

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

v92

Ecclesiastes

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes Introduction

Introduction to Ecclesiastes

Outline of Ecclesiastes

1. The author questions the nature of life and the limits of human wisdom (1:1–6:12).
2. The author teaches about making wise choices in how one lives (7:1–12:7)
3. The conclusion and ending (12:8–14)

What is the book of Ecclesiastes about?

Ecclesiastes is a group of short teachings that try to answer questions such as “What profit {belongs} to humanity in exchange for all his toil that he toils under the sun?” (1:3) Ecclesiastes is a series of thoughts about a variety of subjects, all of them about the purpose and worth of various actions and events. The author concludes that all the work we perform and all the knowledge and skill we gain are as a vapor that disappears, and that we must fear Yahweh and keep his commandments.

How should the title of this book be translated?

The traditional title for this book is “Ecclesiastes.” Its meaning is similar to “religious assembly.” Translators might use a different title such as “Words of a Teacher” or “Teachings of a Wise Man.”

Who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes?

The writer calls himself Qoheleth and identifies himself as “the son of David, king in Jerusalem.” Jewish and Christian tradition identify Qoheleth with King Solomon based on:

- his wisdom (1:16 and twenty-six other references to wisdom)
- his vast wealth (2:8) and the pain that comes from wealth (4:8, 5:13–14, 9:11)
- his large number of servants (2:7 and 10:7)
- his limitless opportunities for worldly pleasures (2:1–2, 9, 3:13, 4:8, 5:4 and 12:1) and
- the wide range of his many building projects (2:4–6).

Some scholars think that Qoheleth was a later anonymous Jewish writer. He appears to have written the book of Ecclesiastes near the end of his life, as he reflected on what he gained from all that he did.

Why are there so many apparent contradictions in the book of Ecclesiastes?

Some scholars think the author was a faithful man. Other scholars think that the author made bad decisions and was sorrowful when he wrote this book. Apparent contradictions in the book may indicate that Qoheleth's faith was sometimes weak. Or it is also possible that the teachings in the book differ from each other in order to relate to different things happening in the lives of readers.

Religious and Cultural Concepts

What does this book teach about how God repays people?

In the ancient Near East, people were concerned with why they were being punished or blessed. They often connected these things to their gods. The writer of Ecclesiastes explains that Yahweh will bless and reward people for the right things they do and punish people for the evil things they do. But this might not happen in this life.

What value did the Israelites place on the book of Ecclesiastes?

The Israelites have often questioned the value of this book. This is due in large part to its unusual wording and teachings. At times, it appears to disagree with the rest of Scripture. While many have questioned its authority, it has been affirmed to be Scripture. It gives valuable lessons concerning the uselessness of pursuing any goal other than to give Yahweh glory.

Vapor as Futility

The Hebrew word translated as "vapor" recurs as a thematic refrain throughout Ecclesiastes, declaring human achievements fleeting. It indicates transience, not moral worthlessness. The paired phrase "pursuit of wind" intensifies this assessment.

Translation Issues

What is the meaning of "under the sun?"

"Under the sun" here is another way of saying "on the earth." When the author says that there is "nothing new under the sun," this means that every kind of thing has already happened before on the earth. While a particular event may not have specifically occurred before, something similar has already occurred.

Translate this phrase consistently through the book.

How do I translate harsh or shocking passages?

Parts of the book of Ecclesiastes can be shocking or surprising to read in Scripture. For example, "If a man should father a hundred {children}, and many years should he live—and many that the days of his years may be—but {if} his soul is not satisfied from the good {thing} (and also a burial place is not for him), I say, 'Better than him {is} the stillborn child.'" (6:3). The translator should allow these difficulties to remain and not try to make them less surprising.

How is life described in the book of Ecclesiastes?

The author of Ecclesiastes concludes that everything in this life quickly passes away, like a vapor that disappears. A person's circumstances or character and even all of the things of this world have little or no significance apart from God. That is because God gives meaning to everything.

At the end of their life, people often say that the years of their life seemed short. The author of Ecclesiastes used the metaphor of vapor or breath to describe how life ends while it seems to be just beginning.

Ecclesiastes 1

Ecclesiastes 1 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 1 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

The chapter opens with a title (1), a poem on the endless cycles of nature (2–11), and Qoheleth's first-person search for wisdom (12–18).

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Vapor

The Hebrew word rendered "vapor" is this book's key term for what is fleeting and insubstantial. For a more thorough discussion of this, see the Introduction to Ecclesiastes.

Under the sun

This recurring idiom means "in this life" or "on the earth." See the Introduction to Ecclesiastes for a more thorough explanation of this phrase.

Ecclesiastes 1:1

ULT	UST
The words of Qoheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem,	*The following is the written lesson of Qoheleth, who was a descendant of David and who ruled as king in Jerusalem.*

ULT **Qoheleth**
UST Qoheleth

The word **Qoheleth** is the name that the main speaker of this book chose to use for himself. In the original language it is a title that means “one who assembles a group,” that is, someone who gathers people together in order to teach them. You could spell out how this name sounds in your language, as the ULT does, or you could translate its meaning.
Support Reference: How to Translate Names

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Qoheleth	Qoheleth
David	David
king	king
Jerusalem	Jerusalem

Ecclesiastes 1:2

ULT	UST
“Vapor of vapors,” says Qoheleth. “Vapor of vapors; the whole is vapor.”	*Qoheleth said: All of human life is as temporary as the mist of my breath! Everything is emptiness!*

ULT **Vapor of vapors**
UST All of human life is as temporary as the mist of my breath

Qoheleth is using **Vapor of vapors** as a common expression of his culture to mean “the most fleeting thing of all.” In this expression, a word is repeated in the possessive form in order to express a superlative. If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The most fleeting thing of all] or [Utterly temporary]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the whole {is} vapor**
UST Everything is emptiness

Qoheleth says **the whole** as an extreme statement for emphasis. He does not mean that every single thing without exception is fleeting. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [just about everything is vapor]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

Ecclesiastes 1:3

ULT	UST
What profit belongs to humanity in exchange for all his toil that he toils under the sun?	*I want to know whether the never-ending labor of being alive in this world ever produces any sense of satisfaction or joy in this life that makes the labor of life worthwhile.*

ULT **What profit {belongs} to humanity in exchange for all his toil that he toils under the sun**

UST I want to know whether the never-ending labor of being alive in this world ever produces any sense of satisfaction or joy in this life that makes the labor of life worthwhile

Qoheleth is not using the question form to emphasize that people gain nothing lasting from all their labor. Instead, this is a genuine question. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [I wonder if there is any profit for a human in exchange for all his toil that he toils under the sun!]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **profit**

UST sense of satisfaction or joy in this life that makes the labor of life worthwhile

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **profit**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [good thing that lasts]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **his toil that he toils**

UST the never-ending labor of being alive

Qoheleth is using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have another way of saying this.

Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **under the sun**

UST in this world

Qoheleth is using **under the sun** as a common expression of his culture to mean “in this life on the earth.” If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. See the Introduction to Ecclesiastes for more information on translating this expression here and throughout this chapter. Alternate translation: [in this earthly life]

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
profit	sense of satisfaction or joy in this life that makes the labor of life worthwhile
his toil	labor

Ecclesiastes 1:4

ULT	UST
A generation is going and a generation is coming, but the earth is standing in perpetuity.	*One generation of people dies, and another generation is born. Nonetheless, nothing seems to change.*

ULT **A generation is going and a generation is coming**
UST One generation of people dies, and another generation is born

Qoheleth is referring to the whole cycle of human life by naming its two major components, one generation **going** and another generation **coming**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [People are continually dying and being born]

Support Reference: Merism

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
generation	generation
earth	Nonetheless, nothing seems to change

Ecclesiastes 1:5

ULT	UST
And the sun rises and the sun sets; and to its place, panting, it is rising there.	*The sun rises every morning and sets each evening. Then, it hurries back to the eastern horizon, from which it will rise again.*

ULT **panting, it is rising there**
UST it hurries back … from which it will rise again

Qoheleth is speaking of the sun as if it were a living thing that could be **panting** as it hurried back to the place where it rises. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [it goes back quickly to rise there again]
Support Reference: Personification

Ecclesiastes 1:6

ULT	UST
Going to the south and turning to the north, turning, turning, the wind is going; and on its courses, the wind is returning.	*The wind blows southward. Then, it changes direction and blows northward. It seems to go around and around, and yet, it always seems to go where it is supposed to go.*

ULT **to {the} south and turning to {the} north**

UST southward. Then, it changes direction and blows northward … around

Qoheleth is referring to all directions by naming two major components, **south** and **north**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in every direction]

Support Reference: Merism

ULT **the wind is going; and on its courses, the wind is returning**

UST It … to go … and yet, it always seems to go where it is supposed to go

Qoheleth is speaking of **the wind** as if it were a living thing that could choose where to travel and then decide to return the same way. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the wind simply blows around and around in the same course]

Support Reference: Personification

Ecclesiastes 1:8

ULT	UST
All the things are wearisome; a person is not able to speak. An eye is not satisfied of seeing, and an ear is not filled from hearing.	*These natural processes make humanity so indescribably tired. Similarly, no matter how much people have seen, they will always want to see more; no matter how much people have heard, they will always want to hear more.*

ULT **and an ear is not filled**
UST no matter how much people have heard, they will always want to hear more

The expression **is not filled** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and an ear does not fill up]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **All the things {are} wearisome**
UST These natural processes make humanity … tired

Qoheleth says **All the things are wearisome** and **a person is not able to speak** as extreme statements for emphasis. He means that the endless repetition he has been describing is exhausting to consider and that no one could ever finish describing how wearisome these things are. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [Very many things indeed are wearisome; a person could never finish describing them]
Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **a person**
UST so indescribably

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific **person**. He means people in general. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [anyone]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **An eye is not satisfied of seeing, and an ear is not filled from hearing**
UST Similarly, no matter how much people have seen, they will always want to see more; no matter how much people have heard, they will always want to hear more

These two clauses mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [People are never satisfied by anything they see or hear]
Support Reference: Parallelism

Ecclesiastes 1:9

ULT	UST
Whatever that which was, it is that which will be, and whatever that which has been done, it is that which will be done. And there is not anything new under the sun.	*Whatever happened in the past will happen again. Likewise, whatever people have done in the past, people will do it again. Nothing happens that is ever new.*

ULT **and whatever that which has been done, it {is} that which will be done**

UST Likewise, whatever people have done in the past, people will do it again

The expressions **has been done** and **will be done** are passive verbal forms. If it would be unnatural to use those forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and whatever people have done, it that which people will do]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **under the sun**

UST happens

See how you translated the same expression in 1:3.

Support Reference: Idiom

Ecclesiastes 1:10

ULT	UST
Is there a thing about which one says, "See this, it is new?" It already existed in ages that were from before our faces.	*Now, someone might claim to have discovered something novel. But, in reality someone discovered it a long time ago, in times long since past.*

ULT **Is there a thing about which one says, "See this, it {is} new**
UST Now, someone might claim to have discovered something novel

Qoheleth is using the question form to make an emphatic statement, that nothing anyone points to is actually new. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [There is nothing about which one says, "See this, it is new!"]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **about which one says**
UST Now, someone might claim

The pronoun **one** refers to any person at all, not to a specific individual. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [about which anyone says]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **See this, it {is} new**
UST something novel

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [that this thing is something new]
Support Reference: Quotes within Quotes

ULT **from before our faces**
UST long since past

Here, **our faces** represents "us," that is, the people who are alive now. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from before us]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
ages	time

Ecclesiastes 1:11

ULT	UST
There is not a memory of the former times, and also, of the latter times that will be; memory will not be of them, along with those that will be at the latter time.	*No one ever remembers the people or the events of the past. The same will be true of the people and events of the future, and even of those after that!*

ULT **a memory of**
UST No one ever remembers

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **memory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [anyone remembering]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the former {times}, and also, of the latter times**
UST the people or the events of the past. The same will be true of the people and events

Qoheleth is referring to people and events of every time by naming two major components, **the former times** and **the latter times**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the people and events of every time]
Support Reference: Merism

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
times	the people or the events of the past

Ecclesiastes 1:13

ULT	UST
So I gave my heart to seek and to explore with wisdom concerning all that is done under the heavens. It is an unpleasant business God has given to the sons of humanity to be busy with it.	*I resolved within myself to use my intellect and my understanding of the world to study everything that people do during their lives on this earth. I discovered that God has employed every human being in the difficult job of being alive.*

ULT **all that is done**
UST everything that people

The expression **is done** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [all that people are doing]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **So I gave my heart**
UST I resolved within myself

Qoheleth is using **I gave my heart** as a common expression of his culture to mean "I devoted my mind." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [So, I set my mind]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **to seek and to explore**
UST to study

The terms **to seek** and **to explore** mean similar things. Qoheleth is using the two terms together for emphasis, indicating that his investigation was thorough. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [to search out thoroughly]
Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **with wisdom**
UST to use my intellect and my understanding of the world

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **wisdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [wisely]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **under the heavens**
UST do during their lives on this earth

Qoheleth is using **under the heavens** as a common expression of his culture to mean "in this life on the earth." This expression means the same thing as "under the sun" in 1:3. If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [during this earthly life]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **an unpleasant business**
UST the difficult job of being alive

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **business**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [something unpleasant that]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **to the sons of humanity**
UST every human being

Qoheleth is using **the sons of humanity** as a common expression of his culture to mean "human beings." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to human beings]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
seek	to study
wisdom	to use my intellect and my understanding of the world
heavens	do during their lives on this earth
unpleasant	difficult
God	God

Ecclesiastes 1:14

ULT	UST
I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun, and—behold—everything is vapor and pursuit of wind.	*Yes, I observed everything that people do during their lives. Now pay attention! I saw that our lives are as temporary as the mist of my breath. Humanity's labor is often as silly as trying to catch the wind.*

ULT **and pursuit of wind**

UST is often as silly as trying to catch the wind

Qoheleth is speaking of everything people do as if it were a **pursuit of wind**. He means that gaining anything lasting from these deeds is as futile as trying to catch the wind. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and as futile as trying to catch the wind]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and—behold**

UST Now pay attention! I saw that

Qoheleth is using the term **behold** to focus his listeners' attention on what he is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation here and in verse 16. Alternate translation: [and—pay attention]

Support Reference: Foreground Information

Ecclesiastes 1:15

ULT	UST
A bent thing—one is not able to straighten it, and lack is not able to be counted.	*It is just like people say: "No one can fix what appears broken, and no one can count what is not there."*

ULT **A bent {thing}—one is not able to straighten it**

UST It is just like people say: "No one can fix what appears broken

Qoheleth is speaking of what is wrong in the world as if it were a **bent** object that someone might try to make straight. He means that people cannot correct the things that are wrong with life. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [What is wrong in life—no one is able to make it right]

Support Reference: Metaphor

Ecclesiastes 1:16

ULT	UST
I spoke, I, with my heart, saying, "I—behold —I have grown and increased wisdom over all who were before my face over Jerusalem, and my heart has seen much wisdom and knowledge."	*So, I said to myself, "Now pay attention! You know that I, Qoheleth, have become wiser than any other king who has ever reigned in Jerusalem. I have experienced first-hand what it means to be exceptionally wise and intelligent."*

ULT **I spoke, I, with my heart**
UST So, I said to myself

See how you translated the phrase **my heart** in 1:13
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **saying**
UST So, I said

The word **saying** introduces the words that Qoheleth spoke to himself. In your translation, use a natural way of introducing direct quotations in your language. It may not be necessary to represent this term explicitly.
Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT **before my face over Jerusalem**
UST has ever … in Jerusalem

Here, **my face** represents Qoheleth speaking of himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [before me in Jerusalem]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **and my heart has seen much wisdom and knowledge**
UST I have experienced first-hand what it means to be exceptionally wise and intelligent

Qoheleth is speaking of his **heart** as if it were a person who could see. In this culture, the heart represented a person's thoughts and understanding, and seeing something represented experiencing and knowing it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and in my thinking I have experienced much wisdom and knowledge]
Support Reference: Personification

ULT **wisdom and knowledge**
UST what it means to be … wise and intelligent

The terms **wisdom** and **knowledge** mean similar things. Qoheleth is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [wise understanding]
Support Reference: Doublet

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wisdom	I, Qoheleth, have become wiser
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
knowledge	and intelligent

Ecclesiastes 1:17

ULT	UST
So, I gave my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I know that also this —it is pursuit of wind.	*Having said this, I resolved to learn more about what it means to be wise, as well as what it means to be stupid and insane, by personal experience. I discovered that even these pursuits were as silly as trying to catch the wind.*

ULT **So, I gave my heart**
UST Having said this, I resolved

See how you translated the same expression in 1:13.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **wisdom and to know madness and folly**
UST about what it means to be wise, as well as what it means to be stupid and insane

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **wisdom**, **madness**, and **folly**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [what is sound judgment and what is poor judgment]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **pursuit of wind**
UST as silly as trying to catch the wind

See how you translated the same expression in 1:14.
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
know	to learn more … by personal experience
wisdom	wise
folly	insane

Ecclesiastes 1:18

ULT	UST
For in much wisdom is much anger, and when one increases knowledge, he increases pain.	*It is like people also say: "The wiser one gets, the angrier and more depressed they feel; knowing more about life only makes life hurt more."*

ULT **in much wisdom {is} much anger, and {when} one increases knowledge, he increases pain**

UST The wiser one gets, the angrier and more depressed they feel; knowing more about life only makes life hurt more

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **wisdom**, **anger**, **knowledge**, and **pain**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [For in much wise thinking is much angry feeling, and when one increases the things he knows, he increases the things that hurt him]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wisdom	The wiser one gets
knowledge	knowing

Ecclesiastes 2

Ecclesiastes 2 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 2 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

Qoheleth narrates a first-person experiment: he tests pleasure (1–11), weighs wisdom against folly (12–23), and concludes that enjoying food, drink, and work is God's gift (24–26).

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Vapor

See the Introduction to Ecclesiastes for a discussion of this term.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The Heart

Qoheleth speaks with and to his "heart," in Hebrew the seat of thinking and deciding rather than of emotion.

Under the sun

See the Introduction to Ecclesiastes for a discussion of this phrase.

