1:28

prostrate, bow down, worship

Definition:

To “prostrate” oneself means to lie flat on the ground, usually in submission to a person of authority such as a king or some other powerful person. This same term can also mean to “worship,” referring to the actions of honoring, praising, and obeying God.

- This term often means literally “bow down” or “prostrate oneself” to humbly honor someone.
- We worship God when we serve and honor him, by praising him and obeying him.
- When the Israelites worshiped God, it often included sacrificing an animal on an altar.
- This term can be used both of people who worship Yahweh as the One True God and others who worship false gods.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “worship” could be translated as “bow down to” or “honor and serve” or “honor and obey.”
- In some contexts, it could also be translated as “humbly praise” or “give honor and praise.”

(See also: **bow**, fear, **sacrifice**, **praise**, **honor**)

Bible References:

- Colossians 2:18-19
- **Deuteronomy 29:18**
- **Exodus 3:11-12**
- **Luke 4:7**
- **Matthew 2:2**
- **Matthew 2:8**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, “I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not **worship** other gods.”
- **14:2** The Canaanites did not **worship** or obey God. They **worshiped** false gods and did many evil things.
- **17:6** David wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could **worship** God and offer him sacrifices.

- 18:12 All of the kings and most of the people of the kingdom of Israel **worshiped** idols.
- 25:7 Jesus replied, “Get away from me, Satan! In God’s word he commands his people, ‘**Worship** only the Lord your God and only serve him.’”
- 26:2 On the Sabbath, he (Jesus) went to the place of **worship**.
- 47:1 There they met a woman named Lydia who was a merchant. She loved and **worshiped** God.
- 49:18 God tells you to pray, to study his word, to **worship** him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5457, H5647, H6087, H7812, G13910, G14790, G21510, G23180, G23230, G23560, G30000, G35110, G43520, G43530, G45730, G45740, G45760

Colossians References:

2:18

provoke, provoked, provocation

Definition:

The term “provoke” means to cause someone to experience a negative reaction or feeling.

- To provoke someone to anger means to do something that causes that person to be angry. This could also be translated as to “cause to become angry” or to “anger.”
- When used in a phrase such as, “do not provoke him,” this could be translated as “do not anger him” or “do not cause him to be angry” or “do not make him angry with you.”

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 20:27-29

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3707, H3708, H4784, H4843, H5006, H7065, H7069, H7107, H7264, G20420, G38630, G39470, G39490, G42920

Colossians References:

3:21

psalm

Definition:

The term “psalm” refers to a sacred song, often in the form of a poem that was written to be sung.

- The Old Testament Book of Psalms has a collection of these songs written by King David and other Israelites such as Moses, Solomon, and Asaph, among others.
- The psalms were used by the nation of Israel in their worship of God.
- Psalms can be used to express joy, faith, and reverence, as well as pain and sorrow.
- In the New Testament, Christians are instructed to sing psalms to God as a way of worshiping him.

(See also: David, faith, joy, Moses, holy)

Bible References:

- Acts 13:33
- Acts 13:35
- Colossians 3:16
- Luke 20:42

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2158, H2167, H4210, G55670, G55680

Colossians References:

3:16

receive, welcome, taken up, acceptance

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

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

Bible References:

- 1 John 5:9
- 1 Thessalonians 1:6
- 1 Thessalonians 4:1
- Acts 8:15
- Jeremiah 32:33
- Luke 9:5
- Malachi 3:10-12
- Psalms 49:14-15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 21:13 The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no sin. He would die to **receive** the punishment for other people's sin. His punishment would bring peace between God and people.
- 45:5 As Stephen was dying, he cried out, "Jesus, **receive** my spirit."
- 49:6 He (Jesus) taught that some people will receive him and be saved, but others will not.
- 49:10 When Jesus died on the cross, he **received** your punishment.
- 49:13 God will save everyone who believes in Jesus and **receives** him as their Master.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3557, H3947, H6901, H6902, H8254, G03080, G03240, G03530, G03540, G05680, G05880, G06180, G11830, G12090, G15230, G16530, G19260, G28650, G29830, G30280, G33350, G33360, G35490, G38580, G38800, G43270, G43550, G43560, G46870, G52640, G55620

Colossians References:

2:6; 3:24; 3:25; 4:10; 4:17

reconcile, reconciled, reconciliation

Definition:

To “reconcile” and “reconciliation” refer to “make peace” between people who were formerly enemies of each other. “Reconciliation” is that act of making peace

- In the Bible, this term usually refer to Gods reconciling people to himself through the sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ.
- Because of sin, all human beings are God’s enemies. But because of his compassionate love, God provided a way for people to be reconciled to him through Jesus.
- Through trusting in Jesus’ sacrifice as payment for their sin, people can be forgiven and have peace with God.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “reconcile” could be translated as “make peace” or “restore good relations” or “cause to be friends.”
- The term “reconciliation” could be translated as “restoring good relations” or “making peace” or “causing peaceful relating.”

(See also: peace, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 5:19
- Colossians 1:18-20
- Matthew 5:24
- Proverbs 13:17-18
- Romans 5:10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2398, H3722, G06040, G12590, G24330, G26430, G26440

Colossians References:

1:20; 1:22

redeem, redeemer, redemption

Definition:

The term “redeem” refers to buying back something or someone that has been previously owned or held captive. A “redeemer” is someone who redeems something or someone.

- God gave laws to the Israelites about how to redeem people or things. For example, someone could redeem a person who was in slavery by paying the price so that the slave could go free. The word “ransom” also refers to this practice.
- If someone’s land had been sold, a relative of that person could “redeem” or “buy back” that land so that it would stay in the family.
- These practices show how God redeems people who are in slavery to sin. When he died on the cross, Jesus paid the full price for people’s sins and redeemed all those who trust in him for salvation. People who have been redeemed by God are set free from sin and its punishment.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “redeem” could also be translated as “buy back” or “pay to free (someone)” or “ransom.”
- The term “redemption” could be translated as “ransom” or “freedom payment” or “buying back.”
- The words “ransom” and “redeem” have basically the same meaning, so some languages may have only one term to translate both these words. The word “ransom,” however, can also mean the payment necessary to “redeem” something or someone. The term “redeem” never refers to the actual payment itself.

(See also: free, **ransom**)

Bible References:

- Colossians 1:13-14
- **Ephesians 1:7-8**
- **Ephesians 5:16**
- **Galatians 3:13-14**
- **Galatians 4:5**
- **Luke 2:38**
- **Ruth 2:20**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1350, H1353, H6299, H6302, H6304, H6306, H6561, H7069, G00590, G06290, G18050, G30840, G30850

Colossians References:

1:14; 4:5

righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness

Definition:

The term “righteousness” refers to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. Having these qualities makes God “righteous.” Because God is righteous, he must condemn sin.

- These terms are also often used to describe a person who obeys God and is morally good. However, because all people have sinned, no one except God is completely righteous.
- Examples of people the Bible who were called “righteous” include Noah, Job, Abraham, Zachariah, and Elisabeth.
- When people trust in Jesus to save them, God cleanses them from their sins and declares them to be righteous because of Jesus’ righteousness.

The term “unrighteous” means to be sinful and morally corrupt. “Unrighteousness” refers to sin or the condition of being sinful.

- These terms especially refer to living in a way that disobeys God’s teachings and commands.
- Unrighteous people are immoral in their thoughts and actions.
- Sometimes “the unrighteous” refers specifically to people who do not believe in Jesus.

The terms “upright” and “uprightness” refer to acting in a way that follows God’s laws.

- The meaning of these words includes the idea of standing up straight and looking directly ahead.
- A person who is “upright” is someone who obeys God’s rules and does not do things that are against his will.
- Terms such as “integrity” and “righteous” have similar meanings and are sometimes used in parallelism constructions, such as “integrity and uprightness.” (See: **parallelism**)

Translation Suggestions:

- When it describes God, the term “righteous” could be translated as “perfectly good and just” or “always acting rightly.”
- God’s “righteousness” could also be translated as “perfect faithfulness and goodness.”

- When it describes people who are obedient to God, the term “righteous” could also be translated as “morally good” or “just” or “living a God-pleasing life.”
- The phrase “the righteous” could also be translated as “righteous people” or “God-fearing people.”
- Depending on the context, “righteousness” could also be translated with a word or phrase that means “goodness” or “being perfect before God” or “acting in a right way by obeying God” or “doing perfectly good.”
- The term “unrighteous” could simply be translated as “not righteous.”
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could include “wicked” or “immoral” or “people who rebel against God” or “sinful.”
- The phrase “the unrighteous” could be translated as “unrighteous people.”
- The term “unrighteousness” could be translated as “sin” or “evil thoughts and actions” or “wickedness.”
- If possible, it is best to translate this in a way that shows its relationship to “righteous, righteousness.”
- Ways to translate “upright” could include “acting rightly” or “one who acts rightly” or “following God’s laws” or “obedient to God” or “behaving in a way that is right.”
- The term “uprightness” could be translated as “moral purity” or “good moral conduct” or “rightness.”
- The phrase “the upright” could be translated as “people who are upright” or “upright people.”

(See also: evil, faithful, good, holy, **integrity**, **just**, **law**, **law**, **obey**, **pure**, righteous, sin, **unlawful**)

Bible References:

- **Deuteronomy 19:16**
- **Job 1:8**
- **Psalms 37:30**
- **Psalms 49:14**
- **Psalms 107:42**

- Ecclesiastes 12:10-11
- Isaiah 48:1-2
- Ezekiel 33:13
- Malachi 2:6
- Matthew 6:1
- Acts 3:13-14
- Romans 1:29-31
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- Galatians 3:7
- Colossians 3:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 1 Peter 3:18-20
- 1 John 1:9
- 1 John 5:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 3:2 But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- 4:8 God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God's promise.
- 17:2 David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- 23:1 Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to, was a **righteous** man.
- 50:10 Then the **righteous** ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1368, H2555, H3072, H3474, H3476, H3477, H3483, H4334, H4339, H4749, H5228, H5229, H5324, H5765, H5766, H5767, H5977, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6665, H6666, H6968, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G00930, G00940, G04580, G13410, G13420, G13430, G13440, G13450, G13460, G21180, G37160, G37170

Colossians References:

3:25; 4:1

rule, reign, ruler, prefect, official, leader

Definition:

The term “ruler” is a general reference to a person who has authority over other people, such as a leader of a country, kingdom, or religious group. A ruler is one who “rules,” and his authority is his “rule.”

- In the Old Testament, a king was sometimes referred to generally as a “ruler,” as in the phrase “appointed him ruler over Israel.”
- God was referred to as the ultimate ruler, who rules over all other rulers.
- In the New Testament, the leader of a synagogue was called a “ruler.”
- Another type of ruler in the New Testament was a “governor.”
- Depending on the context, “ruler” could be translated as “leader” or “person who has authority over.”
- The action to “rule” means to “lead” to “have authority over.” It means the same thing as “reign” when it refers to the ruling of a king.

(See also: authority, governor, king, synagogue)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:17-18
- Acts 7:35-37
- Luke 12:11
- Luke 23:35
- Mark 10:42
- Matthew 9:32-34
- Matthew 20:25
- Titus 3:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0995, H1166, H1167, H1404, H2708, H2710, H3027, H3548, H3920, H4043, H4410, H4427, H4428, H4438, H4467, H4474, H4475, H4623, H4910, H4941, H5057, H5065, H5387, H5401, H5461, H5715, H6113, H6213, H6485, H6957, H7101, H7218, H7287, H7300, H7336, H7786, H7860, H7980, H7981, H7985, H7989, H7990, H8199, H8269, H8323, H8451, G07460, G07520, G07550, G07570, G07580, G09320, G09360, G10180, G12030, G12990, G17780, G17850, G18490, G22320, G22330, G25250, G25830, G28880, G29610, G35450, G38410, G41650, G41730, G42910

Colossians References:

1:16; 2:10; 2:15; 3:15

Sabbath

Definition:

The term “Sabbath” refers to the seventh day of the week, which God commanded the Israelites to set apart as a day of rest and doing no work.

- After God finished creating the world in six days, he rested on the seventh day. In the same way, God commanded the Israelites to set aside the seventh day as a special day to rest and worship him.
- The command to “keep the Sabbath holy” is one of the ten commandments that God wrote on the stone tablets that he gave Moses for the Israelites.
- Following the Jewish system of counting days, the Sabbath begins on Friday at sundown and lasts until Saturday at sundown.
- Sometimes in the Bible the Sabbath is called “Sabbath day” rather than only the Sabbath.