Ecclesiastes 2:1

ULT	UST
I spoke, I with my heart, "Come, let me test you with joy and see good." But behold, it also was vapor.	*Then I said to myself, "Let me experiment. I will try to make myself as happy and satisfied as possible by doing everything that I enjoy." Now pay attention! I concluded that even the joy and satisfaction I experienced from these pleasures were as temporary as the mist of my breath.*

ULT **I spoke, I with my heart**
UST Then I said to myself

Qoheleth is speaking of his own thoughts as if they were a person that he could talk to, his **heart**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I thought to myself]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **with joy and see good**
UST I will try to make myself as happy and satisfied as possible by doing everything that I enjoy

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **joy**, you could express that idea in another way. Also, Qoheleth is speaking of **good** as if it were a thing that he could **see**. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [by making you glad and letting you experience what is pleasant]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **But behold**
UST Now pay attention! I concluded that

Qoheleth is using the term **behold** to focus his listeners' attention on what he is about to say. See how you translated this word in 1:14.
Support Reference: Foreground Information

ULT **it also {was} vapor**
UST even the joy and satisfaction I experienced from these pleasures were as temporary as the mist of my breath

See how you translated this word in 1:14.
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
test	Let me experiment
joy	I will try to make myself as happy and satisfied as possible
good	by doing everything that I enjoy

Ecclesiastes 2:2

ULT	UST
To laughter I said, "Madness!" And to joy, "What is this doing?"	*So I thought deeply and concluded that giddy laughter is the behavior of crazy people. Likewise, I reasoned that merely pursuing what I enjoyed did me no good.*

ULT **To laughter I said, "Madness!" And to joy**
UST So I thought deeply and concluded that giddy laughter is the behavior of crazy people. Likewise, I reasoned that merely pursuing what I enjoyed

Qoheleth is speaking **To laughter** and **to joy** though he knows they cannot hear him. He is doing this to communicate to the people listening that he feels very strongly about these emotions and their place in life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as if he were speaking directly to the people about them. Alternate translation: [About laughter, I said, "Madness!" And about joy]
Support Reference: Apostrophe

ULT **Madness**
UST is the behavior of crazy people

Qoheleth is using a word that expresses a strong feeling of scorn. There may be an equivalent word or phrase in your language that you can use in your translation to convey this feeling. Alternate translation: [Ridiculous]
Support Reference: Exclamations

ULT **And to joy, "What is this doing**
UST Likewise, I reasoned that merely pursuing what I enjoyed did me no good

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [And to joy, I said, "What is this doing]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **What is this doing**
UST did me no good

Qoheleth is using the question form to show that pleasure accomplishes nothing worthwhile. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [This accomplishes nothing!]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
joy	Likewise, I reasoned that merely pursuing what I enjoyed

Ecclesiastes 2:3

ULT	UST
I explored in my heart to drag my flesh with wine (and my heart was guiding me with wisdom) and to seize folly until I could see where is the good for the sons of humanity that they might do under the heavens during the number of the days of their lives.	*So I thought deeply about the effect that indulging myself with wine or letting myself behave stupidly might have on me. All the while, I remained sober and alert. I thought about this until I could discern through my experiences the best use of people's short lives on this earth.*

ULT **to drag my flesh with wine**
UST about the effect that indulging myself with wine

Qoheleth is using **to drag my flesh with wine** as a common expression of the culture to mean "to gratify my body with wine." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to gratify my body with wine]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **and my heart was guiding {me} with wisdom**
UST All the while, I remained sober and alert

Qoheleth is speaking of his **heart** as if it were a living thing that could guide him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and I was still thinking wisely all the while]
Support Reference: Personification

ULT **and to seize folly**
UST or letting myself behave stupidly might have on me

Qoheleth is speaking of **folly** as if it were an object that he could take hold of with his hand. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and to take up foolish behavior]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **is the good for the sons of humanity**
UST the best … of people's

Here the masculine term **sons** has a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use language in your translation that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. See how you translated the same phrase in 1:13.
Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **under the heavens**
UST on this earth

Qoheleth is using **under the heavens** as a common expression of the culture to mean "here on the earth during this life." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. See how you translated the similar phrase in 1:3. Alternate translation: [here on the earth]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wine	wine
wisdom	remained sober and alert
seize	or letting myself behave stupidly might have on me
folly	or letting myself behave stupidly might have on me
good	best
heavens	on this earth

Ecclesiastes 2:4

ULT	UST
I enlarged my deeds. I built for myself houses. I planted for myself vineyards.	*So I did as many memorable and impressive things as I could. I ordered slaves to build palaces for my leisure and to till and plant vineyards for my pleasure.*

> ULT **I built for myself houses. I planted for myself vineyards**
> UST I ordered slaves to build palaces for my leisure and to till and plant vineyards for my pleasure

Qoheleth is using **I built for myself houses** and **I planted for myself vineyards** to represent the work that he had others do for him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I had houses built for myself. I had vineyards planted for myself]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
houses	palaces
planted	plant
vineyards	vineyards

Ecclesiastes 2:5

ULT	UST
I made for myself orchards and royal parks, and I planted in them a tree of each fruit.	*I commissioned royal groves of fruit trees in my honor and gardens with flowing streams. Into those groves, I ordered that slaves should plant many kinds of fruit-bearing trees.*

ULT **and royal parks**
UST and gardens with flowing streams

The term **royal parks** describes large, enclosed gardens that belonged to a king. If your readers would not be familiar with what royal parks are, you could use the name of a similar thing that your readers would recognize, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [and large walled gardens]
Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **a tree of each fruit**
UST many kinds of fruit-bearing trees

Qoheleth is using the possessive form to describe a **tree** that is characterized by the kind of **fruit** that it bears. If a speaker of your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could express this idea in another way. Alternate translation: [every kind of fruit tree]
Support Reference: Possession

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
royal	and gardens with flowing streams
planted	plant
fruit	fruit-bearing

Ecclesiastes 2:7

ULT	UST
I acquired male servants and female servants and sons of the house belonged to me. Also, much property of cattle and sheep belonged to me, more than all who were to my face in Jerusalem.	*I purchased male and female slaves, and they bore children who were also my slaves in my palace. I also owned more livestock of herd and flock animals than any other previous king in Jerusalem's history before me.*

ULT **and sons of the house**
UST and they bore children who were also my slaves in my palace

Qoheleth is using **sons of the house** as a common expression of the culture to mean "servants who were born in my household." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and servants born in my household]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **to my face**
UST before me

Here the expression **to my face** means "before me" (in time). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language here and throughout this chapter. Alternate translation: [before me]

Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
servants	male and female slaves
house	and they bore children who were also my slaves in my palace
cattle	herd
and sheep	flock
Jerusalem	Jerusalem's

Ecclesiastes 2:8

ULT	UST
I also amassed for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I appointed for myself male singers and female singers and the pleasures of the sons of humanity: breast and breasts.	*Moreover, I accumulated large amounts of silver and gold that I obtained from the tributary gifts of kings and the rulers of foreign territories. I owned slaves, both men and women, who sang for me, and I married wives and concubines, who provided me with sexual pleasure.*

ULT **and the treasure of kings and provinces**
UST that I obtained from the tributary gifts of kings and the rulers of foreign territories

Qoheleth is using the possessive form to describe **treasure** that is characterized by belonging to **kings and provinces**. If a speaker of your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could express this idea in another way. Alternate translation: [and the treasure that kings and provinces possessed]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **breast and breasts**
UST wives and concubines

Qoheleth is using **breast and breasts** to represent women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [an abundance of women] or [many women for myself]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
silver	silver
gold	gold
kings	kings
provinces	and the rulers of foreign territories
appointed	I owned

Ecclesiastes 2:9

ULT	UST
So I became great, and I increased more than all who were to my face in Jerusalem. Also, my wisdom stood by me.	*After all my efforts, I had attained more honor, power, and wealth than any king who had ever reigned before me in Jerusalem. Yet I continued to think soberly so that I could evaluate all of my work properly.*

ULT **my wisdom stood by me**

UST I continued to think soberly so that I could evaluate all of my work properly

Qoheleth is speaking of his **wisdom** as if it were a living thing that could stand beside him as a companion. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I remained wise through it all]

Support Reference: Personification

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
wisdom	I continued to think soberly so that I could evaluate all of my work properly

Ecclesiastes 2:10

ULT	UST
And all that my eyes asked, I did not refuse from them. I did not restrain my heart from any joy, because my heart was joyful from all my toil and this was my portion from all my toil.	*In all my efforts, I allowed myself to indulge in every desire that I had. Whatever I wanted, I permitted myself to enjoy it. I did this because my difficult projects made part of me happy, and that experience felt like a reward for all my hard work.*

ULT **and this was my portion from all my toil**
UST and that experience felt like a reward for all my hard work

Qoheleth is speaking of the enjoyment that he received from his work as if it were a **portion** of land or food that had been assigned to him. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and this was what I received in return for all my toil]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
joy	I wanted
my toil	my difficult projects

Ecclesiastes 2:11

ULT	UST
And I turned, I, to all my works that my hands had done and to the toil that I toiled to do and behold, everything was vapor and pursuit of wind, and there was no profit under the sun.	*Then I stopped to think about everything I had accomplished, and all the difficult work that I had done to accomplish it. Pay attention! I concluded that both my effort and everything I achieved were as fleeting and insubstantial as the mist of my breath. My labors had been as silly as trying to catch the wind. Nothing I did provided me with any joy that made life worthwhile.*

ULT **that my hands had done**
UST I had accomplished

Here, **my hands** represents my own efforts. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [that I had accomplished by my own efforts]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **and to {the} toil that I toiled to do**
UST and all the difficult work that I had done to accomplish it

Qoheleth is using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have another way of expressing this. Alternate translation: [and to the work that I had labored to accomplish]
Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **and pursuit of wind**
UST My labors had been as silly as trying to catch the wind

See how you translated the same expression in 1:14.
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and there was no profit under the sun**
UST Nothing I did provided me with any joy that made life worthwhile

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **profit**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [and nothing under the sun benefited me]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
works	I had accomplished
and to {the} toil	work
profit	provided me with any joy that made life worthwhile

Ecclesiastes 2:12

ULT	UST
So I turned, I, to see wisdom and madness and folly, because what can the person do who will come after the king than that which he has already done?	*This led me to start thinking about the potential benefits of being wise alongside those of being crazy or stupid. I did this because, being king, I had more opportunity to investigate these issues than any other human being.*

ULT **what {can} the person {do} who will come after the king {than} that which he has already done**
UST being king, I had more opportunity to investigate these issues than any other human being

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that whoever comes after him will not be able to do anything more than what has already been done. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [the person who will come after the king can do nothing more than what has already been done.]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **what {can} the person {do} who will come after the king**
UST being king, I had more opportunity to investigate these issues than any other human being

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific **person**. He means people in general who might come after him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [what can any person do who will come after the king]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **after the king**
UST being king, I had more opportunity to investigate these issues than any other human being

Qoheleth is speaking of himself in the third person as **the king**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: [after me]
Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wisdom	wise
folly	or stupid
king	king

Ecclesiastes 2:13

ULT	UST
And I saw, I, that there is a profit for wisdom more than folly, as there is a profit of the light more than the darkness.	*And then I recognized that being wise is far more helpful in life than being stupid, just like it is easier to live well when one has a source of light by which to see than when there is only darkness.*

ULT **as {there is} a profit of the light more than the darkness**
UST just like it is easier to live well when one has a source of light by which to see than when there is only darkness

The point of this comparison is that just as **the light** is more useful than **the darkness** for seeing where one is going, so wisdom is more useful than folly for living well. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [as light helps a person to see where he is going, but darkness does not]

Support Reference: Simile

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
profit	is far more helpful in life
wisdom	wise
folly	being stupid

Ecclesiastes 2:14

ULT	UST
The wise, his eyes are in his head, but the fool in the darkness is walking. But I know, even I, that one happening will happen to both of them.	*It is like people say: A wise person is able to live well, just like someone who walks in the daylight can see. A foolish person, however, endangers themselves with their poor decisions, just like someone who walks about in the dark cannot see. Yet even so, I also recognize that the same outcome awaits both wise people and foolish people: Both will die.*

ULT **The wise, his eyes {are} in his head**
UST It is like people say: A wise person is able to live well, just like someone who walks in the daylight can see

Qoheleth is using the expression that **his eyes are in his head** as a common expression of the culture to mean "he sees where he is going." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The wise, he sees where he is going]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **but the fool in the darkness is walking**
UST A foolish person, however, endangers themselves with their poor decisions, just like someone who walks about in the dark cannot see

Qoheleth is speaking of the way a foolish person lives as if it were **walking** in **the darkness**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [but the fool lives without understanding]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **that one happening will happen to both of them**
UST that the same outcome awaits both wise people and foolish people: Both will die

Qoheleth is using a construction in which a verb and its subject come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. The implication is that the one **happening** that will happen to both of them is death. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternatively, your language may have another way of expressing this. Alternate translation: [that the same thing will occur to both of them] or [that one thing, namely death, will happen to both of them]
Support Reference: Poetry

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wise	wise
fool	foolish
know	Yet even so, I … recognize

Ecclesiastes 2:15

ULT	UST
And I spoke, I, with my heart, "As the happening of the fool, even to me—it will happen to me! And why was I, I, wise then, abundantly?" And I said to my heart that also this is vapor.	*This made me say to myself, "I am going to die just as inevitably as stupid people! In this way, all my hard work to become a wise person appears to have made no difference! What was the point?" I reminded myself that even my attempts to become wise and live a fulfilled life were as fleeting as the mist of my breath.*

ULT **As {the} happening of the fool, even {to} me—it will happen {to} me**
UST I am going to die just as inevitably as stupid people

Qoheleth is using a phrase that expresses a strong feeling of dismay. There may be an equivalent word or phrase in your language that you can use in your translation to convey this feeling. Alternate translation: [Alas, the very thing that happens to the fool will happen to me too]
Support Reference: Exclamations

ULT **And why was I, I, wise then, abundantly**
UST In this way, all my hard work to become a wise person appears to have made no difference! What was the point

Qoheleth is using the question form to express his frustration that becoming **wise** gained him no lasting advantage. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [And so I was exceedingly wise for no reason at all!]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **And I said to my heart that also this {is} vapor**
UST I reminded myself that even my attempts to become wise and live a fulfilled life were as fleeting as the mist of my breath

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: [And I said to my heart, "This also is vapor."]
Support Reference: Direct and Indirect Quotations

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
fool	stupid people
wise	wise

Ecclesiastes 2:16

ULT	UST
For there is no memory of the wise person with the fool in perpetuity, because already, in the coming days, both will be forgotten. Alas! The wise die with the fool!	*After all, no one remembers anyone who dies, whether they lived wisely or stupidly, for very long. After a while, people will forget about both of them. How sad! No matter whether we live wisely or act like an idiot, everyone will eventually forget about us!*

ULT **there is no memory of the wise person**

UST no one remembers anyone who dies, whether they lived wisely

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **memory**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [people do not remember the wise person]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **both {will be} forgotten**

UST people will forget about both of them

The expression **forgotten** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [no one will remember either of them]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **Alas! The wise die with the fool**

UST How sad! No matter whether we live wisely or act like an idiot, everyone will eventually forget about us

Qoheleth is using a phrase that expresses a strong feeling of grief. There may be an equivalent word or phrase in your language that you can use in your translation to convey this feeling. Alternate translation: [How terrible! The wise die with the fool]

Support Reference: Exclamations

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
of the wise person	whether they lived wisely
fool	stupidly

Ecclesiastes 2:17

ULT	UST
And I hated life, because bad to me was the work that was done under the sun, because everything was vapor and pursuit of wind.	*Because the job of being a human in this life includes enduring these realities that are burdensome, I began to despise being alive. Everything seemed to be as insubstantial as the mist of my breath and as silly as trying to catch the wind.*

ULT **was the work that was done under the sun**
UST the job of being a human in this life

The expression **was done** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [was the work that people did under the sun]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
bad	includes enduring these realities … are burdensome
work	the job of being a human

Ecclesiastes 2:18

ULT	UST
And I hated, I, all my toil that I had toiled under the sun, that I will leave it to the person who will be after me.	*Then I began to despise all the difficult work that I had labored to do during my life, especially because after I die, someone else will inherit everything that I have acquired in my life.*

ULT **all my toil that I had toiled under the sun**
UST all the difficult work that I had labored to do during my life

Here, **my toil** represents what I had gained by my toil. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [all the possessions that I had earned by my hard work under the sun]

Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my toil	work
leave	especially because … will inherit everything that I have acquired in my life

Ecclesiastes 2:19

ULT	UST
And who knows: Will he be wise or a fool? And he will have authority over all my toil that I toiled and for which I was wise under the sun. Also, this is vapor.	*And no one can predict whether my successor will be a wise or a stupid person. Either way, he will have the ability to enjoy all the things that I labored so hard and so wisely for in my life. Regardless, even his enjoyment of the results of my hard work will be as fleeting as the mist of my breath.*

ULT **And who knows: Will he be wise or a fool**
UST And no one can predict whether my successor will be a wise or a stupid person

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that no one is able to know the answer. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [And no one knows whether he will be wise or a fool.]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **Will he be wise or a fool**
UST whether my successor will be a wise or a stupid person

The pronoun **he** refers to the person who will come after Qoheleth, whom he mentions at the end of the previous verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [Will that person who comes after me be wise or a fool]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **And he will have authority over all my toil**
UST Either way, he will have the ability to enjoy all the things that I labored … for

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **authority**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [And he will rule over all my toil]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
knows	And no one can predict
wise	wise
fool	a stupid
authority	Either way, he will have the ability to enjoy
my toil	labored

Ecclesiastes 2:21

ULT	UST
For there is a person whose toil is with wisdom and with knowledge and with skill, but to a person who has not toiled for it, he will give it as his portion. This also is vapor and a great misfortune.	*Partly I felt this way because it is possible that someone might labor at his work wisely and expertly, even skillfully. But when he dies, his successor will inherit everything, even though he did not do any of the hard work that produced his inheritance! Yet even these painful realities are as fleeting as the mist of my breath.*

ULT **is with wisdom and with knowledge and with skill**
UST wisely and expertly, even skillfully

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **wisdom** and **knowledge** and **skill**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [is that of someone who is wise, knows much, and who possesses skills]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
whose toil	labor
wisdom	wisely
knowledge	and expertly

Ecclesiastes 2:22

ULT	UST
For what endures for the person in exchange for all his toil and in the striving of his heart in which he is a toiler under the sun?	*After all, the emotionally and physically difficult labor that people do throughout their lives does not seem to produce anything that is both good and enduring for them.*

> ULT **For what endures for the person in exchange for all his toil and in the striving of his heart {in} which he {is} a toiler under the sun**
>
> UST After all, the emotionally and physically difficult labor that people do throughout their lives does not seem to produce anything that is both good and enduring for them

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that nothing lasting comes to a person from all his hard work. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [For nothing endures for the person in exchange for all his toil and the striving of his heart with which he labors under the sun.]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
endures	enduring
his toil	labor

Ecclesiastes 2:23

ULT	UST
For all his days are pains, and anger is his business; even in the night, his heart does not rest. Also this—it is vapor.	*This is because every day only seems to cause one pain. Furthermore, the work people do only produces grief. It is so grievous that, when they ought to be asleep, people's minds are so anxious that they cannot rest. Yet even so, all of this is as insubstantial as the mist.*

ULT **all his days {are} pains, and anger {is} his business**

UST every day only seems to cause one pain. Furthermore, the work people do only produces grief

Qoheleth is speaking of a person's **days** as if they were **pains** and of his **anger** as if it were **business**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [all his days are full of pain, and his work causes him grief]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and anger {is} his business**

UST Furthermore, the work people do only produces grief

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **anger** and **business**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [and he works angrily]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

Ecclesiastes 2:24

ULT	UST
There is nothing better for humanity than that he should eat and drink and cause his spirit to see good in his toil. Also, this I saw, I, that it is from the hand of the God,	*So, the best way that people can live is to enjoy whatever they have to eat and drink and to allow themselves to find something enjoyable about their work. I have personally experienced that this joy only comes when God gives it to someone.*

ULT **There is nothing better for humanity {than} that he should eat and drink**
UST So, the best way that people can live is to enjoy whatever they have to eat and drink

Here the masculine term **he** has a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use language in your translation that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: [There is nothing better for humanity than that he or she should eat and drink]
Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **and cause his spirit to see good in his toil**
UST and to allow themselves to find something enjoyable about their work

Qoheleth is using **cause his spirit to see good** as a common expression of the culture to mean "find enjoyment." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and enjoy himself in his toil]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **is from the hand of the God**
UST only comes when God gives it to someone

Here, **the hand of the God** represents what God gives. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [is what God gives]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
better	best
spirit	and to allow themselves to find
good	something enjoyable
in his toil	work
God	God

Ecclesiastes 2:25

ULT	UST
for who will eat and who will enjoy apart from him?	*After all, there is not a single human being who can enjoy the things he has if God does not first give those things to him.*

ULT **for who will eat and who will enjoy apart from him**
UST After all, there is not a single human being who can enjoy the things he has if God does not first give those things to him

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that no one is able to eat or to enjoy anything apart from God. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [for no one can eat or enjoy anything apart from him!]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **apart from him**
UST if God does not first give those things to him

Some ancient manuscripts read “apart from him.” The ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “apart from me.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of the ULT.
Support Reference: Textual Variants

Ecclesiastes 2:26

ULT	UST
For to a person who is good to his face, he gives wisdom and knowledge and joy. But to the sinner, he gives the business of gathering and of collecting to give to the one who is good to the face of the God. Even this is vapor and pursuit of wind.	*God does this by making the people of whom he approves wise, intelligent, and happy. Yet God has decided that whoever disobeys him will work hard only so that they gain wealth that God will give to those of whom he approves. Even their wealth and hard work are as fleeting as the mist of my breath, and as silly as trying to catch the wind.*

ULT **who {is} good to his face**
UST of whom he approves

Here, **to his face** represents in his judgment. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [who is good in his judgment]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **he gives wisdom and knowledge and joy**
UST by making … wise, intelligent, and happy

The pronoun **he** refers to God, whom Qoheleth names later in this verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **of gathering and of collecting**
UST so that they gain wealth

The terms **gathering** and **collecting** mean similar things. Qoheleth is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [of amassing wealth]
Support Reference: Doublet

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
to a person	the people
good	of whom he approves
wisdom	wise
knowledge	intelligent
joy	and happy
sinner	Yet … whoever disobeys him
God	to those of whom he approves

Ecclesiastes 3

Ecclesiastes 3 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 3 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter opens with a poem listing 14 pairs of contrasting activities assigned to appointed times (1–8), then reflects on God's sovereignty, human limitation, injustice, and the shared mortality of humans and animals (9–22).

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Eternity in the human heart

In verse 11, God places eternity in the human heart yet limits understanding of his work, creating a tension central to the chapter's argument.

Ecclesiastes 3:1

ULT	UST
For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under the heavens:	*There is a fixed moment at which everything in this life happens, and a determined period for every kind of event that happens during a person's life:*

> ULT **under the heavens**
> UST during a person's life

See how you translated this phrase in 1:13

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
time	and a determined period
heavens	during a person's life

Ecclesiastes 3:2

ULT	UST
a time to give birth and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to tear out what was planted,	*People will give birth, and people will die, people will plant their crops, and people will reap and harvest those crops.*

ULT **a time to give birth and a time to die**
UST People will give birth, and people will die

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [There is a time to give birth and a time to die]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **what was planted**
UST those crops

The expression **what was planted** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [what they planted]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
time	People will give birth
plant	plant

Ecclesiastes 3:8

ULT	UST
a time to love and a time to hate, a time of war and a time of peace.	*People will love one another, and people will hate one another; people will go to war, and people will mediate peace.*

ULT **war**
UST people will go to war

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **war**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [fighting]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **peace**
UST and people will mediate peace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **peace**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [living peacefully]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
time	People will love one another
love	love
peace	peace

Ecclesiastes 3:9

ULT	UST
What is the profit of the one who does in exchange for that which he is toiling?	*Again, I want to know whether the difficult labor of human life ever produces any satisfaction or joy for hard-working people.*

ULT **What {is the} profit of the one who does in exchange for that which he {is} toiling**
UST Again, I want to know whether the difficult labor of human life ever produces any satisfaction or joy for hard-working people

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that there is no profit for the worker. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [There is no profit for the one who does in exchange for that which he is toiling.]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **is the profit of**
UST any satisfaction or joy

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **profit**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [gains]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
profit	any satisfaction or joy

Ecclesiastes 3:10

ULT	UST
I saw the business that God gives to the sons of humanity to be busy with it.	*I have observed the job of living in which God has employed every human being to bustle about doing.*

ULT **the business**
UST the job of living

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **business**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [tasks]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **to the sons of humanity**
UST every human being

See how you translated this phrase in 1:13.
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
God	God

Ecclesiastes 3:11

ULT	UST
He makes everything beautiful in its time. Also, he gives perpetuity in their heart, yet so that humanity cannot find the work that the God does from beginning to end.	*God makes everything that happens beautifully fitted for the moment that God has determined. And at the same time, God enables humanity to perceive that he is at work in their lives. Even so, God does not allow humanity to understand everything that God does—from the time that he created this world to the point at which he brings all things to an end.*

ULT **Also, he gives perpetuity in their heart, yet so that humanity cannot find the work that the God does from beginning to end**

UST And at the same time, God enables humanity to perceive that he is at work in their lives. Even so, God does not allow humanity to understand everything that God does—from the time that he created this world to the point at which he brings all things to an end

Here the word **yet** introduces the result of God giving the sense of duration **in their heart**: **humanity cannot find the work that the God does from beginning to end**. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that this is the purpose.

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

ULT **perpetuity**

UST to perceive that he is at work in their lives

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **perpetuity**, you could express the same idea in another way.

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **in their heart**

UST humanity

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the inner being of a person were **their heart**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [in their inner being]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in their heart**

UST humanity

The pronoun **their** refers to the sons of humanity mentioned in 3:10. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [in the hearts of humanity]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **the work**

UST everything

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of work, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the deeds]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **from beginning to end**
> UST from the time that he created this world to the point at which he brings all things to an end

Qoheleth is referring to all of God's work in its entirety by naming two major components, **beginning** and **end**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from the very beginning to the very end of everything]

Support Reference: Merism

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
time	for the moment that God has determined
work	everything
God	God

Ecclesiastes 3:12

ULT	UST
I know that there is no good for them except to rejoice and to do good during his life,	*In light of this, I confess that the best way for humanity to live is to gratefully celebrate life and to live ethically while one is alive.*

ULT **there is no good for them except to rejoice and to do good**
UST the best way for humanity to live is to gratefully celebrate life and to live ethically

If it would appear in your language that Qoheleth was making a statement and then contradicting it, you could reword this as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [the best thing for them is to rejoice and to do good]
Support Reference: Connect — Exception Clauses

ULT **during his life**
UST while one is alive

The pronoun **his** refers to each person among those Qoheleth has been discussing. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [during their lives]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
I know	In light of this, I confess
good	best
rejoice	to gratefully celebrate life

Ecclesiastes 3:13

ULT	UST
and every person who eats and drinks and sees good in all of his toil—it is a gift of God.	*And, furthermore, whenever a person is able to enjoy what they have to eat and drink, and to find something gratifying in the work that they do, this is a priceless thing that God has enabled.*

ULT **his toil**
UST in the work … they do

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **toil**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [his hard work]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **is a gift of**
UST is a priceless thing that … has enabled

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **gift**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [is a gracious act of]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
good	something gratifying
his toil	work
God	God

Ecclesiastes 3:14

ULT	UST
I know that everything that God does, it will be enduring. To it, there is nothing to add, and from it, there is nothing to remove. And God acts so that they fear from before his face.	*I also confess that all of God's decisions are unchanging. It is like people say: No one can improve what God does, either by addition or subtraction. God does this so that they submit to God in trusting faith.*

ULT **To it, there is nothing to add, and from it, there is nothing to remove**
UST It is like people say: No one can improve what God does, either by addition or subtraction … does

Qoheleth is referring to all possible changes by naming two major components, **nothing to add** and **nothing to remove**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language.
Support Reference: Merism

ULT **from before his face**
UST to God

Here, **his face** represents his presence. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from before his presence]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
I know	I also confess
God	God's
enduring	unchanging
fear	so that they submit … in trusting faith

Ecclesiastes 3:15

ULT	UST
Whatever that is, already it was, and that which is to be, already it is. And the God seeks that which is pursued.	*Current events are not new. Things like them have already happened. Likewise, future events will not be new. Things like them are already happening now. God is the one who understands what every person is trying to understand.*

ULT **And the God seeks that which is pursued**
UST God is the one who understands what every person is trying to understand

Qoheleth is using **God seeks that which is pursued** as a common expression of the culture to mean "God calls back the past." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And the God calls back what has passed away]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **that which is pursued**
UST what every person is trying to understand

The expression **is pursued** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [that which people pursue]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
God	God
seeks	who understands

Ecclesiastes 3:16

ULT	UST
But again, I saw under the sun: The place of justice—there was wickedness, and the place of equity—there was wickedness!	*However, here is something else that I observed: The places in society from which people expect rulers to make just and fair decisions are frequently places in which rulers make unjust and oppressive decisions!*

ULT **under the sun**
UST that I observed

See how you translated this phrase in 1:3.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **The place of justice—there {was} wickedness, and the place of equity—there {was} wickedness**
UST The places in society from which people expect rulers to make just and fair decisions are frequently places in which rulers make unjust and oppressive decisions

These two clauses mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them and express the emphasis in another way.
Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **justice—there {was} wickedness, and the place of equity—there {was} wickedness**
UST The places in society from which people expect rulers to make just and fair decisions are frequently places in which rulers make unjust and oppressive decisions

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **justice**, **wickedness**, and **equity**, you could express these same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [just decisions—there was wicked deeds, and the place of righteous actions—there was wicked deeds]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
justice	just
wickedness	in which rulers make unjust and oppressive decisions
equity	from which people expect rulers to make just and fair decisions

Ecclesiastes 3:17

ULT	UST
I spoke, I with my heart: "The equitable and the wicked the God will judge, because a time exists for every matter and on account of every deed there."	*I confessed to myself, "God will hold accountable people who make just decisions and those who make unjust decisions. He will do this because there is a moment for everything that happens, including God's judgment of rulers in those places."*

ULT **I spoke, I with my heart**
UST I confessed to myself

Qoheleth is using **I spoke, I in my heart** as a common expression of the culture to mean "I thought to myself." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **The equitable and the wicked the God will judge**
UST God will hold accountable people who make just decisions and those who make unjust decisions

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [That God will judge both the righteous and the wicked]
Support Reference: Direct and Indirect Quotations

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
The equitable	people who make just decisions
wicked	and those who make unjust decisions
God	God
judge	will hold accountable
time	there is a moment

Ecclesiastes 3:18

ULT	UST
I spoke, I, with my heart, "For the sake of the sons of humanity, the God is to test them to see that they are animals, they themselves."	*This led me to confess further to myself: "God is governing the world this way because he wants people to clearly understand that they are really no different than animals."*

ULT I spoke, I, with my heart
UST This led me to confess further to myself

See how you translated the similar expression in 3:17.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT For the sake of the sons of humanity, the God {is} to test them to see that {they are} animal{s}, they themselves
UST God is governing the world this way because he wants people to clearly understand that they are really no different than animals

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [that God tests the sons of humanity to show that they themselves are animals]
Support Reference: Direct and Indirect Quotations

ULT the sons of humanity
UST people

See how you translated the same phrase in 1:13.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT that {they are} animal{s}, they themselves
UST that they are really no different than animals

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if human beings were animals. He means that in terms of mortality, humans are no different from animals. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [that they themselves are no different from animals]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT they themselves
UST that they

The pronoun they themselves refers to the sons of humanity. Qoheleth uses the independent pronoun for emphasis. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the sons of humanity themselves]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
God	God
test	God is governing the world this way … he wants
are animals	are really no different than animals

Ecclesiastes 3:19

ULT	UST
For the happening of the sons of humanity and the happening of the animal—and one happening is for them. As the death of this one, so the death of this one, and one spirit exists for both. But an advantage of humanity over the animal, there is none, for everything is vapor.	*After all, human lives and animal lives end in the same way. People die just like animals die, and they seem to possess the same capacity to die. Because of this, it appears that being human offers no benefit over being an animal. All life is as fleeting as the mist of my breath.*

ULT **For the happening of the sons of humanity and the happening of the animal—and one happening {is} for them**

UST After all, human lives and animal lives end in the same way

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of happening, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [For what happens to the sons of humanity and what happens to the animal—and what happens is for them both]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **the sons of humanity**

UST human lives

See how you translated the similar expression in 1:14.

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **As the death of this {one}, so the death of this one**

UST People die just like animals die

The first use of the pronoun **this one** refers to a human being, and the second use refers to an animal. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers.

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **But an advantage of humanity over the animal**

UST Because of this, it appears that being human offers … benefit over being an animal

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of advantage, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [But the way that humanity is better than the animal]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **everything {is} vapor**

UST All life is as fleeting as the mist of my breath

See how you translated this expression in 1:14.

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
animal	animal
spirit	and … the same capacity to die

Ecclesiastes 3:20

ULT	UST
Both are going to one place. Both are from the dust, and both return to the dust.	*When people and animals die, people bury both in the ground. Both people and animals are as mortal as if God made them from dirt, and when each dies their dead bodies become dirt once again.*

ULT **Both are going to one place**

UST When people and animals die, people bury both in the ground

Qoheleth is referring to death in a polite way by using the phrase going to one place. Depending on what is helpful for your readers, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [Both are going to the grave]

Support Reference: Euphemism

ULT **Both are from the dust, and both return to the dust**

UST Both people and animals are as mortal as if God made them from dirt, and when each dies their dead bodies become dirt once again

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if people and animals were made from the dust and will become dust again. He is alluding to the way God created the first human being out of the ground. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Both were made from dirt, and both will turn back into dirt]

Support Reference: Metaphor

Ecclesiastes 3:21

ULT	UST
Who knows? The spirit of the sons of humanity, it is the one going up, upwards, and the spirit of the animal, it is the one going down, downwards to the earth.	*This causes me to wonder whether people are correct about what happens to people when they die. Perhaps humans ascend to the place in which God lives, and animals descend into the ground.*

ULT **Who knows**
UST This causes me to wonder whether people are correct about what happens to people when they die

Qoheleth is using the question form to express that no one can know for certain what happens after death. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [No one can know for sure.]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **The spirit of the sons of humanity**
UST Perhaps humans

See how you translated this expression in 1:13.
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
knows	This causes me to wonder whether people are correct about what happens to people when they die
spirit	Perhaps
animal	animals

Ecclesiastes 3:22

ULT	UST
So, I saw that there is nothing better than that humanity should rejoice in his works, for it is his portion. For who will bring him to look at what that will be after him?	*So, I confess once again that the best way for people to live is to allow themselves to enjoy what their work produces—even the hard work itself. This is because God has given each person their work. It is their daily allotment. After all, nobody can know what will happen tomorrow.*

ULT **humanity should rejoice in his works**
UST is to allow themselves to enjoy what their work produces—even the hard work itself

The pronoun **his** refers to humanity collectively, spoken of as a single person. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [each person should rejoice in his works]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **it {is} his portion**
UST God has given each person their work. It is their daily allotment

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the enjoyment of work were a **portion** of food allotted to someone. He means that it is what God has assigned to each person. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [it is what God has assigned to him]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **For who will bring him to look at what that will be after him**
UST After all, nobody can know what will happen tomorrow

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that no one can show a person what will happen after him. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [For no one can show him what will happen after him]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
better	best
rejoice	is to allow … to enjoy
works	hard work

Ecclesiastes 4

Ecclesiastes 4 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 4 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

Qoheleth moves from observing oppression (1–3) to reflecting on envy-driven labor and proverbial sayings about contentment (4–6), the advantages of companionship (7–12), and a parable about a poor but wise youth replacing an old foolish king (13–16).

Religious and Cultural Concepts

Vapor as Futility

The Hebrew word translated as “vapor” recurs as a thematic refrain (vv. 4, 7–8, 16), declaring human achievements fleeting. For a more complete discussion, see the Introduction to Ecclesiastes.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Ambiguous Pronoun References

In the parable of the youth and the king (13–16), Hebrew pronouns shift referents without explicit markers. Translators may need to clarify whether “he” refers to the youth or the king.

Ecclesiastes 4:1

ULT	UST
And I turned, I, and I saw all the oppressions that were being done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed—and there was no comforter for them. And from the hand of the ones oppressing them was strength, and there was no comforter for them.	*Next, as I continued to contemplate, I observed all the ways in which people suffer from oppression during their lives. Now pay attention! As I watched those people cry, I realized that no one was there to reassure them in their grief. Furthermore, those who oppressed them appeared to possess power such that no one was able to reassure them in their grief.*

ULT **And I turned, I**
UST Next, as I continued to contemplate

The pronoun **I** refers to Qoheleth. Here, and other places throughout this chapter, it is stated separately from the verb for emphasis. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And I, Qoheleth, turned]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **all the oppressions**
UST all the ways in which

Qoheleth says **all the oppressions** as an extreme statement for emphasis. He means very many oppressions, not necessarily every single one. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [very many oppressions]
Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **the oppressions**
UST the ways in which

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **oppressions**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the oppressive acts]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **were being done**
UST people suffer from oppression

The expression **were being done** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [people were doing]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **under the sun**
UST during their lives

See how you translated the phrase **under the sun** in 1:3 and use that here and elsewhere in this chapter.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **And behold**
UST Now pay attention

Qoheleth is using the term **behold** to focus his listeners' attention on what he is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [And consider this]
Support Reference: Foreground Information

ULT **the tears of the oppressed**
UST As I watched those people cry

Here, **the tears of the oppressed** represents their grief and suffering. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the grief and suffering of the oppressed]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **And from the hand of {the ones} oppressing them**
UST Furthermore, those who oppressed them appeared to possess

Here, **the hand** represents the power or control of the ones oppressing them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [From the power of those who oppressed them]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **was strength**
UST power

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **strength**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [were cruel acts]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

Ecclesiastes 4:3

ULT	UST
But better than the two of them is the one who has not yet lived, who has not seen the evil deed that is being done under the sun.	*Yet the people whose mothers have not yet given birth to them are even more fortunate than both people currently alive and those people who have already died. Indeed, the unborn have not yet had to experience or witness any of the evil actions that humans do during their lives.*

ULT **is being done**
UST humans do

The expression **is being done** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [people are doing]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
better	Yet … are even more fortunate
evil	evil

Ecclesiastes 4:4

ULT	UST
And I saw, I, every toil and every success of the deed—that it is the envy of a person from his friend. This also is vapor and pursuit of wind.	*Then I observed that people work as hard as they do and strive to be successful only because they are jealous of their friends' possessions. Yet even their ill-motivated labor is as insubstantial as the mist of my breath and as futile as trying to catch the wind.*

ULT **every toil and every success of the deed**
UST Then I observed that people work as hard as they do and strive to be successful

The terms **every toil** and **every success of the deed** mean similar things. Qoheleth is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [all that they accomplished]
Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **success of**
UST and strive to be successful

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **success**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [successful result of]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **is the envy of a person from his friend**
UST they are jealous of their friends' possessions

Qoheleth is using the possessive form to describe a **deed** that is characterized by **envy of a person from his friend**, meaning that people's work is driven by jealousy of their neighbors. If a speaker of your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could express this idea in another way. Alternate translation: [is motivated by a person's envy of his neighbor]
Support Reference: Possession

ULT **is vapor and pursuit of wind**
UST is as insubstantial as the mist of my breath and as futile as trying to catch the wind

See how you translated this phrase in 1:14.
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
toil	work
envy	jealous
friend	their friends' possessions

Ecclesiastes 4:5

ULT	UST
The fool is folding his hands and is eating his flesh.	*It is just like people say: Rather than work hard, foolish people merely relax with their unproductive hands folded on their laps, ready to eat their meal. Yet as they do so, they unwittingly ruin themselves, as if they were feasting on their own bodies!*

ULT **The fool is folding his hands and is eating his flesh**

UST It is just like people say: Rather than work hard, foolish people merely relax with their unproductive hands folded on their laps, ready to eat their meal. Yet as they do so, they unwittingly ruin themselves, as if they were feasting on their own bodies

Qoheleth uses a proverb in order to illustrate the self-destructive nature of laziness. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh]

Support Reference: Proverbs

ULT **is folding his hands**

UST merely relax with their unproductive hands folded on their laps, ready to eat their meal

Qoheleth is using **is folding his hands** as a common expression of the culture to mean "is being lazy" or "is refusing to work." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is being lazy]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **and is eating his flesh**

UST Yet as they do so, they unwittingly ruin themselves, as if they were feasting on their own bodies

Qoheleth is speaking as if the fool's laziness were causing him to consume his own **flesh**. He means that the fool's idleness destroys himself. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and is destroying himself]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
fool	foolish
and is eating	Yet as they do so, they unwittingly ruin themselves, as if they were feasting on their own bodies

Ecclesiastes 4:6

ULT	UST
Better is a fullness of a palm with quiet than a fullness of two handfuls with toil and pursuit of wind.	*People also say this: "Despite appearances, being contented with a simple, peaceful lifestyle is twice as good as being rich but living a life of stressful labor—as frustrating as trying to catch the wind."*

ULT **Better {is} a fullness of a palm {with} quiet than a fullness of {two} handfuls {with} toil and pursuit of wind**

UST People also say this: "Despite appearances, being contented with a simple, peaceful lifestyle is twice as good as being rich but living a life of stressful labor—as frustrating as trying to catch the wind

Qoheleth uses a proverb in order to teach that contentment with little is better than striving for much. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [One handful with peace is better than two handfuls with toil and chasing after wind]

Support Reference: Proverbs

ULT **is a fullness of a palm {with} quiet**

UST People also say this: "Despite appearances, being contented with a simple, peaceful lifestyle is twice as good

Qoheleth is speaking as if having a small amount with peace were having **a fullness of a palm with quiet**. He means that having few possessions and being content is valuable. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [a small amount with peace]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **than a fullness of {two} handfuls**

UST as being rich but living a life of stressful labor

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **fullness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [than two hands filled]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **and pursuit of wind**

UST as frustrating as trying to catch the wind

See how you translated this phrase in 1:14.