Translation Suggestions:

- This could also be translated as “resting day” or “day for resting” or “day of not working” or “God’s day of rest.”
- Some translations capitalize this term to show that it is a special day, as in “Sabbath Day” or “Resting Day.”
- Consider how this term is translated in a local or national language.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: rest)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 31:2-3
- Acts 13:26-27
- Exodus 31:14
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Lamentations 2:6
- Leviticus 19:3
- Luke 13:14
- Mark 2:27
- Matthew 12:2
- Nehemiah 10:32-33

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 13:5 “Always be sure to keep the **Sabbath day** holy. That is, do all your work in six days, for the seventh day is a day for you to rest and to honor me.”
- 26:2 Jesus went to the town of Nazareth where he had lived during his childhood. On the **Sabbath**, he went to the place of worship.
- 41:3 The day after Jesus was buried was a **Sabbath** day, and the Jews were not permitted to go to the tomb on that day.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4868, H7676, H7677, G43150, G45210

Colossians References:

2:16

saint

Definition:

The term “saints” literally means “holy ones” and refers to believers in Jesus.

- Later in church history, a person known for his good works was given the title “saint,” but that was not how this term was used during New Testament times.
- Believers in Jesus are saints or holy ones, not because of what they have done, but rather because of their faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ. He is the one who makes them holy.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “saints” could include “holy ones” or “holy people” or “holy believers in Jesus” or “set apart ones.”
- Be careful not to use a term that refers to people of only one Christian group.

(See also: holy)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 5:10
- 2 Corinthians 9:12-15
- Revelation 16:6
- Revelation 20:9-10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2623, H6918, H6922, G00400

Colossians References:

1:2; 1:4; 1:12; 1:26

seek, search, look for

Definition:

The term “seek” means to look for something or someone. In the past tense, the verb is “sought.” This term is sometimes used figuratively, meaning to “attempt” or “make an effort” to do something or to ask for something.

- To “seek” or “look for” an opportunity to do something can mean to “try to find a time” to do it.
- To “seek Yahweh” means to “spend time and energy getting to know Yahweh and learning to obey him.”
- To “seek protection” means to “try to find a person or place that will protect you from danger.”
- To “seek justice” means to “make an effort to see that people are treated justly or fairly.”
- To “seek the truth” means to “make an effort to find out what the truth is.”
- To “seek favor” means to “urgently ask for favor” or to “do things to cause someone to help you.”

(See also: **just**, **true**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 10:14**
- **Acts 17:26-27**
- **Hebrews 11:6**
- **Luke 11:9**
- **Psalms 27:8**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0579, H1156, H1239, H1243, H1245, H1556, H1875, H2470, H2603, H2658, H2664, H3289, H7125, H7592, H7836, H8446, G03270, G15670, G19340, G20520, G22120

Colossians References:

3:1

servant, serve, maidservant, young man, young women

Definition:

A “servant” refers to a person who works for (or obeys) another person, either by choice or by force. A servant was under his master’s direction. In the Bible, “servant” and “slave” are mostly interchangeable terms. The term “serve” generally means to do work for someone, and the concept can be applied in a wide variety of contexts.

- In the Bible the words “young man” or “young woman” often mean “servant” or “slave.” This meaning will be discerned from context. One indicator of this situation is if the possessive is used, eg. “her young women” which could be translated as “her servants” or “her slaves.”

Translation Suggestions

- The term “serve” can also be translated as “minister to” or “work for” or “take care of” or “obey,” depending on the context.
- To “serve God” can be translated as to “worship and obey God” or to “do the work that God has commanded.”
- In the Old Testament, God’s prophets and other people who worshiped God were often called his “servants.”
- In the New Testament, people who obeyed God through faith in Christ were often called his “servants.”
- To “serve tables” means to bring food to people who are sitting at tables, or more generally, to “distribute food.”
- In the context of a person serving guests, this term means “care for” or “serve food to” or “provide food for.” When Jesus told the disciples to “serve” the fish to the people, this could be translated as, “distribute” or “hand out” or “give.”
- People who teach others about God are said to serve both God and the ones they are teaching.
- The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians about how they used to “serve” the old covenant. This refers to obeying the laws of Moses. Now they “serve” the new covenant. That is, because of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, believers in Jesus are enabled by the Holy Spirit to please God and live holy lives.
- Paul talks about their actions in terms of their “service” to either the old or new covenant. This could be translated as “serving” or “obeying” or “devotion to.”
- Often, when a person referred to himself as “your servant” he was showing respect to the person addressed. That person may have had higher social status, or the speaker may be showing humility. It did not mean that the person speaking was an actual servant.

(See also: enslave, works, obey, house, lord)

Bible References:

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 6:1 When Abraham was very old and his son, Isaac, had grown to be a man, Abraham sent one of his **servants** back to the land where his relatives lived to find a wife for his son, Isaac.
- 19:10 Then Elijah prayed, “O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your **servant**.”
- 29:3 “Since the **servant** could not pay the debt, the king said, ‘Sell this man and his family as **slaves** to make payment on his debt.’”
- 35:6 “All my father’s **servants** have plenty to eat, and yet here I am starving.”
- 47:4 The **slave** girl kept yelling as they walked, “These men are servants of the Most High God.”
- 50:4 Jesus also said, “A **servant** is not greater than his master.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s for Servant: H0519, H5288, H5647, H5649, H5650, H5657, H7916, H8198, H8334, G12490, G14010, G14020, G23240, G34070, G34110, G36100, G38160, G49830, G52570

Strong’s for Serve: H3547, H4929, H4931, H5647, H5656, H5673, H5975, H6213, H6399, H6402, H6440, H6633, H6635, H7272, H8104, H8120, H8199, H8278, H8334, G12470, G12480, G13980, G14020, G14380, G19830, G20640, G22120, G23230, G29990, G30000, G30090, G43370, G43420, G47540, G50870, G52560

Colossians References:

3:11; 3:22; 3:24; 4:1; 4:12

sexual immorality, immorality, immoral, fornication

Definition:

The term “sexual immorality” refers to sexual activity that takes place outside the marriage relationship of a man and a woman. This is against God’s plan. Older English Bible versions call this “fornication.”