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Better	good
wind	wind

Ecclesiastes 4:7

ULT	UST
And I turned, I, and I saw a vapor under the sun:	*I proceeded to contemplate another facet of people's lives—one that also seemed as insubstantial as the mist.*

ULT **a vapor**

UST another facet of people's lives—one that also seemed as insubstantial as the mist

See how you translated this in 1:14.

Support Reference: Metaphor

Ecclesiastes 4:8

ULT	UST
There is one person and there is not a second person—even a son or brother, there is not for him—and there is no end to all his toil. Also, his eye is not satisfied with wealth. So why am I toiling and causing my soul to lack from good things? Even this is vapor, and it is an unpleasant business.	*I saw someone who lived alone. He appeared to have no children nor any brothers or sisters living with him. And every day, the person labored without stopping. Even though he was wealthy, he never felt satisfied with his life and possessions. Then he asked himself, "Why am I allowing my hard work to deprive me of things that I enjoy?" His attempts to satisfy himself with a lavish lifestyle were as insubstantial as the mist. His joyless labor was really the most lamentable part of the difficult job of being alive in which God has employed humanity.*

ULT **even a son or brother, there is not for him**
UST children nor any brothers or sisters living with him

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [he does not even have a son or a brother]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **his toil**
UST And every day, the person labored

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **toil**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the hard work he does]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **his eye is not satisfied**
UST he never felt satisfied

Here, **his eye** represents his desire or appetite. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [he is never satisfied]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **with wealth**
UST with his life and possessions

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of wealth, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [with all that he owns]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **So why {am} I toiling and causing my soul to lack from good things**
UST Then he asked himself, "Why am I allowing my hard work to deprive me of things that I enjoy

The lonely person is using the question form to emphasize that there is no good reason for his solitary toil. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [So there is no reason for me to toil and cause my soul to lack from good things.]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **my soul**
UST me

Here, **my soul** represents the person himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [myself]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **is vapor**
UST were as insubstantial as the mist

See how you translated this in 1:14.
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and it {is} an unpleasant business**
UST His joyless labor was really the most lamentable part of the difficult job of being alive in which God has employed humanity

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of business, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [and it is unpleasant to deal with]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
his toil	labored
soul	me
good	of things that I enjoy
unpleasant	the most lamentable part of

Ecclesiastes 4:9

ULT	UST
Better are the two people than the one person, that there is for them a good wage in exchange for their toil.	*Having a friend is more advantageous than living one's life alone. After all, together two people can experience better outcomes in their hard work.*

ULT **a good wage**
UST better outcomes

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **wage**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [to earn more]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **in exchange for their toil**
UST in their hard work

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **toil**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [in exchange for the work they do]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Better	is more advantageous

Ecclesiastes 4:10

ULT	UST
For if they fall, the one person will lift up his companion, but woe is his—the one person that will fall, but there is no second person to lift him up.	*First, if you were to fall down, a friend could help you get up again, but if you are alone and you fall down, you will only experience hardship and pain, because no one will be there to help you stand up again.*

ULT **For if they fall**
UST First, if … were to fall down

Qoheleth is presenting a possible condition, that if two companions fall, one can help the other up. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that could happen. Alternate translation: [For if one of them falls]

Support Reference: Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

ULT **but woe {is} his**
UST but … you … only experience hardship and pain

Qoheleth is using a phrase that expresses a strong feeling of distress for the person who is alone and falls with no one to help. There may be an equivalent word or phrase in your language that you can use in your translation to convey this feeling. Alternate translation: [but how terrible it will be for him]

Support Reference: Exclamations

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
companion	friend
woe	but … you … only experience hardship and pain

Ecclesiastes 4:12

ULT	UST
And if he will overpower him, the one person, the two people will stand against him, and the three-fold rope will not be torn in two quickly.	*Third, if someone stronger than you were to attack you, he might beat you up by yourself. However you and your friend would be able to ward off your attacker together! Three people could defend themselves even more easily, just as a rope that someone made from three strands is harder to rip in half than a rope with one or two strands.*

ULT **And if he will overpower him, the one person**
UST Third, if someone stronger than you were to attack you, he might beat you up by yourself

The pronoun **he** refers to an attacker, while the pronoun **him** refers to the person who is alone. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And if an attacker overpowers the one person]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **and the three-fold rope will not be torn in two quickly**
UST Three people could defend themselves even more easily, just as a rope that someone made from three strands is harder to rip in half than a rope with one or two strands

Qoheleth is speaking as if the bond between three people were a **three-fold rope** that cannot easily be **torn in two**. He means that three people united together are very strong. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and three people standing together will not be quickly defeated]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **will not be torn in two**
UST Three people could defend themselves even more easily, just as a rope that someone made from three strands is harder to rip in half than a rope with one or two strands

The expression **will not be torn in two** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [will not break in two]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

Ecclesiastes 4:13

ULT	UST
Better is a child, poor but wise, than a king, old but foolish, who does not know how to be warned any longer.	*It is preferable to be a poor young man who nonetheless acts wisely than to be a king who, despite his age, acts like a fool and refuses to pay attention to good advice, as he did when he was younger.*

ULT **Better {is} a child, poor but wise, than a king, old but foolish**
UST It is preferable to be a poor young man who nonetheless acts wisely than to be a king who, despite his age, acts like a fool

Qoheleth uses a proverb in order to teach that wisdom is more valuable than power or age. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture.
Support Reference: Proverbs

ULT **to be warned**
UST to pay attention to good advice

The expression **to be warned** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [to receive warnings]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Better	It is preferable to be
wise	nonetheless acts wisely
king	king
old	age
foolish	fool
know	and refuses
warned	to pay attention to good advice

Ecclesiastes 4:14

ULT	UST
For from the house of those who are bound, he came forth to become king, yet even in his kingdom he was born poor.	*I imagine that it is possible for a young man like that to live so successfully that he becomes king—even ruling over the land in which his mother gave birth to him in poverty, so severe that it was like someone tying her up with ropes.*

ULT **from the house of those who are bound**
UST so severe that it was like someone tying her up with ropes

Qoheleth is using **the house of those who are bound** as a common expression of the culture to mean "prison." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [from prison]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **those who are bound**
UST so severe that it was like someone tying her up with ropes

The expression **who are bound** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [those whom someone had bound]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **he came forth**
UST a young man … to live so successfully

The pronoun **he** refers to the poor but wise youth from the previous verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the poor but wise youth came forth]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **he was born poor**
UST in which his mother gave birth to him in poverty

The expression **he was born** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [his mother bore him into poverty]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
house	so severe that it was like someone tying her up with ropes
bound	so severe that it was like someone tying her up with ropes
to become king	that he becomes king
in his kingdom	ruling
he was born	in which his mother gave birth to him

Ecclesiastes 4:15

ULT	UST
I saw all the living, the ones walking around under the sun, with the second child who will stand under him.	*But then I imagine all of the people in this young man's kingdom who merely go about their lives. The person who will be the successor to the young king is among them.*

ULT **the living**

UST the people in this young man's kingdom

See how you translated the similar expression in 4:2.

Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

ULT **who will stand under him**

UST who will be the successor to the young king

The pronoun **him** refers to the young king mentioned in the previous verses. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [who will stand in his place as the next king]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

Ecclesiastes 4:16

ULT	UST
There was no end to all the people, to all who were to their faces. Even the latter people will not rejoice in him, because even this is vapor and pursuit of wind.	*Despite his current popularity with the endless crowds of his subjects, after a few years future generations will be tired of him. So even the wise way he lived that led to his success is as fleeting as the mist of my breath and as frustrating as trying to catch the wind.*

ULT **There {was} no end to all the people**
UST with the endless crowds of his subjects

Qoheleth says **There was no end to all the people** as an extreme statement for emphasis. He means that there were very many people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [There were very many people]
Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **will not rejoice in him**
UST will be tired of him

The pronoun **him** refers to the young king who rose to power. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [will not rejoice in that young king]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **is vapor and pursuit of wind**
UST as fleeting as the mist of my breath and as frustrating as trying to catch the wind

See how you translated the similar phrase in 1:14.
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
rejoice	will be tired

Ecclesiastes 5

Ecclesiastes 5 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 5 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

The chapter moves from instruction about worship and vows (1–7) to reflection on oppression and wealth (8–17), closing with counsel to enjoy God's gifts (18–20).

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Vows

A person could promise God to do something in return for help. Such a promise was binding, so the writer warns against vowing rashly.

Vapor

The writer calls things "vapor" (7, 10), a recurring image for what is fleeting and empty. See the Introduction to Ecclesiastes for a further explanation of this term and its usage.

Ecclesiastes 5:1

ULT	UST
Keep your feet when you go to the house of God. And drawing near to listen is better than fools giving a sacrifice, for they are not knowing that they do evil.	*Be mindful of how you behave when you go to worship God at his house. Draw near to him by listening expectantly. That is far better than offering sacrifices to God in the ways that foolish people do. They are ignorant that they are behaving inappropriately in God's presence!*

ULT **Keep your feet**
UST Be mindful of how you behave

Qoheleth is using **Keep your feet** as a common expression of the culture to mean "be careful about how you conduct yourself." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Watch your conduct]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the house of God**
UST God at his house

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the temple were **the house of God**, since that was the place where God made his presence known among his people. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the temple where God dwells]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Keep	Be mindful of how you behave
house of God	his house
better	better
fools	foolish
sacrifice	sacrifices
knowing	They are ignorant
evil	inappropriately

Ecclesiastes 5:2

ULT	UST
Do not be hurried concerning your mouth, and do not let your heart hurry to bring forth a word to the face of God. For the God is in heaven, but you are on the earth; therefore, let your words be few.	*Do not be so quick to say something that you speak rashly. Neither should you allow yourself to raise an issue hastily in God's presence. You ought to remember that this God is the God who rules from heaven and that you live here on the dust of the earth. For this reason, you ought to think before you say anything in God's presence.*

ULT **concerning your mouth**
UST to say something

Here, **your mouth** represents what you say. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [concerning what you say]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **and do not let your heart hurry**
UST Neither should you allow yourself … hastily

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if your thoughts and intentions were **your heart**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and do not let your thoughts hurry you]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **to the face of God … the**
UST in God's presence

Here, **to the face of God** represents being in the presence of God. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [into the presence of God]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **For … God {is} in heaven, but you {are} on the earth**
UST You ought to remember that this God is the God who rules from heaven and that you live here on the dust of the earth

The implication is that God is exalted far above people and so should be addressed with reverence and with few words. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [For God is exalted in heaven high above you, and you are lowly here on the earth]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
God	God's
heaven	heaven
earth	earth

Ecclesiastes 5:3

ULT	UST
For the dream comes with much business, and the voice of a fool with many words.	*After all, it is like people say: "When someone claims to receive secret messages from the gods, he tends to rush busily about his life. And whenever foolish people talk, they tend to speak in as many words as possible."*

ULT **For the dream comes with much business, and the voice of a fool with many words**
UST After all, it is like people say: "When someone claims to receive secret messages from the gods, he tends to rush busily about his life. And whenever foolish people talk, they tend to speak in as many words as possible

These two clauses mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [For a fool is certainly known by his excessive talking]
Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **For the dream comes with much business, and the voice of a fool with many words**
UST After all, it is like people say: "When someone claims to receive secret messages from the gods, he tends to rush busily about his life. And whenever foolish people talk, they tend to speak in as many words as possible

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific **dream** or a specific **fool**. He means dreams and fools in general. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use expressions that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [For some dreams come with much business, and the voice of fools with many words]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **and the voice of a fool**
UST And whenever foolish people talk

Here, **the voice of a fool** represents what a fool says. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and what a fool says]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **and the voice of a fool with many words**
UST And whenever foolish people talk … to speak in as many words as possible

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [and the voice of a fool comes with many words]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
dream	When someone claims to receive secret messages from the gods
fool	foolish

Ecclesiastes 5:4

ULT	UST
When you vow a vow to God, do not delay fulfilling it, for there is no delight in the fools. That which you vow, fulfill.	*If you solemnly promise God that you will offer a sacrifice to him, you ought to do what you promised quickly. Neither God nor his people tolerate foolish people. You should be careful to do whatever you promise.*

ULT **you vow a vow**
UST you solemnly promise … that you will offer a sacrifice

Qoheleth is using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have another way of saying this. Alternate translation: [you make a vow]
Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **for there is no delight in the fools**
UST Neither God nor his people tolerate foolish people

The implication is that it is God who has no delight in fools who do not fulfill what they have vowed. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [for God takes no delight in fools who do not fulfill their vows]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
vow	you solemnly promise … that you will offer a sacrifice
God	God
fulfilling	you ought to do what you promised quickly
delight	God nor his people tolerate
fools	foolish

Ecclesiastes 5:5

ULT	UST
It is better that you do not vow than that you vow but do not fulfill.	*It is better to not promise anything to God than to promise to do something and then fail to do it!*

ULT **than that you vow but do not fulfill**
UST than to promise to do something and then fail to do it

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [than that you make a vow but do not fulfill your vow]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
better	better
vow	to … promise anything to God
fulfill	and then fail to do it

Ecclesiastes 5:6

ULT	UST
Do not give your mouth to cause your flesh to sin, and do not say to the face of the messenger that it was an unintentional sin. Why should God be angry concerning your voice and destroy the deed of your hands?	*You should never talk in such a way that you begin to sin. It would be shameful if you promised God that you would offer him a sacrifice only to lie and claim that you made a mistake when God's priest arrived to collect the sacrificial animal. If you were to do that, God would be so frustrated with your so-called promises that he would destroy everything you have worked to accomplish!*

ULT **Do not give your mouth to cause your flesh to sin**
UST You should never talk in such a way that you begin to sin

Qoheleth is using **Do not give your mouth to cause your flesh to sin** as a common expression of the culture to mean "do not let what you say bring guilt upon you." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Do not let what you say bring guilt upon you]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **your flesh**
UST you begin to sin

Qoheleth is using **your flesh** to represent your whole self. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [yourself]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT **the messenger**
UST It would be shameful if you promised God that you would offer him a sacrifice only to lie and … when God's priest arrived to collect the sacrificial animal

The phrase **the messenger** could mean: (1) the priest who came to collect what a person had vowed to give to God. Alternate translation: [the priest who comes to collect your offering]; or (2) an angel sent by God. Alternate translation: [the angel]. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **that it {was} an unintentional sin**
UST claim that you made a mistake

The pronoun **it** refers to the vow that the person made and did not fulfill. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [that your vow was an unintentional sin]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **your voice**
UST your so-called promises

Here, **your voice** represents what you have said. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [your words]

Support Reference: Metonymy

> ULT **the deed of your hands**
> UST everything you have worked to accomplish

Here, **the deed of your hands** represents what you have worked to accomplish. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the work you have accomplished]

Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
sin	sin
messenger	It would be shameful if you promised God that you would offer him a sacrifice only to lie and … when God's priest arrived to collect the sacrificial animal
God	God
destroy	destroy

Ecclesiastes 5:7

ULT	UST
For in many dreams and vaporous things and many words— just fear God.	*This is the point: While everyone else is chasing messages from the gods, offering the prolific prayers of foolish people, or doing whatever vain things people do in God's presence, you ought to live your life fearfully remembering that God is God!*

ULT **For in many dreams and vaporous things and many words**

UST This is the point: While everyone else is chasing messages from the gods, offering the prolific prayers of foolish people, or doing whatever vain things people do in God's presence

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [For there is futility in many dreams and vaporous things and many words]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **and vaporous things**

UST or doing whatever vain things people do in God's presence

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if things that are empty and fleeting were **vaporous things**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and empty, fleeting things]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
dreams	While everyone else is chasing messages from the gods
fear	you ought to live your life fearfully remembering that God is God
God	God

Ecclesiastes 5:8

ULT	UST
If the extortion of the poor and the robbery of justice and equity you see in the province, do not be amazed concerning the matter, for a high one over a high one is watching, and high ones are over them.	*You may witness powerful people where you live extorting money from impoverished people or corrupting legal systems to their own benefit. You should not be surprised about this. Lamentably, this is the way things are. The people who can hold these powerful people accountable watch and do nothing. And even these more powerful people are under the authority of someone even higher who likewise does nothing.*

ULT **the extortion of {the} poor and {the} robbery of justice and equity**
UST powerful people … extorting money from impoverished people or corrupting legal systems to their own benefit

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **extortion** and **robbery**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [poor people being extorted and just and fair treatment being denied]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **justice and equity**
UST or corrupting legal systems to

The phrase **justice and equity** expresses a single idea. The word **equity** tells more about **justice**. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning in a different way. Alternate translation: [justice]
Support Reference: Hendiadys

ULT **for a high one over a high one is watching**
UST Lamentably, this is the way things are. The people who can hold these powerful people accountable watch and do nothing

The phrase **for a high one over a high one is watching** could mean: (1) that each official is protected by another official who is more powerful than he is. Alternate translation: [for over each official is a higher official who protects him]; or (2) that God watches over all of them. Alternate translation: [for over each official is a higher official and God watches over all] You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers.
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
robbery	their own benefit
justice	or corrupting legal systems to
province	where you live
watching	watch

Ecclesiastes 5:9

ULT	UST
And a profit of a land—it is taken by all. But a king is served by a field.	*Also, all of these corrupt officials seize the harvests of our fields—even the king enjoys the food that his subjects collect from our farms.*

ULT **And a profit of a land**
UST Also … the harvests of our fields

Qoheleth is using the possessive form to describe a **profit** that is characterized by coming from **a land**. If a speaker of your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could express this idea in another way. Alternate translation: [And the profit that comes from a land]
Support Reference: Possession

ULT **it {is taken} by all**
UST all of these corrupt officials seize

The expression **it is taken** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [everyone takes it]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **But a king is served by a field**
UST even the king enjoys the food that his subjects collect from our farms

The expression **is served** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [But a field provides for a king]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **But a king is served by a field**
UST even the king enjoys the food that his subjects collect from our farms

The implication is that even a king depends on what farmland produces, although it is also possible that Qoheleth means that a king who promotes farming benefits everyone in his land. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [But even a king depends on what the fields produce]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
profit	Also … the harvests of
land	our fields
king	king

Ecclesiastes 5:10

ULT	UST
A lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver, and whoever loves increase, not income. Also this is vapor.	*Some people believe that only wealth can provide them with the kind of happy life that they desire. These people will never think that they have enough money, nor will any number of possessions make them happy. In reality, money is also as insubstantial as the mist of my breath.*

ULT **A lover of silver will not be satisfied {with} silver**
UST Some people believe that only wealth can provide them with the kind of happy life that they desire. These people will never think that they have enough money … will … make them happy

Here, **silver** represents money. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [A lover of money will not be satisfied with money]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **A lover of silver**
UST Some people believe that only wealth can provide them with the kind of happy life that they desire

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific **lover of silver**. He means anyone who loves wealth. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Anyone who loves silver]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **and whoever loves increase, not income**
UST Some people believe that only wealth can provide them with the kind of happy life that they desire … nor … any number of possessions

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [and whoever loves increase will not be satisfied with income]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
lover	Some people believe that only wealth can provide them with the kind of happy life that they desire
silver	Some people believe that only wealth can provide them with the kind of happy life that they desire