- This term can refer to any kind of sexual activity that is against God’s will, including homosexual acts and pornography.
- One type of sexual immorality is adultery, which is sexual activity specifically between a married person and someone who is not that person’s spouse.
- Another type of sexual immorality is “prostitution,” which involves being paid to have sex with someone.
- This term is also used figuratively to refer to Israel’s unfaithfulness to God when they worshiped false gods.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sexual immorality” could be translated as “immorality” as long as the correct meaning of the term is understood.
- Other ways to translate this term could include “wrong sexual acts” or “sex outside of marriage.”
- This term should be translated in a different way from the term “adultery.”
- The translation of this term’s figurative uses should retain the literal term if possible since there is a common comparison in the Bible between unfaithfulness to God and unfaithfulness in the sexual relationship.

(See also: adultery, false god, prostitute, faithful)

Bible References:

- Acts 15:20
- Acts 21:25-26
- Colossians 3:5-8
- Ephesians 5:3
- Genesis 38:24-26
- Hosea 4:13-14
- Matthew 5:31-32
- Matthew 19:7-9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2181, H8457, G16080, G42020, G42030

Colossians References:

3:5

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws.

Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people do not know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a “sinful nature,” a nature that that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who did not keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebelling against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people do not see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: disobey, evil, flesh, tax collector)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3

- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31
- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 3:15 God said, “I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children.”
- 13:12 God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- 20:1 The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- 21:13 The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people’s **sin**.
- 35:1 One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinners** who had gathered to hear him.
- 38:5 Then Jesus took a cup and said, “Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**.”
- 43:11 Peter answered them, “Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**.”
- 48:8 We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- 49:17 Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

Colossians References:

1:14

slander, slanderer, revile, insult

Definition:

A slander consists of negative, defaming things spoken (not written) about another person. To say such things (not to write them) about someone is to slander that person. The person saying such things is a slanderer.

- Slander may be a true report or a false accusation, but its effect is to cause others to think negatively of the person being slandered.
- To “slander” could be translated as to “speak against” or to “spread an evil report” or to “defame.”
- A slanderer is also called an “informer” or a “tale-bearer.”

(See also: **blasphemy**)

Bible References:

- **1 Corinthians 4:13**
- **1 Timothy 3:11**
- **2 Corinthians 6:8-10**
- **Mark 7:20-23**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1681, H1696, H1848, H3960, H5791, H7270, H7400, H8267, G09870, G09880, G12280, G14260, G26360, G26370, G30590, G30600

Colossians References:

3:8

Son of God, the Son

Definition:

The term "Son of God" refers to Jesus, the Word of God, who came into the world as a human being. He is also often referred to as "the Son."

- The Son of God has the same nature as God the Father, and is fully God.
- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all of one essence.
- Unlike human sons, the Son of God has always existed.
- In the beginning, the Son of God was active in creating the world, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Because Jesus is God's Son, he loves and obeys his Father, and his Father loves him.

Translation Suggestions:

- For the term "Son of God," it is best to translate "Son" with the same word the language would naturally use to refer to a human son.
- Make sure the word used to translate "son" fits with the word used to translate "father" and that these words are the most natural ones used to express a true father-son relationship in the project language.
- Using a capital letter to begin "Son" may help show that this is talking about God.
- The phrase "the Son" is a shortened form of "the Son of God," especially when it occurs in the same context as "the Father."

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Christ, ancestor, God, God the Father, Holy Spirit, Jesus, son, sons of God)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:10
- Acts 9:20
- Colossians 1:17
- Galatians 2:20
- Hebrews 4:14
- John 3:18
- Luke 10:22
- Matthew 11:27

- Revelation 2:18
- Romans 8:29

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 22:5 The angel explained, “The Holy Spirit will come to you, and the power of God will overshadow you. So the baby will be holy, the **Son of God**.”
- 24:9 God had told John, “The Holy Spirit will come down and rest on someone you baptize. That person is **the Son of God**.”
- 31:8 The disciples were amazed. They worshiped Jesus, saying to him, “Truly, you are **the Son of God**.”
- 37:5 Martha answered, “Yes, Master! I believe you are the Messiah, the **Son of God**.”
- 42:10 “So go, make disciples of all people groups by baptizing them in the name of the Father, **the Son**, and the Holy Spirit, and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
- 46:6 Right away, Saul began preaching to the Jews in Damascus, saying, “Jesus is the **Son of God**!”
- 49:9 But God loved everyone in the world so much that he gave his only **Son** so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with God forever.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0426, H0430, H1121, H1247, G23160, G52070

Colossians References:

1:13

soul, self

Definition:

The term “soul” can either refer generally to the non-physical part of a person or refer specifically to a person’s awareness of themselves as a person distinct from others.

- In the Bible, the terms “soul” and “spirit” may be two different concepts, or they may be two terms that refer to the same concept.
- When a person dies, his soul leaves his body.
- In contrast to the body, the “soul” can be spoken of as the part of a person that “relates to God.”

Translation Suggestions:

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

(See also: spirit)

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 2:8
- Acts 2:27-28
- Acts 2:41
- Genesis 49:6
- Isaiah 53:10-11
- James 1:21
- Jeremiah 6:16-19
- Jonah 2:7-8
- Luke 1:47
- Matthew 22:37
- Psalms 19:7
- Revelation 20:4

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5082, H5315, H5397, G55900

Colossians References:

3:23

spirit, wind, breath

Definition:

The term “spirit” refers to the non-physical part of a person which cannot be seen. In biblical times, the concept of a person’s spirit was closely related to the concept of a person’s breath. The term can also refer to wind, that is, the movement of air in the natural world.

- The term “spirit” can refer to a being that does not have a physical body, such as an evil spirit.
- In general, the term “spiritual” describes things in the non-physical world.
- The term “spirit of” can also mean “having the characteristics of,” such as in “spirit of wisdom” or “in the spirit of Elijah.” Sometimes the Bible applies this term in the context of a person’s attitude or emotional state, such as “spirit of fear” and “spirit of jealousy.”
- Jesus said that God is a spirit.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, some ways to translate “spirit” might include “non-physical being” or “inside part” or “inner being.”
- In some contexts, the term “spirit” could be translated as “evil spirit” or “evil spirit being.”
- Sometimes the term “spirit” is used to express the feelings of a person, as in “my spirit was grieved in my inmost being.” This could also be translated as “I felt grieved in my spirit” or “I felt deeply grieved.”
- The phrase “spirit of” could be translated as “character of” or “influence of” or “attitude of” or “thinking (that is) characterized by.”
- Depending on the context, “spiritual” could be translated as “non-physical” or “from the Holy Spirit” or “God’s” or “part of the non-physical world.”
- The phrase “spiritual maturity” could be translated as “godly behavior that shows obedience to the Holy Spirit.”
- The term “spiritual gift” could be translated as “special ability that the Holy Spirit gives.”
- Sometimes this term can be translated as “wind” when referring to the simple movement of air or “breath” when referring to air movement caused by living beings.