Ecclesiastes 5:11

ULT	UST
When the good thing increases, the ones eating it increase. And what advantage belongs to its master except the sight of his eyes?	*The more wealth that an individual has, the more people seek to benefit from that individual's wealth. So rich people do not really benefit from their wealth. It only seems to others that their wealth helps them.*

ULT **the {ones} eating it increase**
UST the more people seek to benefit from that individual's wealth

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if using up a person's wealth were **eating** it. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the ones spending it increase]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **And what advantage {belongs} to its master except the sight of his eyes**
UST So rich people do not really benefit from their wealth. It only seems to others that their wealth helps them

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that the owner of such wealth gains no real advantage from it. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [And so its master gains no advantage from it except to look at it with his eyes!]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **the sight of his eyes**
UST It only seems to others that their wealth helps them

Qoheleth is using **the sight of his eyes** as a common expression of the culture to mean "looking at what he owns." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [looking at what he owns]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
good	wealth
the {ones} eating it	people seek to benefit from that individual's wealth
master	rich people

Ecclesiastes 5:12

ULT	UST
Sweet is the sleep of the worker, however little or however much he eats, but the satisfaction of a rich person— it is not allowing him to sleep.	*Poor hardworking people sleep soundly at night no matter whether they have a lot of food or only a little to eat. Like a person who sleeps poorly because he has eaten too much, the wealth that rich people believe provides them with a satisfying life actually makes them so anxious that they are unable to fall asleep.*

ULT **Sweet is the sleep of the worker**
UST Poor hardworking people sleep soundly at night

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if restful and satisfying sleep were **Sweet**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The worker sleeps peacefully]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **is the sleep of the worker**
UST Poor hardworking people … at night

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific **worker**. He means workers in general. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [is the sleep of any worker]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **however little or however much he eats**
UST no matter whether they have a lot of food or only a little to eat

Qoheleth is referring to all the amounts that a worker might eat by naming two major components, **however little** and **however much**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [whatever amount he eats]
Support Reference: Merism

ULT **but the satisfaction of a rich person— it is not allowing him to sleep**
UST Like a person who sleeps poorly because he has eaten too much, the wealth that rich people believe provides them with a satisfying life actually makes them so anxious that they are unable to fall asleep

Qoheleth is speaking of **the satisfaction of a rich person** as if it were a living thing that could keep him from sleeping. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [but a rich person is so full that he cannot sleep]
Support Reference: Personification

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
he eats	to eat

Ecclesiastes 5:13

ULT	UST
There is a sickening misfortune I have seen under the sun: Wealth kept by its master to his harm.	*I have observed that money is the cause of another lamentable, gut-wrenching situation that can happen to people during their lives. I have watched someone save all of his substantial income. But his wealth ultimately caused him pain.*

ULT **a sickening misfortune**
UST another lamentable, gut-wrenching situation

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the misfortune that he saw were a disease, calling it **sickening**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly here and in verse 16. Alternate translation: [a distressing misfortune]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **under the sun**
UST that can happen to people during their lives

See how you translated **under the sun** in 1:3. This also occurs in verse 18.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **Wealth kept by its master to his harm**
UST I have watched someone save all of his substantial income. But his wealth ultimately caused him pain

The expression **kept** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Wealth that its master keeps, to his harm]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
misfortune	another lamentable … situation
master	I have watched someone

Ecclesiastes 5:14

ULT	UST
And that wealth perished in an unfortunate business. And he had fathered a son, but there was not in his hand anything.	*When his investments unexpectedly failed, he lost his entire savings. He had planned to give this wealth to his son as an inheritance. Yet now he had nothing left to pass on.*

ULT **And he had fathered a son, but there was not in his hand anything**
UST He had planned to give this wealth to his son as an inheritance. Yet now he had nothing left to pass on

The implication is that this man had nothing left to leave to his son. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And he had fathered a son, but he had nothing left to leave him]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **in his hand**
UST Yet now he had nothing left to pass on

Here, **in his hand** represents in his possession. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [among his possessions]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **in an unfortunate business**
UST When his investments unexpectedly failed

See how you translated the similar expression in 1:13.
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
And … perished	he lost
unfortunate	When his investments unexpectedly failed

Ecclesiastes 5:15

ULT	UST
As he went out from the womb of his mother, naked he will go again, just as he came. And he will not take anything in exchange for his toil that he will take in his hand.	*And so that man died in the same condition as when his mother gave birth to him: He began his life naked, possessing no wealth, and so he died in the same way. When he died, that man's labor had never produced for him any meaningful sense of satisfaction.*

ULT **naked he will go again, just as he came**

UST And so that man died … He began his life naked, possessing no wealth, and so he died in the same way

Qoheleth is referring to dying in a polite way by using the phrase **he will go again**. Depending on what is helpful for your readers, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [naked he will die and depart, just as he came]

Support Reference: Euphemism

ULT **naked**

UST He began his life naked, possessing no wealth

Qoheleth is using **naked**, which describes a person who has no clothing, to represent a person who has no possessions at all. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [with nothing at all]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
womb	in the same condition as when his mother gave birth to him
he … again	And so that man died … and so he died
in exchange for his toil	labor

Ecclesiastes 5:16

ULT	UST
And also this is a sickening misfortune: Just as he came, thus he will go. And what profit belongs to him who toils for the wind?	*Yes, this was the lamentable, gut-wrenching situation that I witnessed: This man brought nothing into the world when his life began, and when he died, he took nothing with him. And so, it seems that his hard work never enabled him to feel satisfied. His work was like a frustrated attempt to grab a handful of the wind.*

ULT **And what profit {belongs} to him who toils for the wind**
UST And so, it seems that his hard work never enabled him to feel satisfied. His work was like a frustrated attempt to grab a handful of the wind

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that such a person gains nothing at all from his work. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [And there is no profit at all for him who toils for the wind!]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **And what profit {belongs} to him who toils for the wind**
UST And so, it seems that his hard work never enabled him to feel satisfied. His work was like a frustrated attempt to grab a handful of the wind

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **profit**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [And how does the one who toils for the wind benefit]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **who toils for the wind**
UST His work was like a frustrated attempt to grab a handful of the wind

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the results of such a person's work were **the wind**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who toils for something he cannot keep]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a … misfortune	was the lamentable … situation that I witnessed
profit	And so, it seems that his hard work never enabled him to feel satisfied
who toils	work

Ecclesiastes 5:17

ULT	UST
Also, all his days in darkness he eats, and in great vexation and his sickness and anger.	*Moreover, every day of his life he sat in the dark when he ate his meals—deeply depressed, fatigued from illness, and fuming.*

ULT **all his days in darkness he eats**
UST every day of his life he sat in the dark when he ate his meals

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the gloom and misery in which such a person lives were **darkness**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [all his days he eats his meals in misery]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and {in} great vexation and his sickness and anger**
UST deeply depressed, fatigued from illness, and fuming

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **vexation**, **sickness**, and **anger**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [and being greatly vexed and feeling sick and being angry]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
days	day
he eats	when he ate his meals
and anger	and fuming

Ecclesiastes 5:18

ULT	UST
Behold what I, I, have seen is good: That it is beautiful to eat and to drink and to see good in all his toil that he will toil under the sun during the number of the days of his life that the God has given to him, for it is his portion.	*Now pay attention! I have observed how beautiful life can be when people merely enjoy the food and drink that they have and allow themselves to feel some satisfying happiness in their hard work. People can do this only while they are alive during the brief span of life that God has allotted to them as his gift—no more and no less.*

ULT **Behold**
UST Now pay attention

Qoheleth is using the term **Behold** to focus his listeners' attention on what he is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [Consider]
Support Reference: Foreground Information

ULT **I, I, have seen**
UST I have observed

See how you translated the similar expression in 4:4.
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **his toil that he will toil**
UST in their hard work

See how you translated the similar expression in 1:3.
Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **it {is} his portion**
UST as his gift—no more and no less

See how you translated the similar expression in 3:22.
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
good	how … life can be
his toil	hard work
days	during the brief span of life
God	God

Ecclesiastes 5:19

ULT	UST
Also, each person who the God gives to him wealth and possessions and has empowered him to eat from it and to accept his portion and to rejoice in his toiling—this, it is a gift of God.	*God sometimes gives people money and possessions. But only sometimes does he also give them the ability to enjoy what they have. When God does, people accept what God has given them—no more and no less—and are able to enjoy their otherwise difficult and stressful work. This joyful acceptance is something priceless, like a gift from God.*

ULT **each person who the God gives to him wealth and possessions**
UST God … gives people money and possessions

Here the masculine term **him** has a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use language in your translation that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: [each person, whether man or woman, to whom the God gives wealth and possessions]
Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **and has empowered him to eat from it and to accept his portion and to rejoice in his toiling**
UST But only sometimes does he also give them the ability to enjoy what they have. When God does, people accept what God has given them—no more and no less—and are able to enjoy their otherwise difficult and stressful work

The implication is that the ability to enjoy wealth is itself a gift that God must give, since not everyone whom God makes wealthy is able to enjoy what he has. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and, though he does not do this for everyone he makes wealthy, has additionally enabled him to eat from it and to accept his portion and to rejoice in his toiling]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **this, it {is} a gift of God**
UST This joyful acceptance is something priceless, like a gift from God

The pronoun **this** refers to the ability to enjoy wealth and possessions, although it is also possible that it refers to the wealth and possessions themselves. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [this ability, it is a gift of God]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
God	God
God	God

Ecclesiastes 5:20

ULT	UST
For not much does he remember the days of his life, because the God occupies him with the joys of his heart.	*By enabling us to accept the good things in our lives joyfully, God focuses our attention on what we enjoy about our lives. This allows us to forget, momentarily, the reality that one day we will inevitably die.*

ULT **For not much does he remember the days of his life**
UST This allows us to forget, momentarily, the reality that one day we will inevitably die

The implication is that such a person does not brood over how short and troubled his life is. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [For such a person does not dwell on how short and troubled his life is]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **with the joys of his heart**
UST on what we enjoy about our lives

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **joys**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [with things that make him rejoice in his heart]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **with the joys of his heart**
UST on what we enjoy about our lives

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if a person's inner feelings were **his heart**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [with the joyful feelings he has inside]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
days	day
God	God
joys	on what we enjoy about our lives

Ecclesiastes 6

Ecclesiastes 6 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 6 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

Qoheleth continues his examination of wealth and mortality, arguing that neither abundance nor long life benefits a person who is unable to enjoy them.

1. Wealth that God gives but does not allow a person to enjoy (1–2)
2. A long, unsatisfied life is worse than a stillborn child (3–6)
3. Sayings about appetite, wisdom, and desire (7–9)
4. Human limits before the one who is more powerful (10–12)

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 6:7 and 6:9.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Vapor

The word rendered “vapor” recurs through this chapter (verses 2, 4, 9, 11, and 12) as the book’s key image for what is fleeting and insubstantial, not for what is morally worthless.

Burial

In this culture a proper burial honored the dead, so the remark that “a burial place is not for him” (3) describes a disgrace rather than merely an absence.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Qoheleth advances much of his argument by asking questions that expect no answer (verses 6, 8, 11, and 12). If questions do not work this way in your language, you could translate them as statements.

Quoted Sayings

Verses 7 and 9 appear to be popular sayings that Qoheleth quotes in support of his argument. If it would be helpful, you could mark them as quoted sayings.

Ecclesiastes 6:1

ULT	UST
There is a misfortune that I have seen under the sun and it is great on humanity:	*Sadly, I have also observed the painful realities that happen to people during their lives. This lamentable part of life is deeply distressing and difficult to accept.*

ULT **under the sun**
UST to people during their lives

See how you translated **under the sun** in 1:3. This also occurs in verse 12.
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a misfortune	the painful realities that happen

Ecclesiastes 6:2

ULT	UST
A person who the God gives to him wealth and possessions and honor, so he is not lacking for his soul from anything that he desires, but the God does not enable him to eat from it; instead, a nonnative person will eat it—this is vapor, and it is a sickening misfortune.	*God sometimes makes people so wealthy and well-respected that they have everything that they could want. Yet sometimes God does not allow these people to enjoy those things that their wealth provides. Instead, someone outside their family acquires their wealth and enjoys it. Yet even still, money remains as fleeting as the mist of my breath. It is gut-wrenching and lamentable that this can happen.*

ULT **A person who the God gives to him**
UST God sometimes makes people

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific **person**. He means anyone in this situation in general. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Anyone to whom God gives]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **wealth and possessions and honor**
UST so wealthy and well-respected

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **wealth**, **possessions**, and **honor**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [many valuable things that he owns and many people who honor him]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **for his soul from anything**
UST they have everything that they could want

Here, **his soul** represents his appetite. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [for his appetite anything]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **to eat from it; instead, a nonnative person will eat it**
UST to enjoy those things that their wealth provides. Instead, someone outside their family acquires their wealth and enjoys it … of

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the wealth that God gives were food that a person could **eat**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to enjoy it; instead, a nonnative person will enjoy it]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **this {is} vapor**
UST Yet even still, money remains as fleeting as the mist … my breath

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if this situation were **vapor**, which appears for a moment and then is gone. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. This also occurs in verse 9. Alternate translation: [this situation is fleeting and empty]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
God	God
possessions	so wealthy
honor	and well-respected
soul	they have everything that they could want
desires	they have everything that they could want
to eat	to enjoy
nonnative	outside their family … of
will eat it	acquires their wealth and enjoys it
a … misfortune	and lamentable that this can happen

Ecclesiastes 6:3

ULT	UST
If a man should father a hundred children, and many years should he live—and many that the days of his years may be—but if his soul is not satisfied from the good thing (and also a burial place is not for him), I say, "Better than him is the stillborn child."	*Someone could perhaps father very many children and live a very long life. No matter how long his life might be—even if he were to go on living forever—if he never allows himself to enjoy the wonderful parts of his life, I will consider the life of a baby who dies when it is still in its mother's womb to be more desirable than this man's miserable life.*

ULT **If a man should father a hundred {children}, and many years should he live**
UST Someone could perhaps father very many children and live a very long life

Qoheleth is presenting a possible condition, that a man might father many children and live for many years. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a condition that could happen. Alternate translation: [Perhaps a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years]
Support Reference: Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

ULT **a hundred children**
UST very many children

Qoheleth says **a hundred children** as an extreme statement for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [an extremely large number of children]
Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **and many years should he live—and many that the days of his years may be**
UST and live a very long life. No matter how long his life might be

These two clauses mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [and he should live an exceedingly great number of years]
Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **but {if} his soul is not satisfied**
UST if he never allows himself to enjoy

The expression **his soul is not satisfied** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [but if he does not find satisfaction]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **a burial place is not for him**
UST he were to go on living forever

This could mean: (1) that this man does not receive an honorable burial, which was a great disgrace in this culture. Alternate translation: [he does not even receive an honorable burial]; or (2) that he lives forever and so does not need to be buried. Alternate translation: [if he were to live forever]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **I say, “Better than him {is} the stillborn child**
> UST I will consider the life of a baby who dies when it is still in its mother’s womb to be more desirable than this man’s miserable life

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [I say that the stillborn child is better than him]

Support Reference: Direct and Indirect Quotations

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
years	and live a very long life
soul	if he never allows himself to enjoy
good	the wonderful parts of his life
burial place	he were to go on living forever
Better	to be more desirable

Ecclesiastes 6:4

ULT	UST
For in vapor, it came, and in the darkness, it will go, and in the darkness its name will be covered.	*True, this baby's life was as brief as the mist, and it died in its mother's womb, never having seen the light. The baby's parents were never able to name their child, so that the child's life will be only a sad memory.*

ULT **in vapor, it came, and in the darkness, it will go**
UST this baby's life was as brief as the mist, and it died in its mother's womb, never having seen the light

Qoheleth is referring to being born and dying in a polite way by using the phrase **in vapor it came, and in the darkness it will go**. Depending on what is helpful for your readers, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [it was conceived, and it died]
Support Reference: Euphemism

ULT **and in the darkness its name will be covered**
UST The baby's parents were never able to name their child, so that the child's life will be only a sad memory

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the child's name were an object that **the darkness** hides from sight. He means that no one ever remembers this child. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and no one will ever remember its name]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **its name will be covered**
UST The baby's parents were never able to name their child, so that the child's life will be only a sad memory

The expression **its name will be covered** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [no one will remember its name]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

Ecclesiastes 6:5

ULT	UST
Even the sun it did not see, nor did it know. More rest belongs to this one than this one.	*The stillborn baby did not even live to experience life under the light of the sun. Yet neither did it have to feel the burden of a difficult life. So, despite its brief life, the stillborn baby found more peace than that miserable man.*

ULT **Even {the} sun it did not see**
UST The stillborn baby did not even live to experience life under the light of the sun

Qoheleth is using **Even the sun it did not see** as a common expression of the culture to mean "it never lived." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [It never lived]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **nor did it know**
UST Yet neither did it have to feel the burden of a difficult life

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [nor did it know anything about life]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **More rest {belongs} to this one**
UST So, despite its brief life, the stillborn baby found more peace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **rest**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [This one rests better]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **belongs to this one than this one**
UST the stillborn baby … than that miserable man

The pronoun **this one** occurs twice here. The first instance refers to the stillborn child and the second instance refers to the man who has wealth but does not enjoy it. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [belongs to this stillborn child than to that man]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
know	did it have to feel the burden of a difficult life

Ecclesiastes 6:6

ULT	UST
And if he lived a thousand years twice, but a good thing he did not see—are not both going to one place?	*His life would not improve even if that man were to go on living for two thousand years. He, like every human being, only ever endured the painful parts of life, but he never enjoyed the good parts of his life. Truthfully, the man's life will come to an end just as the stillborn baby's will, and both of them experience death—just like every human being.*

ULT **And if he lived a thousand years twice**
UST His life would not improve even if that man were to go on living for two thousand years

Qoheleth says **And if he lived a thousand years twice** to introduce an imaginary situation to help explain that even a very long life has no value if a person does not enjoy it. Use a natural method in your language for introducing an imaginary situation. Alternate translation: [And imagine a man who lived a thousand years twice]
Support Reference: Hypothetical Situations

ULT **a thousand years twice**
UST two thousand years

Qoheleth says **a thousand years twice** as an extreme statement for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [an extremely long time]
Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **but a good {thing} he did not see**
UST He, like every human being, only ever endured the painful parts of life, but he never enjoyed the good parts of his life … to … and … experience

Qoheleth is using **a good thing he did not see** as a common expression of the culture to mean "he did not enjoy his life." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [but he did not enjoy his life]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **are not both going to one place**
UST Truthfully, the man's life will come … an end just as the stillborn baby's will … both of them … death—just like every human being

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that every person dies, no matter how long he lives. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [both of them certainly go to one place!]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

> ULT **both going to one place**
> UST Truthfully, the man's life will come … an end just as the stillborn baby's will … both of them … death—just like every human being

Qoheleth is referring to dying in a polite way by using the phrase **going to one place**. Depending on what is helpful for your readers, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [both going to die]

Support Reference: Euphemism

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
years	years
but a good thing	He, like every human being, only ever endured the painful parts of life, but he never enjoyed the good parts of his life … to … and … experience

Ecclesiastes 6:7

ULT	UST
All the toil of humanity is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not filled.	*It is like people say: "Everyone works hard to satiate their appetites, but no one ever satisfies their deepest cravings."*

ULT **All the toil of humanity {is} for his mouth, and yet the soul is not filled**
UST It is like people say: "Everyone works hard to satiate their appetites, but no one ever satisfies their deepest cravings

Qoheleth uses or invents a proverb in order to show that people work only to satisfy their appetites and yet are never satisfied. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [All people's labor goes into their mouths, yet their appetite is never satisfied]
Support Reference: Proverbs

ULT **All the toil of humanity**
UST It is like people say: "Everyone works hard

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **toil**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [All that humanity works for]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **is for his mouth**
UST to satiate their appetites

Here, **his mouth** represents the food that he eats. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [is for the food that he eats]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **the soul is not filled**
UST no one ever satisfies their deepest cravings

The expression **the soul is not filled** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [nothing fills the soul]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **the soul is not filled**
UST no one ever satisfies their deepest cravings

Here, **the soul** represents the appetite, not the spirit. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the appetite is not satisfied]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the toil of	works