(See also: soul, Holy Spirit, **demon**, **breath**)

Bible References:

- **1 Corinthians 5:5**

- 1 John 4:3
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- Acts 5:9
- Colossians 1:9
- Ephesians 4:23
- Genesis 7:21-22
- Genesis 8:1
- Isaiah 4:4
- Mark 1:23-26
- Matthew 26:41
- Philippians 1:27

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 13:3 Three days later, after the people had prepared themselves **spiritually**, God came down on top of Mount Sinai with thunder, lightning, smoke, and a loud trumpet blast.
- 40:7 Then Jesus cried out, “It is finished! Father, I give my **spirit** into your hands.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his **spirit**.
- 45:5 As Stephen was dying, he cried out, “Jesus, receive my **spirit**.”
- 48:7 All the people groups are blessed through him, because everyone who believes in Jesus is saved from sin, and becomes a **spiritual** descendant of Abraham.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0178, H1172, H5397, H7307, H7308, G41510, G41520, G41530, G53260, G54270

Colossians References:

1:9; 2:5; 3:16

submit, submitted, submitting, submission, in submission

Definition:

To “submit” usually means to voluntarily place oneself under the authority of a person or government.

- The Bible tells believers in Jesus to submit to God and other authorities in their lives.
- The instruction to “submit to one another” means to humbly accept correction and to focus on the needs of others rather than on our own needs.
- To “live in submission to” means to put oneself under the authority of something or someone.

Translation Suggestions:

- The command “submit to” could be translated as “put yourself under the authority of” or “follow the leadership of” or “humbly honor and respect.”
- The term “submission” could be translated as “obedience” or “the following of authority.”
- The phrase “live in submission to” could be translated as “be obedient to” or “put oneself under the authority of.”
- The phrase “be in submission” could be translated as “humbly accept authority.”

(See also: subject-submission)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G52260, G52920, G52930

Colossians References:

3:18

suffer, suffering

Definition:

The terms “suffer” and “suffering” refer to experiencing something very unpleasant, such as illness, pain, or other hardships.

- When people are persecuted or when they are sick, they suffer.
- Sometimes people suffer because of wrong things they have done; other times they suffer because of sin and disease in the world.
- Suffering can be physical, such as feeling pain or sickness. It can also be emotional, such as feeling fear, sadness, or loneliness.
- The phrase “suffer me” means “bear with me” or “hear me out” or “listen patiently.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “suffer” can be translated as “feel pain” or “endure difficulty” or “experience hardships” or “go through difficult and painful experiences.”
- Depending on the context, “suffering” could be translated as “extremely difficult circumstances” or “severe hardships” or “experiencing hardship” or “time of painful experiences.”
- The phrase “suffer thirst” could be translated as “experience thirst” or “suffer with thirst.”
- To “suffer violence” could also be translated as “undergo violence” or “be harmed by violent acts.”

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- 2 Thessalonians 1:3-5
- 2 Timothy 1:8
- Acts 7:11-13
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 6:6-8
- Matthew 16:21
- Psalms 22:24
- Revelation 1:9
- Romans 5:3-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 9:13 God said, “I have seen the **suffering** of my people.”
- 38:12 Jesus prayed three times, “My Father, if it is possible, please let me not have to drink this cup of **suffering**.”
- 42:3 He (Jesus) reminded them that the prophets said the Messiah would **suffer** and be killed, but would rise again on the third day.
- 42:7 He (Jesus) said, “It was written long ago that the Messiah would **suffer**, die, and rise from the dead on the third day.”
- 44:5 “Although you did not understand what you were doing, God used your actions to fulfill the prophecies that the Messiah would **suffer** and die.”
- 46:4 God said, “I have chosen him (Saul) to declare my name to the unsaved. I will show him how much he must **suffer** for my sake.”
- 50:17 He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more **suffering**, sadness, crying, evil, pain, or death.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0943, H1741, H1934, H4531, H5142, H5375, H5999, H6031, H6040, H6041, H6064, H6090, H6770, H6869, H6887, H7661, G00910, G09410, G09710, G22100, G23460, G23470, G25520, G25530, G25610, G38040, G39580, G43100, G47780, G47770, G48410, G50040

Colossians References:

1:24

testimony, testify, witness, eyewitness, evidence

Definition:

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

- In some places in the Old Testament, “Testimony” refers specifically to the tablets of stone on which Yahweh wrote his ten commandments. From that use it came to refer to God’s law more broadly.
- Often a person “testifies” about something he has experienced directly.
- A witness who gives “false testimony” does not tell the truth about what happened.
- Sometimes the term “testimony” refers to a prophecy that a prophet has stated.
- In the New Testament, this term was often used to refer to how Jesus’ followers testified about the events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “testify” or “give testimony” could also be translated as “tell the facts” or “tell what was seen or heard” or “tell from personal experience” or “give evidence” or “tell what happened.”

- Ways to translate “testimony” could include, “report of what happened” or “statement of what is true” or “evidence” or “what has been said” or “prophecy.”

- Ways to translate “Testimony” could include, “the stone slabs on which I wrote my commands” or “God’s law” or “God’s commands” or “the record of the agreement between Yahweh and Israel.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony to them” could be translated as to “show them what is true” or to “prove to them what is true.”
- The phrase, “as a testimony against them” could be translated as “which will show them their sin” or “exposing their hypocrisy” or “which will prove that they are wrong.”
- To “give false testimony” could be translated as “say false things about” or “state things that are not true.”
- The term “witness” or “eyewitness” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “person seeing it” or “the one who saw it happen” or “those who saw and heard (those things).”
- Something that is “a witness” could be translated as “guarantee” or “sign of our promise” or “something that testifies that this is true.”
- The phrase “you will be my witnesses” could also be translated as “you will tell other people about me” or “you will teach people the truth that I taught you” or “you will tell people what you have seen me do and heard me teach.”
- To “witness to” could be translated as to “tell what was seen” or to “testify” or to “state what happened.”
- To “witness” something could be translated as to “see something” or to “experience something happen.”

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

Bible References:

- **Deuteronomy 31:28**
- **Micah 6:3**
- **Matthew 26:60**
- **Mark 1:44**
- **John 1:7**
- **John 3:33**

- Acts 4:32-33
- Acts 7:44
- Acts 13:31
- Romans 1:9
- 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12
- 1 Timothy 5:19-20
- 2 Timothy 1:8
- 2 Peter 1:16-18
- 1 John 5:6-8
- 3 John 1:12
- Revelation 12:11

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 39:2 Inside the house, the Jewish leaders put Jesus on trial. They brought many **false witnesses** who lied about him.
- 39:4 The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted, “We do not need any more **witnesses**. You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your judgment?”
- 42:8 “It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in Jerusalem, and then go to all people groups everywhere. You are **witnesses** of these things.”
- 43:7 “We are **witnesses** to the fact that God raised Jesus to life again.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5707, H5713, H5715, H5749, H6030, H8584, G02670, G12630, G19570, G26490, G31400, G31410, G31420, G31430, G31440, G43030, G48280, G49010, G55750, G55760, G55770, G60200

Colossians References:

4:13

throne, enthroned

Definition:

A throne is a specially-designed chair where a ruler sits when he decides important matters and listens to requests from his people.

- A throne is also a symbol of the authority and power that a ruler has.
- The word “throne” can also be used to refer to the ruler, his reign, or his power.
- In the Bible, God was often portrayed as a king who sits on his throne. Jesus was described as sitting on a throne at the right hand of God the Father.
- Jesus said that heaven is God’s throne. One way to translate this could be, “where God reigns as king.”

(See also: authority, power, king, reign)

Bible References:

- Colossians 1:15-17
- Genesis 41:40
- Luke 1:32
- Luke 22:30
- Matthew 5:34
- Matthew 19:28
- Revelation 1:4-6

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3427, H3676, H3678, H3764, H7675, G09680, G23620

Colossians References:

1:16

Timothy

Definition:

Timothy was a young man from Lystra. He later joined Paul on several missionary trips and helped shepherd new communities of believers.

- Timothy's father was a Greek, but both his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice were Jews and believers in Christ.
- The elders and Paul formally appointed Timothy for the ministry by placing their hands on him and praying for him.
- Two books in the New Testament (I Timothy and 2 Timothy) are letters written by Paul that provide guidance to Timothy as a young leader of local churches.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: **appoint**, **believe**, church, Greek, minister)

Bible References:

- **1 Thessalonians 3:2**
- **1 Timothy 1:2**
- **Acts 16:3**
- Colossians 1:1
- **Philemon 1:1**
- **Philippians 1:1**
- **Philippians 2:19**

Word Data:

- Strong's: G50950

Colossians References:

1:1

to minister, ministry

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “ministry” refers to serving others by teaching them about God and caring for their spiritual needs.

- In the Old Testament, the priests would “minister” to God in the temple by offering sacrifices to him.
- Their “ministry” also included taking care of the temple and offering prayers to God on behalf of the people.
- The job of “ministering” to people can include serving them spiritually by teaching them about God.
- It can also refer to serving people in physical ways, such as caring for the sick and providing food for the poor.

Translation Suggestions:

- In the context of ministering to people, to “minister” could also be translated as to “serve” or to “care for” or to “meet the needs of.”
- When referring to ministering in the temple, the term “minister” could be translated as “serve God in the temple” or “offer sacrifices to God for the people.”
- In the context of ministering to God, this could be translated as to “serve” or to “work for God.”
- The phrase “ministered to” could also be translated as “took care of” or “provided for” or “helped.”

(See also: serve, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 20:23-26
- Acts 6:4
- Acts 21:17-19

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6399, H8120, H8334, H8335, G12470, G12480, G12490, G20230, G20380, G24180, G30080, G30090, G30100, G30110, G39300, G52560, G52570, G55240

Colossians References:

1:7; 1:23; 1:25; 4:7; 4:17

tradition

Definition:

The term “tradition” refers to a custom or practice that has been kept over time and which is passed down to people in later generations.

- Often in the Bible the word “traditions” referred to teachings and practices that people made, not God’s laws. The expression “tradition of men” or “human tradition” makes this clear.
- Phrases such as “traditions of the elders” or “traditions of my fathers” referred specifically to Jewish customs and practices that Jewish leaders over time had added to the laws God gave to the Israelites through Moses. Even though these added traditions had not come from God, people thought they had to obey them in order to be righteous.
- The apostle Paul used the term “tradition” in a different way to refer to teachings about Christian practice that came from God and that he and other apostles had taught new believers.
- In modern times, there are many Christian traditions that are not taught in the Bible, but rather are the result of historically accepted customs and practices. These traditions should always be evaluated in light of what God teaches us in the Bible.

(See also: apostle, **believe**, **Christian**, **ancestor**, **generation**, Jew, **law**, **Moses**)

Bible References:

- **2 Thessalonians 3:6-9**
- Colossians 2:8
- **Galatians 1:13-14**
- **Mark 7:2**
- **Matthew 15:3**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G38620

Colossians References:

2:8

trespass

Definition:

The term “trespass” means to cross a line or to violate a boundary. This term is often used figuratively, meaning to break a law or to violate the rights of another person.

- This term is very similar to the word “transgression,” but is generally used more often to describe violations against other people than against God.
- A trespass can be a violation of a moral law or a civil law.
- A trespass can also be a sin committed against another person.
- This term is related to the terms “sin” and “transgress,” especially as it relates to disobeying God. All sins are trespasses against God.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, to “trespass against” could be translated as to “sin against” or to “break the rule.”
- Some languages may have an expression like “cross the line” that could be used to translate “trespass.”
- Consider how this term fits with the meaning of the surrounding Bible text and compare it to other terms that have a similar meaning, such as “transgress” and “sin.”