Ecclesiastes 6:8

ULT	UST
For what advantage belongs to the wise more than the fool? What advantage belongs to the poor person who knows how to walk before the living?	*Consider this: Living wisely does not seem any more able than living foolishly to keep a person from suffering and dying. In the same way, knowing how to conduct oneself wisely does not seem to lengthen or improve the life of someone who is poor.*

ULT **For what advantage {belongs} to the wise more than the fool**
UST Consider this: Living wisely does not seem any more able than living foolishly to keep a person from suffering and dying

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that a wise person has no lasting advantage over a foolish person. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [For the wise person has no advantage over the fool!]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **belongs to the wise more than the fool**
UST Living wisely … than living foolishly

Qoheleth is using the adjective **the wise** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this adjective with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [belongs to a wise person more than to a foolish person]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

ULT **What {advantage belongs} to the poor person who knows {how} to walk before the living**
UST In the same way, knowing how to conduct oneself wisely does not seem to lengthen or improve the life of someone who is poor

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that a poor person who knows how to conduct himself well gains no lasting advantage either. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [The poor person who knows how to walk before the living has no advantage either!]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **to walk before the living**
UST knowing how to conduct oneself wisely

Qoheleth is using **to walk before the living** as a common expression of the culture to mean "to conduct himself well among other people." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to conduct himself well among other people]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **before the living**
UST knowing how to conduct oneself wisely

Qoheleth is using the adjective **the living** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this adjective with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [before people who are alive]

Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
belongs to the wise	Living wisely
fool	living foolishly
knows	knowing

Ecclesiastes 6:9

ULT	UST
Better is a sight of the eyes than the walking of the soul. Also this is vapor and pursuit of wind.	*It is like people also say: "It is better to enjoy the things that one already has than to allow one's impulsive desire to inform one's decisions." These realities are as insubstantial as the mist, and as futile as trying to catch the wind.*

ULT **Better {is} a sight of {the} eyes than the walking of {the} soul**
UST It is like people also say: "It is better to enjoy the things that one already has than to allow one's impulsive desire to inform one's decisions

Qoheleth uses or invents a proverb in order to teach that being content with what a person already has is better than craving what he does not have. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [Better to enjoy what the eyes already see than to crave what one does not have]
Support Reference: Proverbs

ULT **is a sight of {the} eyes**
UST to enjoy the things that one already has

Qoheleth is using **a sight of {the} eyes** as a common expression of the culture to mean "what a person already has." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is what a person already sees before him]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **than the walking of {the} soul**
UST than to allow one's impulsive desire to inform one's decisions

Qoheleth is using **the walking of {the} soul** as a common expression of the culture to mean "desire that is never satisfied." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [than craving what one does not have]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **and pursuit of wind**
UST futile as trying to catch the wind

See how you translated **pursuit of wind** in 1:14.
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Better	better
soul	one's

Ecclesiastes 6:10

ULT	UST
Whatever that is, already its name has been called, and it is known what a person is—and he is not able to contend with he who is more powerful than him.	*Before anything happens, God has already declared what it should be. It is evident to everyone that human beings are merely mortal. So, it is pointless to complain to God about the parts of life that we dislike. Humans are not all-powerful or all-knowing like God is!*

ULT **already its name has been called**
UST Before anything happens, God has already declared what it should be

The expression **its name has been called** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [already it has a name]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **and it is known what a person is**
UST It is evident to everyone that human beings are merely mortal

The expression **it is known** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and people know what a person is]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **he who is more powerful than him**
UST Humans are not all-powerful or all-knowing like God is

The implication is that **he who is more powerful than him** is God. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [God, who is far more powerful than any person]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
called	God has already declared what it should be
known	It is evident to everyone

Ecclesiastes 6:11

ULT	UST
When there are many words that are increasingly vaporous, what advantage belongs to humanity?	*It sometimes seems as if our complaints about life only produce more words that are as insubstantial as the mist. This does not appear to benefit anyone.*

> ULT **what advantage {belongs} to humanity**
> UST This does not appear to benefit anyone

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that speaking many words brings no benefit to people. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [there is no advantage at all for humanity.]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

Ecclesiastes 6:12

ULT	UST
For who is knowing what is good for humanity in life during the number of the days of his vaporous life? And he makes them like the shadow. For who will declare to humanity what will be after him under the sun?	*Certainly, I wonder whether anyone can know what he ought to do during his limited lifetime. People live for a short time, and their lives seem as fleeting as the mist. Indeed, God has designed human life so that it lasts briefly, just like a passing shadow. Moreover, God seems to want human beings to be ignorant about what might happen to them tomorrow.*

ULT **For who is knowing what {is} good for humanity in life {during} the number of the days of his vaporous life**

UST Certainly, I wonder whether anyone can know what he ought to do during his limited lifetime. People live for a short time, and their lives seem as fleeting as the mist

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that no one knows what is good for a person to do during his brief life. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [For no one knows what is good for humanity in life during the number of the days of his vaporous life.]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **And he makes them like the shadow**

UST Indeed, God has designed human life so that it lasts briefly, just like a passing shadow

The point of this comparison is that just as **the shadow** is brief and quickly gone, so are the days of a person's life. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [And he makes the days of a person's life brief and fleeting, quickly gone like a shadow]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **And he makes them**

UST Indeed, God has designed human life

The pronoun **he** refers to God, and the pronoun **them** refers to the days of a person's life. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And God makes the days of a person's life]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **For who will declare to humanity what will be after him under the sun**

UST Moreover, God seems to want human beings to be ignorant about what might happen to them tomorrow

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that no one is able to tell a person what will happen after he dies. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [For no one will declare to humanity what will be after him under the sun.]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

> ULT **what will be after him**
> UST what might happen … tomorrow

Here, **what will be after him** could mean: (1) what will happen after he dies. Alternate translation: [what will happen after he dies]; or (2) what will happen to him later in life. Alternate translation: [what will happen to him in the future]

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
knowing	know
good	he ought to do
declare	God seems to want … to be ignorant about

Ecclesiastes 7

Ecclesiastes 7 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 7 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter first gathers proverbs about wisdom, mortality, and the limits of human understanding, and then records Qoheleth's own search for understanding.

1. Better-than proverbs about mourning, grief, and rebuke (1–6)
2. Further proverbs about patience, anger, and the protection wisdom gives (7–12)
3. A call to consider God's work in good times and bad (13–14)
4. Counsel about righteousness, wisdom, and human sinfulness (15–22)
5. Qoheleth's search for the scheme of things (23–29)

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 7:1–12, 14–18, and 26–29.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Better-than sayings

Many verses in this chapter use a proverb form that sets two things side by side and declares one of them more advantageous than the other. The comparison is practical rather than absolute: it commends what teaches a person about life, not what feels pleasant.

Vapor

The Hebrew word rendered "vapor" is this book's key term for what is fleeting and insubstantial, and it appears again in this chapter in verses 6 and 15. Render it consistently through the book.

Fearing God

In verse 18, the person who fears God is the person who reverently acknowledges God's rule and lives accordingly. This is respectful submission, not terror.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The heart

Throughout the chapter, "heart" stands for the inner person: thoughts, inclination, and moral judgment. If your readers would not understand this use of "heart," consider a term in your language that refers to the seat of thinking and deciding.

The woman in verse 26

Interpreters understand the woman in verse 26 in two ways: (1) a specific kind of seductive woman who entraps men or (2) folly pictured as a woman. The ULT preserves the figure so that either reading remains possible.

Ecclesiastes 7:1

ULT	UST
Better is a good name than good oil, and the day of death than the day of his being born.	*An honorable reputation is more advantageous than expensive perfume. Similarly, a person's death is a more advantageous moment than the moment when that person's mother gave birth to him.*

ULT **Better is a {good} name than good oil**
UST An honorable reputation is more advantageous than expensive perfume

Here Qoheleth uses or invents a proverb in order to teach that what people remember about a person is worth more than what money can buy. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [A good name is better than fine perfume]
Support Reference: Proverbs

ULT **a {good} name**
UST An honorable reputation

Here, **name** represents a person's reputation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [a good reputation]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **than good oil**
UST than expensive perfume

The implication is that **good oil** is expensive perfumed oil, which people in this culture valued highly. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [than costly perfumed oil]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **and the day of death than the day of his being born**
UST Similarly, a person's death is a more advantageous moment than the moment when that person's mother gave birth to him

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [and better is the day of death than the day of his being born]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **than the day of his being born**
UST is a more advantageous moment than the moment when that person's mother gave birth to him

The expression **his being born** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [than the day when his mother bore him]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Better	is more advantageous
good	expensive
oil	than … perfume
day	Similarly, a person's
his being born	that person's mother gave birth to him

Ecclesiastes 7:2

ULT	UST
Better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of a banquet, because it is the end of all humanity and the living will give it to his heart.	*Attending a funeral is more useful than attending a celebratory feast. This is true because everyone will die. People should take time to ponder this reality while they are alive.*

ULT **a house of mourning than to go to a house of a banquet**
UST a funeral … more … than attending a celebratory feast

Here, **a house of mourning** and **a house of a banquet** represent the gatherings that people hold in those places. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [a funeral than to go to a feast]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **it {is} the end of all humanity**
UST everyone will die

Qoheleth is referring to dying in a polite way by using the phrase **the end of all humanity**. Depending on what is helpful for your readers, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [death is what awaits all humanity]
Support Reference: Euphemism

ULT **and the living will give {it} to his heart**
UST People should take time to ponder this reality while they are alive

Qoheleth is using **will give {it} to his heart** as a common expression of the culture to mean "will think carefully about it." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and the living should reflect seriously on that]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **and the living**
UST People … while they are alive

Qoheleth is using the adjective **the living** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this adjective with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [and a person who is alive]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Better	is … useful
house	a funeral
mourning	a funeral
a banquet	feast

Ecclesiastes 7:3

ULT	UST
Better grief than laughter, for with a bad face a heart may be well.	*Feeling grief and mourning is more advantageous than laughing. This is true because grieving painful experiences may help one better understand what life is like and accept it.*

ULT **Better grief than laughter**
UST Feeling grief and mourning is more advantageous than laughing

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **grief** and **laughter**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [Better to grieve than to laugh]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **with a bad face**
UST grieving painful experiences

Qoheleth is using **a bad face** as a common expression of the culture to mean "a sad expression." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [with a sad expression]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **a heart may be well**
UST may help one better understand what life is like and accept it

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if a person's inner self were his **heart**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [a person may be well within himself]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Better	is … advantageous
may be well	may help one better understand what life is like and accept it

Ecclesiastes 7:4

ULT	UST
The heart of wise people is in a house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in a house of joy.	*Wise people participate in public ceremonies of mourning so that they may ponder the fact that they also will die. Conversely, foolish people ignore this reality by only attending celebrations and festive parties.*

ULT **The heart of wise people {is} in a house of mourning**

UST Wise people participate in public ceremonies of mourning so that they may ponder the fact that they also will die

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the thoughts and inclinations of wise people were their **heart**, which could be in a place. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Wise people set their minds on a house of mourning]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wise people	Wise people
house	participate in public ceremonies of mourning
mourning	mourning
fools	foolish
joy	by only attending celebrations and festive parties

Ecclesiastes 7:5

ULT	UST
Better to listen to a rebuke of a wise person than a person listening to a song of fools,	*Listening to the criticism of someone who lives wisely is more advantageous than listening to the song of foolish people.*

ULT **than a person listening to a song of fools**
UST more … than listening to the song of foolish people

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific **person**. He means people in general. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [than for someone to listen to a song of fools]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **a song of fools**
UST the song of foolish people

The implication is that **a song of fools** is entertainment and flattery that pleases a person but teaches him nothing. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the pleasant but empty singing of fools]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Better	is … advantageous
rebuke	the criticism of
a wise person	someone who lives wisely
fools	foolish

Ecclesiastes 7:6

ULT	UST
for like the sound of the thorns under the cooking pot, so is the laughter of the fool. And this also is vapor.	*This is true because the laughter of foolish people is as useless as trying to heat food over a fire that someone fuels with thorns. Although the thorns may loudly pop, they will only produce a little heat. In the same way, the loud noise of foolish people is as insubstantial as the mist.*

ULT **like the sound of the thorns under the cooking pot, so {is} the laughter of the fool**
UST the laughter of foolish people is as useless as trying to heat food over a fire that someone fuels with thorns. Although the thorns may loudly pop, they will only produce a little heat

The point of this comparison is that just as **the sound of the thorns under the cooking pot** is loud but produces almost no heat, so is **the laughter of the fool** loud but worth nothing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [just as thorns crackle loudly under the cooking pot but give almost no heat, so the laughter of the fool is loud but accomplishes nothing]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **the thorns under the cooking pot**
UST is as useless as trying to heat food over a fire that someone fuels with thorns. Although the thorns may loudly pop, they will only produce a little heat

Qoheleth is using words with similar sounds for poetic effect. In the original language, the word for **the thorns** sounds almost the same as the word for **the cooking pot**. You may want to reproduce this effect if poetry in your language does this.

Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **And this also {is} vapor**
UST In the same way, the loud noise of foolish people is as insubstantial as the mist

See how you translated the similar expression in 6:2. Alternate translation: [And this also is like a passing breath]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
thorns	thorns
fool	foolish

Ecclesiastes 7:7

ULT	UST
Surely oppression crazes a wise person, and a bribe destroys a heart.	*Now, the power to abuse someone less powerful can turn even wise people into foolish people. In the same way, officials who accept dishonest payment become unable to do what is right.*

ULT **Surely oppression crazes {a} wise {person}, and a bribe destroys a heart**
UST Now, the power to abuse someone less powerful can turn even wise people into foolish people. In the same way, officials who accept dishonest payment become unable to do what is right

These two clauses mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Surely corrupt gain completely ruins the mind of even a wise person]
Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **oppression crazes {a} wise person**
UST the power to abuse someone less powerful can turn even wise people into foolish people

Qoheleth is speaking of **oppression** as if it were a living thing that could drive a person out of his mind. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [a wise person loses his mind when others oppress him]
Support Reference: Personification

ULT **and a bribe destroys a heart**
UST In the same way, officials who accept dishonest payment become unable to do what is right

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if a person's ability to judge rightly were his **heart**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and a bribe destroys a person's ability to judge rightly]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a wise person	even wise people
bribe	officials who accept dishonest payment
destroys	In the same way … become unable to do what is right

Ecclesiastes 7:8

ULT	UST
Better is the end of a thing than its beginning. Better is length of spirit than height of spirit.	*It is better for people for something to conclude than for it merely to begin. Similarly, being patient is more advantageous than being proud.*

ULT is length of spirit
UST being patient

Qoheleth is using **length of spirit** as a common expression of the culture to mean "patience." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is patience]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT than height of spirit
UST more … than being proud

Qoheleth is using **height of spirit** as a common expression of the culture to mean "pride." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [than pride]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Better	better

Ecclesiastes 7:9

ULT	UST
Do not hasten in your spirit to become angry, for anger rests in the lap of fools.	*You should not allow yourself to lose your temper quickly, because being irritable is characteristic of foolish people.*

ULT **Do not hasten in your spirit to become angry**
UST You should not allow yourself to lose your temper quickly

Qoheleth is using **hasten in your spirit to become angry** as a common expression of the culture to mean "become angry quickly." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Do not become angry quickly]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **anger rests in {the} lap of fools**
UST being irritable is characteristic of foolish people

Qoheleth is speaking of **anger** as if it were a living thing that could settle down and rest in a person's **lap**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [fools are characterized by anger]

Support Reference: Personification

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
spirit	yourself
fools	foolish

Ecclesiastes 7:10

ULT	UST
Do not say, “What was, that the former days were better than these?” For you do not ask about this out of wisdom.	*Neither should you complain and wonder why it seems that life in the past was preferable to the present. Surely only foolish nostalgia, not wise reflection, causes this kind of comment.*

ULT **What was, that the former days were better than these**

UST why it seems that life in the past was preferable to the present

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [What was the reason that the former days were better than these days]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
days	that life in the past
better	preferable
wisdom	wise

Ecclesiastes 7:11

ULT	UST
Wisdom is good with an inheritance and an advantage to those who see the sun.	*Thinking and living wisely is both valuable and useful, just like receiving an endowment of property or money from a relative who has died. As such, being wise can provide anyone alive with significant benefits.*

ULT **Wisdom is good with an inheritance**
UST Thinking and living wisely is both valuable and useful, just like receiving an endowment of property or money from a relative who has died

The implication is that **Wisdom** brings the kind of benefit that wealth brings. This could mean that wisdom is: (1) as good as an inheritance or (2) good along with an inheritance. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Wisdom is as valuable as an inheritance]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **Wisdom is good with an inheritance**
UST Thinking and living wisely is both valuable and useful, just like receiving an endowment of property or money from a relative who has died

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **Wisdom** and **an inheritance**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [To be wise is good along with what a person inherits]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **to those who see the sun**
UST anyone alive

Qoheleth is using **those who see the sun** as a common expression of the culture to mean "people who are alive." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to those who are living]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Wisdom	Thinking and living wisely
good	is both valuable and useful
inheritance	receiving an endowment of property or money from a relative who has died

Ecclesiastes 7:12

ULT	UST
For as in the shadow of wisdom, so in the shadow of silver. And this is an advantage of knowledge: Wisdom preserves her owners.	*Their ability to think and act wisely can provide protection for people, just like money can sometimes provide protection for wealthy people. Nonetheless, knowing how to think and live well has one more benefit than being wealthy: This kind of wise thinking often prevents people from doing foolish things that would cause undesirable outcomes.*

ULT **as in the shadow of wisdom, {so} in the shadow of silver**
UST Their ability to think and act wisely can provide protection for people, just like money can sometimes provide protection for wealthy people

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the protection that wisdom and money give a person were **the shadow** that they cast. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [as wisdom gives protection, so also does silver give protection]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **silver**
UST just like money can sometimes provide protection for wealthy people

Here, **silver** represents money and possessions in general. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [riches]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **And {this is} an advantage of knowledge**
UST Nonetheless, knowing how to think and live well has one more benefit than being wealthy

Qoheleth is using the possessive form to describe **an advantage** that **knowledge** gives a person. If a speaker of your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could express this idea in another way. Alternate translation: [And this is an advantage that knowledge gives a person]
Support Reference: Possession

ULT **Wisdom preserves her owners**
UST This kind of wise thinking often prevents people from doing foolish things that would cause undesirable outcomes

Qoheleth is speaking of **Wisdom** as if it were a living thing that could keep alive the people who have it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Being wise keeps people alive]
Support Reference: Personification

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wisdom	Their ability to think and act wisely can provide protection for people
silver	just like money can sometimes provide protection for wealthy people
knowledge	knowing how to think and live well

Ecclesiastes 7:13

ULT	UST
See the work of the God: For who is able to straighten that which he has bent?	*Think carefully about what God has done. Certainly, no human being can change those aspects of their lives that they dislike, since God has determined that their lives should be that way.*

ULT **to straighten that which he has bent**
UST no human being can change those aspects of their lives that they dislike, since God has determined that their lives should be that way

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the way that God orders events were something that God had **bent** and no one could **straighten**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to change what he has determined]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
work	what … has done
God	God

Ecclesiastes 7:14

ULT	UST
In a day of good, be in good, but in a day of misfortune, see— indeed, the God has done this as well as this, so that humanity cannot find anything after him.	*When your life is going well for you, enjoy it! But when your life is not going the way that you would prefer, stop to consider this: God is the one who created life and causes both good things and less desirable things to happen. God does this so that we do not start thinking that we can control what happens to us.*

ULT **In a day of good, be in good, but in a day of misfortune, see**
UST When your life is going well for you, enjoy it! But when your life is not going the way that you would prefer, stop to consider

Qoheleth is referring to all of the circumstances of a person's life by naming two extremes, **a day of good** and **a day of misfortune**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [In whatever circumstances you find yourself, consider this]
Support Reference: Merism

ULT **be in good**
UST enjoy it

Qoheleth is using **be in good** as a common expression of the culture to mean "enjoy what is good." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [enjoy the good things]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the God has done this as well as this**
UST this: God is the one who created life and causes … good things and less desirable things to happen

The first occurrence of the pronoun **this** refers to **a day of good**, while the second refers to **a day of misfortune**. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the God has made the day of good as well as the day of misfortune]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **humanity cannot find anything after him**
UST we do not start thinking that we can control what happens to us

Qoheleth is using **cannot find anything after him** as a common expression of the culture to mean "cannot discover what God has planned." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [humanity cannot discover what God has planned]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
good	When your life is going well for you
misfortune	But when your life is not going the way that you would prefer
God	God

Ecclesiastes 7:15

ULT	UST
I have seen both in the days of my vapor: There is a righteous person perishing in his righteousness, and there is a wicked person lengthening in his evil.	*In my lifetime, as fleeting as the fading mist of my breath, I have witnessed two opposite scenarios. On the one hand, many good people die young, even though they live justly. On the other hand, many bad people live long and prosperous lives, even though they live unjustly.*

ULT **in the days of my vapor**
UST In my lifetime, as fleeting as the fading mist of my breath

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if his lifetime were **vapor**, which appears for a moment and then is gone. See how you translated the similar expression in 1:14. Alternate translation: [in the days of my brief life]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **perishing in his righteousness**
UST die young, even though they live justly

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **his righteousness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [perishing even though he acts righteously]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **lengthening in his evil**
UST live long and prosperous lives, even though they live unjustly

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [lengthening his days in his evil]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
days	In my lifetime
righteous	many good people
perishing	die young
evil	even though they live unjustly

Ecclesiastes 7:16

ULT	UST
Do not be overly righteous, and do not be exceedingly wise— why should you be shocked?	*So, you should not think that you can be so virtuous that your virtue obligates God to give you a long and prosperous life. Neither should you think that you can become so wise that you can avoid anything painful in life. If you were to think this way, you would only be astonished when undesirable things happen.*

ULT **Do not be overly righteous**

UST So, you should not think that you can be so virtuous that your virtue obligates God to give you a long and prosperous life … you

The implication is that Qoheleth is warning against a kind of excess, not against being righteous. This could mean: (1) being self-righteous. Alternate translation: [Do not be self-righteous]; or (2) being excessively scrupulous about doing what is right. Alternate translation: [Do not be excessively scrupulous]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **why should you be shocked**

UST If you were to think this way, you would only be astonished when undesirable things happen

The expression **be shocked** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [why should life shock you]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
righteous	you can be so virtuous that your virtue obligates God to give you a long and prosperous life … you
wise	wise

Ecclesiastes 7:17

ULT	UST
Do not be very wicked, and do not be a fool—why should you die when it is not your time?	*You should not live so sinfully that God becomes angry at you, and neither should you allow yourself to live foolishly. If you were to live this way, your foolishness could cause you to die young.*

ULT **why should you die when {it is} not your time**
UST you … If you were to live this way, your foolishness could cause you to die young

Qoheleth is using the question form to warn his readers about the consequence of being wicked and foolish. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [otherwise you will die before your time has come!]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **when {it is} not your time**
UST you … If you were to live this way, your foolishness could cause you to die young

Qoheleth is using **not your time** as a common expression of the culture to mean "before the time when you would otherwise die." This could mean: (1) that the person dies needlessly young because of their own foolishness. Alternate translation: [sooner than you need to]; or (2) that God cuts their life short. Alternate translation: [because God is displeased with your wickedness]

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wicked	You should not live so sinfully that God becomes angry at you
fool	and neither should … allow yourself to live foolishly
time	you … If you were to live this way, your foolishness could cause you to die young

Ecclesiastes 7:18

ULT	UST
It is good that you should take hold of this, and also from this, do not let your hand rest. For the one who fears God will go forth with both of them.	*Your life will go best if you are diligent in remembering to live according to both parts of my advice to you. The kind of individual who recognizes that God is governing this world and submits to him will demonstrate this by living as both parts of my advice have instructed him.*

ULT **you should take hold of this, and also from this**
UST if you are diligent in remembering to live according to both parts of my advice to you

The first occurrence of the pronoun **this** refers to the warning against being overly righteous and wise, while the second refers to the warning against being wicked and foolish. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [you should take hold of this warning against being overly righteous and wise, and also from that warning against being wicked and foolish]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **you should take hold of this**
UST if you are diligent in remembering to live according to both parts of my advice to you

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if his advice were an object that a person could **take hold of**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [you should pay attention to this advice]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **do not let your hand rest**
UST if you are diligent in remembering to live according to both parts of my advice to you

Qoheleth is using **do not let your hand rest** as a common expression of the culture to mean “do not let go of it.” If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [do not loosen your grip]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **will go forth with both of them**
UST will demonstrate this by living as both parts of my advice have instructed him

Qoheleth is using **will go forth with both of them** as a common expression of the culture to mean “will come safely through both of these.” If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [will come safely through both of these dangers]

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
good	best
fears	The kind of individual who recognizes that God is governing this world and submits to him
God	God

Ecclesiastes 7:19

ULT	UST
Wisdom is strong for the wise, more than ten rulers who are in the city.	*The ability to think and live wisely can guide an individual safely through his life. It can do this more effectively than even the ten most powerful officials who govern a city!*

ULT **Wisdom is strong for the wise, more than ten rulers who are in the city**
UST The ability to think and live wisely can guide an individual safely through his life. It can do this more effectively than even the ten most powerful officials who govern a city

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if wisdom were a defense that makes a person **strong**, the way that **rulers** defend a city. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Wisdom protects the wise person better than ten rulers can protect the city]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **for the wise**
UST an individual

Qoheleth is using the adjective **the wise** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this adjective with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [for a wise person]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

ULT **more than ten rulers who are in the city**
UST It can do this more effectively than even the ten most powerful officials who govern a city

Qoheleth says **ten rulers** as an extreme statement for emphasis. He means a large number of powerful officials. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [more than a whole group of powerful rulers in the city]
Support Reference: Hyperbole

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Wisdom	The ability to think and live wisely
for the wise	an individual
rulers	officials

Ecclesiastes 7:20

ULT	UST
For a person—there is not a righteous person on the earth who does good and does not sin.	*Humanity needs the protection that comes from thinking and living wisely, because no one who has ever lived has been entirely righteous. No human being has ever done only what is good and right without ever doing anything wrong.*

ULT **For a person—there is not a righteous {person} on the earth**
UST Humanity needs the protection that comes from thinking and living wisely, because no one who has ever lived has been entirely righteous

If it would be more natural in your language, you may want to put the information about **a person** with the information about there not being **a righteous {person} on the earth**. Alternate translation: [For there is not a righteous person among the people on the earth]
Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **there is not a righteous {person} on the earth who does good and does not sin**
UST no one who has ever lived has been entirely righteous. No human being has ever done only what is good and right without ever doing anything wrong

Here Qoheleth uses or invents a proverb in order to state that every person sins. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [no righteous man walks the earth who does only good and never sins]
Support Reference: Proverbs

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
righteous	righteous
earth	who has ever lived
good	right
sin	ever doing anything wrong

Ecclesiastes 7:21

ULT	UST
Also, to all of the words that they say, do not give your heart, so that you will not hear your servant belittling you.	*Relatedly, you should not pay attention to everything that people say. If you were to do that, you might inadvertently hear people whom you trust publicly demean you.*

ULT **to all of the words that they say, do not give your heart**
UST you should not pay attention to everything that people say

If it would be helpful in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [do not give your heart to all of the words that they say]
Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **that they say**
UST that people say

Qoheleth is using the pronoun **they** in a general sense, not to refer to specific people. Use an expression for this that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [that anyone says]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **do not give your heart**
UST you should not pay attention

Qoheleth is using **do not give your heart** as a common expression of the culture to mean "do not pay attention." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [do not listen to them]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **your servant belittling you**
UST people whom you trust publicly demean you

The implication is that it would be especially painful to hear **your servant** speak badly of you, since a servant owed his master respect. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [even your own servant, who owes you respect, speaking badly of you]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
servant	people whom … trust

Ecclesiastes 7:22

ULT	UST
For even many times—your heart knows that even you have belittled others.	*After all, you yourself know very well that you have also publicly demeaned people who trusted you.*

ULT **your heart knows**
UST you yourself know

Qoheleth is using **your heart knows** as a common expression of the culture to mean "you yourself are aware." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [you know]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **even you have belittled others**
UST you have also publicly demeaned people who trusted you

Qoheleth is stating the pronoun **you** separately, even though the verb translated as **have belittled** already includes this meaning. He is doing that to emphasize that his readers have done the very thing that they would not want to hear. If a speaker of your language would use an explicit pronoun for the same purpose, you may want to use that construction in your translation. If not, your language may have other ways of showing the meaning here. Alternate translation: [even you yourself have belittled others]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **others**
UST people who trusted you

Qoheleth is using the adjective **others** as a noun to mean a certain kind of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this adjective with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [other people]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
times	very well
knows	know

Ecclesiastes 7:23

ULT	UST
All of this I tested with wisdom. I said, "Let me be wise," but it was far from me.	*I used my ability to think and live wisely to analyze all of these realities of life. I resolved that I would become wise enough to understand all the realities that I have witnessed in my life. Frustratingly, I could not do it.*

ULT **with wisdom**
UST I used my ability to think and live wisely

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **wisdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [by thinking wisely]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **I said, "Let me be wise**
UST I resolved that I would become wise enough to understand … the realities that I have witnessed in my life

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [I said that I would be wise,]
Support Reference: Direct and Indirect Quotations

ULT **was far from me**
UST Frustratingly, I could not do it

Qoheleth is using **far from me** as a common expression of the culture to mean "beyond my ability to understand." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [was beyond what I could understand]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
tested	to analyze
wisdom	I used my ability to think and live wisely

Ecclesiastes 7:24

ULT	UST
Far away is that which was. And deep, deep —who can find it?	*All the present realities that I observed were beyond my comprehension, as if they were too far away for me to see clearly. They were also difficult for me to understand, as if they were too deep for me to get to the bottom of them. I do not believe that any human being can understand all of this.*

ULT **Far away {is} that which was. And deep, deep**

UST All the present realities that I observed were beyond my comprehension, as if they were too far away for me to see clearly. They were also difficult for me to understand, as if they were too deep for me to get to the bottom of them

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if what he wanted to understand were **Far away** and **deep** in a place that he could not reach. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Beyond understanding is that which was. And profoundly mysterious]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **And deep, deep**

UST They were also difficult for me to understand, as if they were too deep for me to get to the bottom of them

Qoheleth is repeating forms of the word **deep** in order to intensify his expression of the idea that it conveys. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the intensification. Alternate translation: [And extremely deep]

Support Reference: Reduplication

ULT **who can find it**

UST I do not believe that any human being can understand all of this

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that no one is able to understand these things. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [no one can find it.]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

Ecclesiastes 7:25

ULT	UST
I turned, I, and my heart, to know and to explore and to seek wisdom and the scheme of things, and to know the wickedness that is folly and the foolishness that is madness.	*Nevertheless, I shifted my attention to a larger task. I wanted to study humanity's ability to think and live wisely so that I could comprehend the way that God governs everything and the reason that he governs the way he does. I also wanted to study humanity's tendency to live so foolishly that they openly disobey God and to live so irrationally that they become fools.*

ULT **I turned, I, and my heart**
UST Nevertheless, I shifted my attention

Qoheleth is speaking of his **heart** as if it were a living thing that could search alongside him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I turned with all my mind]
Support Reference: Personification

ULT **I turned, I, and my heart**
UST Nevertheless, I shifted my attention

Qoheleth is stating the pronoun **I** separately, even though the verb translated as **I turned** already includes this meaning. He is doing that to emphasize that he himself gave his whole attention to this search. If a speaker of your language would use an explicit pronoun for the same purpose, you may want to use that construction in your translation. If not, your language may have other ways of showing the meaning here. Alternate translation: [I myself turned my whole heart]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **to know and to explore and {to} seek**
UST to a larger task. I wanted to study … so

The terms **to know**, **to explore**, and **{to} seek** mean similar things. Qoheleth is using the three terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [to diligently search out]
Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **the wickedness {that is} folly and the foolishness {that is} madness**
UST humanity's tendency to live so foolishly that they openly disobey God and to live so irrationally that they become fools

The terms **{the} wickedness {that is} folly** and **the foolishness {that is} madness** mean similar things. Qoheleth is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [how completely senseless wicked madness is]
Support Reference: Doublet

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
to know	to a larger task. I wanted to study … so
seek	to a larger task. I wanted to study … so
wisdom	humanity’s ability to think and live wisely
wickedness	that they openly disobey God
folly	humanity’s tendency to live so foolishly

Ecclesiastes 7:26

ULT	UST
And I am finding more bitter than death: the woman who, she is snares— and nets, her heart; chains, her hands. One who is good to the face of the God will flee from her, but a sinner will be captured by her.	*This is what I learned: Foolish thinking is as painful as one's death. It is like a seductive woman who attempts to ensnare young men. Her desire is to trap and deceive people, as if her very heart were a cage, and her very hands were iron chains. Foolish thinking is like such a woman. Although foolish thinking like that will capture sinful people, those who live well in God's presence will be able to avoid foolish living.*

ULT **more bitter than death**
UST Foolish thinking is as painful as one's death

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the distress that this woman causes were a taste that was **more bitter than death**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [more painful to endure than dying]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the woman who, she {is} snares**
UST Foolish thinking is as painful as one's death. It is like a seductive woman who attempts to ensnare young men … Foolish thinking is like such a woman

Qoheleth is stating the pronoun **she** separately, even though the phrase **the woman who** already indicates whom he is talking about. He is doing that to emphasize what this woman is like. If a speaker of your language would use an explicit pronoun for the same purpose, you may want to use that construction in your translation. If not, your language may have other ways of showing the meaning here. Alternate translation: [the woman who is truly nothing but snares]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **the woman who, she is**
UST Foolish thinking is as painful as one's death. It is like a seductive woman who attempts to ensnare young men … Foolish thinking is like such a woman

The implication is that Qoheleth is describing something that traps a man and ruins him. This could mean: (1) a seductive woman. Alternate translation: [the seductive woman, and she is]; or (2) folly, which Qoheleth pictures as a woman. Alternate translation: [the folly, and it is] You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers.
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **and nets, her heart; chains, her hands**
UST Her desire is to trap and deceive people, as if her very heart were a cage, and her very hands were iron chains

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [and her heart is a net, and her hands are chains]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **and nets, her heart**
UST Her desire is to trap and deceive people, as if her very heart were a cage

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if this woman's intentions were **nets** for catching a man. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and her heart, intent on catching men]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **chains, her hands**
UST and her very hands were iron chains

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if this woman's hold on a man were **chains**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [her hands hold a man tightly so that he cannot escape]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **One who is good to the face of**
UST those who live well in God's presence

See how you translated the similar expression in 2:26.
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **but a sinner will be captured by her**
UST Although foolish thinking like that will capture sinful people

The expression **will be captured** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [but she will capture a sinner]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
snares	ensnare
good	those who live well
God	God's
sinner	sinful
captured	capture

Ecclesiastes 7:27

ULT	UST
“See, this I have found,” says Qoheleth: One to one to find the scheme of things,	*So, understand—this is what I, Qoheleth, have learned from my investigations: I carefully considered one thing after another until I could comprehend the way that God governs everything and the reason that he governs the way he does.*

ULT **See, this I have found,” says Qoheleth**
UST So, understand—this is what I, Qoheleth, have learned from my investigations

The phrase **says Qoheleth** introduces a direct quotation. In your translation, use a natural way of indicating direct quotations in your language.
Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT **One to one to find the scheme of things**
UST I carefully considered one thing after another until I could comprehend the way that God governs everything and the reason that he governs the way he does

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [I examined one thing after another in order to find the scheme of things]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **Qoheleth**
UST Qoheleth

See how you translated this name in 1:1.
Support Reference: How to Translate Names

Ecclesiastes 7:28

ULT	UST
while still my soul sought, but I have not found: One man from a thousand men I found, but a woman among all of these people, I did not find.	*Despite all my failures, I continued searching, but I could not find what I was desperate to discover. I was looking to become wise, as if the ability to think and live wisely was an elusive woman living among a thousand men. I found all the men, but I never found that woman.*

ULT **while still my soul sought, but I have not found**
UST Despite all my failures, I continued searching, but I could not find what I was desperate to discover

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [while still my soul sought the scheme of things, but I have not found it]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **my soul sought**
UST I continued searching

Here, **my soul** represents the seeker himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [I kept searching]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **One man from a thousand {men} I found, but a woman among all of these {people}, I did not find**
UST I was looking to become wise, as if the ability to think and live wisely was an elusive woman living among a thousand men. I found all the men, but I never found that woman

If it would be helpful in your language, you could change the order of these clauses. Alternate translation: [Among a thousand people, I found one man, but among all of these people, I did not find the woman]
Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **One man from a thousand men**
UST all the men

Qoheleth says **a thousand {men}** as an extreme statement for emphasis. He means a very large number of people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [One man from a very great number of men]
Support Reference: Hyperbole

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
soul	I
sought	searching

Ecclesiastes 7:29

ULT	UST
Only see this I have found: That the God made humanity upright, but they, they have sought out many schemes.	*So, consider this: After everything, I have learned only that when God created humanity, God made them to live justly and equitably. Despite this, humans have tried to discover innumerable ways to understand life and attempt to control what happens to them.*

ULT **the God made humanity upright**
UST when God created humanity, God made them to live justly and equitably

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if living rightly were standing **upright**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [God made people to live rightly]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **but they, they have sought out many schemes**
UST Despite this, humans have tried to discover innumerable ways to understand life and attempt to control what happens to them

Qoheleth is stating the pronoun **they** along with the verb translated as **have sought out**, which already includes its meaning. He is doing that because he is contrasting what God did with what **humanity** has done. If a speaker of your language would use an explicit pronoun for the same purpose, you may want to use that construction in your translation. If not, your language may have other ways of showing that meaning here. Alternate translation: [but they have sought out many schemes]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **many schemes**
UST innumerable ways to understand life and attempt to control what happens to them

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **schemes**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [how they might scheme in many ways]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
God	God
upright	God made them to live justly and equitably
they … have sought out	have tried to discover

Ecclesiastes 8

Ecclesiastes 8 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 8 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter moves from wise conduct before a king to the injustice that Qoheleth observes, and it ends by affirming that no one can fully understand what God does.

1. The value of wisdom (1)
2. Wise conduct before a king (2–9)
    1. Obeying the king's command (2–4)
    2. Knowing the right time and the limits of human power (5–9)
3. The wicked seem to escape judgment (10–14)
4. Commendation of joy (15)
5. The limits of understanding God's work (16–17)

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 8:1, 8:5–8, and 8:11–14.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The oath of God

In verse 2, Qoheleth grounds obedience to the king in an oath connected with God. This likely refers to a promise of loyalty to the king that people made in God's name, though it could refer to God's own oath concerning the king.

Vapor

The Hebrew word rendered "vapor" is this book's key term for what is fleeting and insubstantial, and it appears again in this chapter in verses 10 and 14. Render it consistently through the book.

Fearing God

In verses 12 and 13, those who fear God are people who reverently acknowledge his rule and live accordingly. This is respectful submission, not terror.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Generic “him”

In several verses (6, 7, 15, and 17), “him” and “he” refer to people in general rather than to a specific person. If your language would not use a singular pronoun this way, you could use a plural or general expression.

Textual variant in verse 10

Most Hebrew manuscripts say that the wicked were “forgotten” in the city, while some manuscripts and ancient versions say that they were “praised.” The ULT follows the second reading.