(See also: disobey, iniquity, sin, transgress)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 25:28
- 2 Chronicles 26:16-18
- Colossians 2:13
- Ephesians 2:1
- Ezekiel 15:7-8
- Romans 5:17
- Romans 5:20-21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0816, H0817, H0819, H2398, H4603, H4604, H6586, H6588, G02640, G39000

Colossians References:

2:13

tribulation, distress, distresses, trouble

Definition:

The term “tribulation” refers to a time of hardship, suffering, and distress.

- It is explained in the New Testament that Christians will endure times of persecution and other kinds of tribulation because many people in this world are opposed to Jesus’ teachings.
- The term “tribulation” could also be translated as “time of great suffering” or “deep distress” or “severe difficulties.”

(See also: earth, teach, wrath)

Bible References:

- Mark 4:17
- Mark 13:19
- Matthew 13:20-21
- Matthew 24:9
- Matthew 24:29
- Romans 2:9

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6869, G23470, G44230

Colossians References:

1:24

Tychicus

Definition:

Tychicus was one of Paul's fellow ministers of the gospel.

- Tychicus accompanied Paul on at least one of his missionary journeys to Asia.
- Paul described him as "beloved" and "faithful."
- Tychicus carried Paul's letters to Ephesus and Colosse.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Asia, beloved, Colossae, Ephesus, faithful, good news, minister)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:11-13
- Colossians 4:9
- Titus 3:12

Word Data:

- Strong's: G51900

Colossians References:

4:7

understand, understanding, thinking

Definition:

The term “understand” means to hear or receive information and know what it means.

- The term “understanding” can refer to “knowledge” or “wisdom” or realizing how to do something.
- To understand someone can also mean to know how that person is feeling.
- While walking on the road to Emmaus, Jesus caused the disciples to understand the meaning of the scriptures about the Messiah.
- Depending on the context, the term “understand” could be translated by “know” or “believe” or “comprehend” or “know what (something) means.”
- Often the term “understanding” can be translated by “knowledge” or “wisdom” or “insight.”

(See also: believe, know, wise)

Bible References:

- Job 34:16-17
- Luke 2:47
- Luke 8:10
- Matthew 13:12
- Matthew 13:14
- Proverbs 3:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0995, H0998, H0999, H1847, H2940, H3045, H3820, H3824, H4486, H7200, H7919, H7922, H7924, H8085, H8394, G00500, G01450, G01910, G08010, G10970, G11080, G12710, G19210, G19220, G19870, G19900, G26570, G35390, G35630, G49070, G49080, G49200, G54240, G54280, G54290

Colossians References:

1:6; 1:9; 2:2

vain, vanity

Definition:

The terms “vain” and “vanity” describe something that is useless or extremely temporary.

- In the Old Testament, idols are sometimes described as “vain” things that are worthless and cannot do anything.
- If something is done “in vain,” it means that there the effort or action did not accomplish what was intended. The phrase “in vain” might be translated in various ways, including: “without result;” “with no result;” “for no reason;” “for no purpose,” or “with no purpose.”
- Depending on the context, the term “vain” could be translated as “empty,” “useless,” “hopeless,” “worthless,” “meaningless,” etc.

(See also: false god, worthy)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-2
- 1 Samuel 25:21-22
- 2 Peter 2:18
- Isaiah 45:19
- Jeremiah 2:29-31
- Matthew 15:9

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1891, H1892, H2600, H7307, H7385, H7387, H7723, H8193, H8267, H8414, G09450, G15000, G27560, G27580, G27610, G31510, G31520, G31530, G31550

Colossians References:

2:18

watch, guard, take heed, beware

Definition:

The term “watch” means to look at something very closely and carefully. It also has several figurative meanings. A “watchman” was someone whose job was to guard a city by looking carefully all around him for any danger or threat to the people in the city.

- The command to “watch your life and doctrine closely” means to be careful to live wisely and to not believe false teachings.
- To “watch out” is a warning to be careful to avoid a danger or harmful influence.
- To “watch” or “keep watch” means to always be alert and on guard against sin and evil. It can also mean to “be ready.”
- To “keep watch over” or “keep close watch” can mean to guard, protect or take care of someone or something.
- Other ways of translating “watch” could include “pay close attention to” or “be diligent” or “be very careful” or “be on guard.”
- Other words for “watchman” are “sentry” or “guard.”

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:6
- Hebrews 13:17
- Jeremiah 31:4-6
- Mark 8:15
- Mark 13:33-34
- Matthew 25:10-13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0821, H2370, H4929, H4931, H5027, H5341, H6486, H6822, H6836, H6974, H7462, H7789, H7919, H8104, H8108, H8245, G00690, G09910, G11270, G14920, G23340, G28920, G35250, G37080, G39060, G43370, G46480, G50830, G54380

Colossians References:

4:2

will of God

Definition:

The “will of God” refers to God’s desires and plans.

- God’s will especially relates to his interactions with people and how he wants people to respond to him.
- It also refers to his plans or desires for the rest of his creation.
- The term to “will” means to “determine” or to “desire.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The “will of God” could also be translated as “what God desires” or “what God has planned” or “God’s purpose” or “what is pleasing to God.”

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:15-17
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6
- Colossians 4:12-14
- Ephesians 1:1-2
- John 5:30-32
- Mark 3:33-35
- Matthew 6:8-10
- Psalms 103:21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6310, H6634, H7522, G10120, G10130, G23070, G23080, G23090, G25960

Colossians References:

1:1; 1:9; 4:12

wise, wisdom

Definition:

The term “wise” describes someone who understands what is the right and moral thing to do and then does that. “Wisdom” is the understanding and practice of what is true and morally right.

- Being wise includes the ability to make good decisions, especially choosing to do what pleases God.
- People become wise by listening to God and humbly obeying his will.
- A wise person will show the fruits of the Holy Spirit in his life, such as joy, kindness, love, and patience.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate “wise” could include “obedient to God” or “sensible and obedient” or “God-fearing.”
- “Wisdom” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “wise living” or “sensible and obedient living” or “good judgment.”
- It is best to translate “wise” and “wisdom” in such a way that they are different terms from other key terms like righteous or obedient.

(See also: obey, fruit)

Bible References:

- Acts 6:3
- Colossians 3:15-17
- Exodus 31:6
- Genesis 3:6
- Isaiah 19:12
- Jeremiah 18:18
- Matthew 7:24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 2:5 She also wanted to be **wise**, so she picked some of the fruit and ate it.
- 18:1 When Solomon asked for **wisdom**, God was pleased and made him the **wisest** man in the world.

- 23:9 Some time later, **wise** men from countries far to the east saw an unusual star in the sky.
- 45:1 He (Stephen) had a good reputation and was full of the Holy Spirit and of **wisdom**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0998, H1350, H2445, H2449, H2450, H2451, H2452, H2454, H2942, H3820, H3823, H6195, H6493, H6912, H7535, H7919, H7922, H8454, G46780, G46790, G46800, G49200, G54280, G54290, G54300

Colossians References:

1:9; 1:28; 2:3; 2:23; 3:16; 4:5

word of God, word of Yahweh, word of the Lord, word of truth, scripture

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “word of God” refers to anything that God has communicated to people. This includes spoken and written messages. Jesus is also called “the Word of God.”

- The term “scriptures” means “writings.” It is only used in the New Testament and refers to the Hebrew scriptures, which is the Old Testament. These writings were God’s message that he had told people to write down so that many years in the future people could still read it.
- The related terms “word of Yahweh” and “word of the Lord” often refer to a specific message from God that was given to a prophet or other person in the Bible.
- Sometimes this term occurs as simply “the word” or “my word” or “your word” (when talking about God’s word).
- In the New Testament, Jesus is called “the Word” and “the Word of God.” These titles mean that Jesus fully reveals who God is, because he is God himself.

The term “word of truth” is another way of referring to “God’s word,” which is his message or teaching. It does not refer to just one word.

- God’s word of truth includes everything that God has taught people about himself, his creation, and his plan of salvation through Jesus.
- This term emphasizes the fact that what God has told us is true, faithful, and real.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “the message of Yahweh” or “God’s message” or “the teachings from God.”
- It may be more natural in some languages to make this term plural and say “God’s words” or “the words of Yahweh.”
- The expression “the word of Yahweh came” is often used to introduce something that God told his prophets or his people. This could be translated as “Yahweh spoke this message” or “Yahweh spoke these words.”
- The term “scripture” or “scriptures” could be translated as “the writings” or “the written message from God.” This term should be translated differently from the translation of the term “word.”

- When “word” occurs alone and it refers to God’s word, it could be translated as “the message” or “God’s word” or “the teachings.” Also consider the alternate translations suggested above.
- When the Bible refers to Jesus as “the Word,” this term could be translated as “the Message” or “the Truth.”
- “Word of truth” could be translated as “God’s true message” or “God’s word, which is true.”
- It is important for the translation of this term to include the meaning of being true.

(See also: **prophet**, **true**, **Yahweh**)

Bible References:

- **Genesis 15:1**
- **1 Kings 13:1**
- **Jeremiah 36:1-3**
- **Luke 8:11**
- **John 5:39**
- **Acts 6:2**
- **Acts 12:24**
- **Romans 1:2**
- **2 Corinthians 6:7**
- **Ephesians 1:13**
- **2 Timothy 3:16**
- **James 1:18**
- **James 2:8-9**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **25:7** In **God’s word** he commands his people, “Worship only the Lord your God and only serve him.”
- **33:6** So Jesus explained, “The seed is the **word of God**.”
- **42:3** Then Jesus explained to them what **God’s word** says about the Messiah.
- **42:7** Jesus said, “I told you that everything written about me in **God’s word** must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds so they could understand **God’s word**.
- **45:10** Philip also used other **scriptures** to tell him the good news of Jesus.

- 48:12 But Jesus is the greatest prophet of all. He is the **Word of God**.
- 49:18 God tells you to pray, to study his **word**, to worship him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0561, H0565, H1697, H3068, G30560, G44870

Colossians References:

1:25; 3:16; 4:3

world, worldly

Definition:

The term “world” usually refers to the part of the universe where people live: the earth. The term “worldly” describes the evil values and behaviors of people living in this world.

- In its most general sense, the term “world” refers to the heavens and the earth, as well as everything in them.
- In many contexts, “world” actually means “people in the world.”
- Sometimes it is implied that this refers to the evil people on earth or the people who do not obey God.
- The apostles also used “world” to refer to the selfish behaviors and corrupt values of the people living in this world. This can include self-righteous religious practices which are based on human efforts.
- People and things characterized by these values are said to be “worldly.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “world” could also be translated as “universe” or “people of this world” or “corrupt things in the world” or “evil attitudes of people in the world.”
- The phrase “all the world” often means “many people” and refers to the people living in a certain region. For example, “all the world came to Egypt” could be translated as “many people from the surrounding countries came to Egypt” or “people from all the countries surrounding Egypt came there.”
- Another way to translate “all the world went to their hometown to be registered in the Roman census” would be “many of the people living in regions ruled by the Roman empire went…”
- Depending on the context, the term “worldly” could be translated as “evil” or “sinful” or “selfish” or “ungodly” or “corrupt” or “influenced by the corrupt values of people in this world.”
- The phrase “saying these things in the world” can be translated as “saying these things to the people of the world.”
- In other contexts, “in the world” could also be translated as “living among the people of the world” or “living among ungodly people.”

(See also: corrupt, heaven, Rome, godly)

Bible References:

- 1 John 2:15
- 1 John 4:5
- 1 John 5:5

- **John 1:29**
- **Matthew 13:36-39**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0776, H2309, H2465, H5769, H8398, G10930, G28860, G28890, G36250

Colossians References:

1:6; 2:8; 2:20

wrath, fury

Definition:

Wrath is an intense anger that is sometimes long-lasting. The Bible describes both people and God as experiencing intense anger. When speaking about God's "wrath," make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful fit of rage (which might be true of a human person).

- In the Bible, "wrath" often refers to God's righteous judgment of sin and punishment of people who rebel against him.
- The "wrath of God" can also refer to his judgment and punishment for sin.
- God's wrath is the righteous penalty for those who do not repent of their sin.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways this term could be translated include "intense anger" or "righteous judgment" or "anger."
- God's wrath is just and holy. When talking about God's wrath, make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful human rage.

(See also: judge, sin)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- Luke 3:7
- Luke 21:23
- Matthew 3:7
- Revelation 14:10
- Romans 1:18
- Romans 5:9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0639, H2197, H2528, H2534, H2740, H3707, H3708, H5678, H7107, H7109, H7110, H7265, H7267, G23720, G37090, G39490, G39500

Colossians References:

3:6; 3:8