Ecclesiastes 8:1

ULT	UST
Who is like the wise person, and who knows the interpretation of a matter? The wisdom of a person enlightens his face, and the strength of his face is changed.	*Wise people are truly unparalleled! They have the ability to solve difficult problems. Being wise can make people visibly happy and transform the grim look of their faces.*

ULT **Who {is} like the wise person, and who knows {the} interpretation of a matter**
UST Wise people are truly unparalleled! They have the ability to solve difficult problems

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that no one is like the wise person, because only a wise person knows the interpretation of a matter. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate these questions as statements or as exclamations. Alternate translation: [No one is like the wise person, and no one else knows the interpretation of a matter!]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **the interpretation of a matter**
UST to solve difficult problems

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **interpretation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [what a matter means]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **The wisdom of a person**
UST Being wise

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **wisdom**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [That a person is wise]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **enlightens his face**
UST can make people visibly happy

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if wisdom were a light that **enlightens** a person's **face**. He means that wisdom gives a person a cheerful or gracious expression. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [gives him a cheerful expression]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and the strength of his face is changed**
UST and transform the grim look of their faces

Qoheleth is using **the strength of his face** as a common expression of the culture to mean "his harsh or stern expression." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and his harsh expression is changed] or [and it changes his harsh expression]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wise	Wise
knows	They have the ability
interpretation	to solve

Ecclesiastes 8:2

ULT	UST
As for me—listen to the mouth of a king, that is, on account of the oath of God.	*Now, here is my counsel: God supports the king who represents God and rules with his authority. Because of this divine support, you should pay attention to and comply with the king's directives.*

ULT **the mouth of a king**
UST the king's directives

Here, **mouth** represents the king's commands. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the commands of a king]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **the oath of God**
UST God supports the king who represents God and rules with his authority

Qoheleth is using the possessive form to describe an **oath** that involves **God**. This could mean: (1) an oath of loyalty to the king that a person made in the presence of God or (2) an oath that God made to support the king. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the oath that you swore before God]
Support Reference: Possession

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
listen to	you should pay attention to and comply with
king	king's
oath	God supports the king who represents God and rules with his authority
God	God

Ecclesiastes 8:3

ULT	UST
Do not be terrified from his face. Go! Do not stand in a bad matter, for everything that he pleases, he will do,	*Do not let this king intimidate you. If the king should ever order you to do something immoral or unjust, you should not comply. Leave immediately! After all, the king has the power to do whatever he wants—including commanding someone to kill you!*

ULT **Do … be terrified from his face**
UST Do … let this king intimidate you

Here, **face** represents the presence of the king. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. This also occurs in verse 12. Alternate translation: [Do not let fear of this king control you]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **Do not stand in a bad matter**
UST If the king should ever order you to do something immoral or unjust, you should not comply

Qoheleth is using **Do not stand in a bad matter** as a common expression of the culture to mean "do not join in or continue with an evil plan." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Do not take part in an evil plan]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
terrified	Do … let … intimidate you
bad	immoral or unjust
he pleases	he wants—including commanding someone to kill you

Ecclesiastes 8:4

ULT	UST
for the word of a king is authoritative. And who will say to him, "What are you doing?"	*This is because the king possesses absolute authority, such that none of his subjects could disobey him without risking harm to himself. No one would ever dare to question the king's actions or demand an explanation for what he commands.*

ULT **And who will say to him, "What are you doing**
UST No one would ever dare to question the king's actions or demand an explanation for what he commands

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [And who will ask him what he is doing]
Support Reference: Direct and Indirect Quotations

ULT **What are you doing**
UST to question the king's actions … an explanation for what he commands

Qoheleth is imagining someone using the question form to challenge or rebuke the king for what he is doing. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You should not do what you are doing!]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
king	king

Ecclesiastes 8:5

ULT	UST
One who listens to a command will not know a bad matter, and the heart of a wise person will know the time and procedure,	*The king will not harm anyone who pays attention to what the king commands and complies with his directives. In light of this, someone who is wise will need to discern how to respond to the king's authority with careful timing and appropriate behavior.*

ULT **will not know a bad matter**
UST The king will not harm

Qoheleth is using **will not know a bad matter** as a common expression of the culture to mean "will not experience harm." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [will not experience any harm]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the heart of a wise person**
UST In light of this, someone who is wise

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the **heart** of a wise person were the part of him that thinks and understands. He means the mind of a wise person. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the mind of a wise person]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
know	The king will … harm
bad	The king will … harm
a wise person	In light of this, someone who is wise
time	timing

Ecclesiastes 8:6

ULT	UST
because for every matter there is a time and procedure, because the misfortune of humanity is severe upon him,	*They will need to know this because, although human beings endure all sorts of lamentable realities in life, in every situation in which people find themselves, there is always a proper way to do something and an appropriate moment at which to do it.*

ULT **because the misfortune of humanity {is} severe upon him**
UST although human beings endure all sorts of lamentable realities in life

Qoheleth uses the word **because** here to indicate a contrast between the fact that there is a proper **time and procedure** for every matter and the fact that people suffer great **misfortune**. In your translation, indicate this contrast in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [even though the misfortune of humanity is severe upon him]

Support Reference: Connect — Contrast Relationship

ULT **the misfortune of humanity**
UST human beings … all sorts of lamentable realities

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **misfortune**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [what troubles humanity]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **upon him**
UST endure … in life

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific person by **him**. He means people in general. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [upon people]

Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
time	and an appropriate moment at which to do it
the misfortune	all sorts of lamentable realities

Ecclesiastes 8:7

ULT	UST
for he is not knowing whatever that will be, for when it will be— who will declare it to him?	*One of the most lamentable of these realities is that the events of the future are hidden to human beings. After all, no human can foresee the future well enough to tell others about it.*

ULT **who will declare {it} to him**
UST to tell others about it

Qoheleth is using the question form to emphasize that no one can tell a person what will happen in the future. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [no one can declare it to him.]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
knowing	are hidden to human beings
declare	to tell others about it

Ecclesiastes 8:8

ULT	UST
There is no person authorized over the wind to restrain the wind, and there is no authority over the day of death, and there is no discharge in the war, and wickedness will not deliver its masters.	*God has not enabled anyone to control the wind; in a similar way, no one can control when they will die, just like soldiers cannot decide to go home while they are fighting a battle. This is true even for those people who disobey God. Their attempts to control their own lives apart from God cannot give them mastery over what is uncontrollable.*

ULT **and wickedness will not deliver its masters**

UST This is true even for those people who disobey God. Their attempts to control their own lives apart from God cannot give them mastery over what is uncontrollable

Qoheleth is speaking of **wickedness** as if it were a living thing that could **deliver its masters**. He means that doing wicked things will not save wicked people from death. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and wicked people will not escape death by doing wicked things]

Support Reference: Personification

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
authority	can control
day	when they will
wickedness	This is true even for those people who disobey God. Their attempts to control their own lives apart from God
will … deliver	give … mastery over what is uncontrollable
masters	them

Ecclesiastes 8:9

ULT	UST
All this I saw while giving my heart to every deed that was done under the sun: A time that the person has authority over another person to his harm.	*As I considered the kinds of things that happen to people during their lives, I witnessed all these lamentable realities happening. I saw that sometimes people like the king possess such power over other human beings that they dominate and harm them.*

ULT while giving my heart
UST As I considered

See how you translated the similar phrase in 1:13. This also occurs in verse 16.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT to every deed that was done
UST the kinds of things that happen to people

The expression **was done** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [to every deed that people did]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT under the sun
UST during their lives

See how you translated **under the sun** in 1:3. This also occurs in verses 15 and 17.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT to his harm
UST that they dominate and harm them

The pronoun **his** refers to a person who suffers **harm**. This could mean: (1) the person over whom someone else has authority. Alternate translation: [to the harm of the person he rules over]; or (2) the person who has authority, who brings harm on himself by harming others. Alternate translation: [to his own harm, he brings harm to another] It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers.
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
time	I saw that sometimes
authority	possess such power

Ecclesiastes 8:10

ULT	UST
And then I saw wicked people buried, and they entered, and from a place of holiness they went. And they were praised in the city where thus they had done. This also is vapor:	*Moreover, I observed the honor that people gave to wicked people at their funerals. I had daily witnessed these wicked people going in and out of the sacred places where people worship God, and people in the city praised them for their behavior! Yet even this is only temporary, as fleeting as a mist.*

ULT **wicked people buried**
UST the honor that people gave to wicked people at their funerals

The expression **buried** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [people burying the bodies of wicked people]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **and they entered, and from a place of holiness they went**
UST I had daily witnessed these wicked people going in and out of the sacred places where people worship God

The implication is that while these wicked people were alive, they regularly went into and out of **a place of holiness**, that is, the temple. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and while they were alive, they regularly entered and left the holy place, the temple]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **And they were praised**
UST and people … praised them

The standard written Hebrew text as we have it today reads “And they were forgotten.” Other ancient manuscripts read “And they were praised.” The ULT follows that reading. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of the ULT.
Support Reference: Textual Variants

ULT **where thus they had done**
UST for their behavior

The implication is that these **wicked people** had done evil deeds in the same **city** where people praised them. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [where they had done these evil deeds]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **This also {is} vapor**
UST Yet even this is only temporary, as fleeting as a mist

The pronoun **This** refers to something that Qoheleth says is **vapor**. This could mean: (1) the situations that Qoheleth describes in the next two verses. Alternate translation: [What I am about to describe also is vapor]; or (2) the situation that he has just described in this verse. Alternate translation: [People praising the wicked actions of others is also vapor] It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. This also occurs in verse 14.
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

> ULT **This also {is} vapor**
> UST Yet even this is only temporary, as fleeting as a mist

See how you translated this same word in 1:2. This word also occurs in verse 14.
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wicked	wicked
buried	the honor that people gave to wicked people at their funerals
holiness	sacred
praised	praised

Ecclesiastes 8:11

ULT	UST
that a decree against the evil deed is not made quickly— therefore, the heart of the sons of humanity fills in them to do evil;	*First, people in power sometimes administer justice against evil actions too slowly. For this reason, many people feel encouraged to plan and commit evil actions without fear of negative consequences.*

ULT **a decree {against} the evil deed is not made quickly**
UST First, people in power sometimes administer justice against evil actions too slowly

The expression **is not made** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [those in authority do not quickly make a decree against the evil deed]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **the heart of the sons of humanity fills in them to do evil**
UST many people feel encouraged to plan and commit evil actions without fear of negative consequences

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if **the heart** of people were a container that **fills** with the desire **to do evil**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [people become fully determined to do evil]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the sons of humanity**
UST many people

See how you translated **the sons of humanity** in 1:13.
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
decree	First, people in power sometimes administer justice … too slowly
evil	evil

Ecclesiastes 8:12

ULT	UST
that a sinner is doing evil a hundred times and lengthening days for himself— yet also I know that it will be good for those who fear God, who fear from before his face.	*Second, sometimes sinful people commit a hundred crimes, and yet they live a long life. Despite this, I am confident that the lives of people who understand that God is powerful and just and good—those who fearfully submit themselves to God—will turn out well in the end.*

ULT **a hundred times**
UST a hundred

Qoheleth says **a hundred times** as an extreme statement for emphasis. He means very many times. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [over and over again]
Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **and lengthening {days} for himself**
UST and yet they live a long life

Qoheleth is using **lengthening days for himself** as a common expression of the culture to mean "living a long life." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and living a long life]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
sinner	sinful
evil	crimes
days	and yet they live a long life
know	I am confident
good	the lives of … will turn out well in the end
fear	people who understand that God is powerful and just and good
God	God

Ecclesiastes 8:13

ULT	UST
But it will not be good for the wicked, nor will he lengthen his days like the shadow, because he is not fearing before the face of God.	*I am also confident of the opposite: The lives of people who disobey God will not go well. Just like shadows in the setting sun appear to stretch on forever—in the same way, the current prosperity of evil people is an illusion. After all, they feel no fear when they think of God's power and justice!*

ULT **will he lengthen {his} days like … shadow**

UST Just like shadows in the setting sun appear to stretch on forever—in the same way, the current prosperity of evil people is an illusion

The point of this comparison is that just as **the shadow** soon passes away, so the life of a wicked person will come to an end. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [will he lengthen his days, which pass away quickly like a shadow]

Support Reference: Simile

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
good	I am also confident of the opposite
wicked	people who disobey God
fearing	fear
God	God's

Ecclesiastes 8:14

ULT	UST
There is vapor that is done on the earth: that there are righteous people who it befalls to them like the deeds of the wicked people, and there are wicked people who it befalls to them like the deeds of the righteous people. I say that also this is vapor.	*It is only a temporary reality of this life that the undesirable things that bad people deserve sometimes happen to good people, and the kind of lives that good people deserve seem to happen to bad people. I confess that, despite current appearances, these realities are also as temporary as a mist.*

ULT **vapor that is done on the earth**
UST It is only a temporary reality of this life

The expression **is done** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [vapor that happens on the earth]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **like the deeds of the wicked people … like the deeds of the righteous people**
UST the undesirable things that bad people deserve … the kind of lives that good people deserve

The implication is that righteous people experience what **wicked people** deserve for their **deeds**, and wicked people experience what **righteous people** deserve for their **deeds**. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [according to what the wicked people deserve for their deeds … according to what the righteous people deserve for their deeds]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **this {is} vapor**
UST these realities are … as temporary as a mist

See how you translated the similar expression in 6:2.
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
earth	of this life
righteous	good people
wicked	the undesirable things that bad people deserve

Ecclesiastes 8:15

ULT	UST
And I praised, I, joy—that there is nothing good for humanity under the sun except to eat and to drink and to rejoice. And it will accompany him in his toil during the days of his life that the God has given to him under the sun.	*Living life joyfully is worth celebrating! The best that anyone can do during one's life is simply to eat and drink and be happy. For as long as this God graciously decides a person should live, this kind of simple joy will remain with him like a faithful companion, no matter what difficult labor he must do.*

ULT **And I praised, I**
UST is worth celebrating

Qoheleth is stating the pronoun **I** separately, even though the verb translated as **praised** already includes this meaning. He is doing that to emphasize that this is his own conclusion. If a speaker of your language would use an explicit pronoun for the same purpose, you may want to use that construction in your translation. If not, your language may have other ways of showing the meaning here. Alternate translation: [And I myself praised]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **joy**
UST Living life joyfully

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **joy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [people being joyful]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **there is nothing good for humanity under the sun except to eat and to drink and to rejoice**
UST The best that anyone can do during one's life is simply to eat and drink and be happy

If it would appear in your language that Qoheleth was making a statement and then contradicting it, you could reword this as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [the only good thing for humanity under the sun is to eat and to drink and to rejoice]
Support Reference: Connect — Exception Clauses

ULT **And it will accompany him in his toil**
UST this kind of simple joy will remain with him like a faithful companion, no matter what difficult labor he must do

Qoheleth is speaking of joy as if it were a living thing that could **accompany him in his toil**. He means that a person can experience joy while he works hard. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And he will be able to experience joy in his toil]
Support Reference: Personification

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
praised	is worth celebrating
joy	Living life joyfully
good	best
rejoice	and be happy
God	God

Ecclesiastes 8:16

ULT	UST
When I gave my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done on the earth—for even in the day and in the night sleep in his eyes he is not seeing—	*I then resolved within myself to become as wise as I could. I wanted to observe the difficult parts of people's lives so that I could understand them, even though they can make people so anxious that they cannot sleep at night or during the day.*

ULT **the business that is done on the earth**
UST the difficult parts of people's lives

The expression **is done** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [the business that people do on the earth]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **in the day and in the night**
UST at night or during the day

Qoheleth is referring to all of the time by naming two major components, **the day** and **the night**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [at all times]
Support Reference: Merism

ULT **sleep in his eyes he is not seeing**
UST they can make people so anxious that they cannot sleep

Qoheleth is using **sleep in his eyes he is not seeing** as a common expression of the culture to mean "he does not sleep at all." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [he is not sleeping at all]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **in his eyes he is not seeing**
UST they can make people so anxious that they cannot sleep

The pronouns **his** and **he** refer to someone who does not sleep. This could mean: (1) any person who is busy with **the business that is done on the earth**. Alternate translation: [in his eyes a person who is busy with that business is not seeing]; or (2) Qoheleth himself, who is speaking of himself in the third person. Alternate translation: [in my eyes, who am busy with that business, am not seeing]. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers.
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
know	to become as wise as I could
wisdom	wise
earth	the difficult parts of people's lives

Ecclesiastes 8:17

ULT	UST
then I saw every deed of the God: that humanity is not able to find the deed that is done under the sun, on account of which humanity toils to seek, yet he will not find, and even if the wise one says to know, he is not able to find.	*When I did this, I thought about everything that God has done. Then I realized that he has made humanity so that they can never fully comprehend everything that God does in their lives. Although people will never stop trying to understand, they will never succeed. Even if wise people claim that they understand it all, they really cannot.*

ULT **humanity is not able to find the deed**
UST he has made humanity so that they can never fully comprehend everything

Qoheleth is using **find** as a common expression of the culture to mean "understand." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [humanity is not able to understand the deed]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **on account of which humanity toils to seek, yet he will not find**
UST Although people will never stop trying to understand, they will never succeed

Qoheleth uses the word **yet** here to indicate a contrast between how hard people work **to seek** and the fact that they **will not find**. In your translation, indicate this contrast in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [on account of which, although humanity toils to seek, he will not find]

Support Reference: Connect — Contrast Relationship

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
God	God
seek	to understand
wise	wise
know	that they understand it all

Ecclesiastes 9

Ecclesiastes 9 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 9 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter reflects on death as the one event that comes to every person, urges readers to enjoy life while they can, and ends with a story showing that wisdom is valuable even when people do not honor it.

1. The same fate comes to everyone (1–3)
2. The living have hope, but the dead are forgotten (4–6)
3. A call to enjoy life and work with all your strength (7–10)
4. Time and misfortune overtake all people (11–12)
5. The value of wisdom (13–18)
    1. The poor wise man who delivered a city (13–15)
    2. Sayings about wisdom (16–18)

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 9:2, 9:4–6, 9:11–12, and 9:17–18.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Sheol

In verse 10, Hades is the place of the dead, where Qoheleth says there is no more work, planning, knowledge, or wisdom. Use a term that refers to the place where people go when they die, not a place of punishment.

White clothes and oil

In verse 8, wearing white clothes and putting oil on the head were signs of joy and celebration in the culture of that time. If your readers would not understand these as signs of joy, you could explain them in a footnote.

Vapor

The Hebrew word rendered “vapor” is this book’s key term for what is fleeting and insubstantial, and it appears twice in verse 9. Render it consistently through the book.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“One happening”

In verses 2 and 3, the “one happening” that comes to everyone is death. Translate this in a way that makes clear that Qoheleth is speaking about the fate that all people share, whether they are righteous or wicked.

Ecclesiastes 9:1

ULT	UST
Indeed, all of this I gave to my heart to examine all of this: That the righteous and the wise and their work are in the hand of God. Either love or hate, humanity is not knowing; both are to their faces.	*Truly, I thought deeply about all these realities so that I could study them, including this one: It is God who controls what happens to everyone and what the labor that they do produces. This is true for wise people and those who live justly. However, people never know what will happen to them in the future. Even for righteous people, both undesirable and enjoyable things may happen to them.*

ULT **I gave to my heart to examine … in**
UST I thought deeply about … so that I could study them

Qoheleth is using **I gave to my heart** as a common expression of the culture to mean "I thought carefully about." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I carefully considered]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the righteous and the wise**
UST wise people and those who live justly

Qoheleth is using the adjectives **righteous** and **wise** as nouns to mean people who are righteous and people who are wise. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate these adjectives with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: [the righteous people and the wise people]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

ULT **Either love or hate**
UST both undesirable and enjoyable things

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **love** and **hate**, you could express the same ideas in another way. This also occurs in verse 6. Alternate translation: [Whether someone will love them or hate them]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **both {are} to their faces**
UST what will happen to them in the future. Even for righteous people … may happen to them

Here, **to their faces** represents "ahead of them," that is, in their future. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [both are in their future]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
righteous	and those who live justly
wise	wise
work	labor
God	God
love	enjoyable things
knowing	know

Ecclesiastes 9:2

ULT	UST
Everything is as for everyone, one happening: for the righteous person and for the wicked person, for the good person and for the pure person and for the unclean person, and for the person who sacrifices and for the person who does not sacrifice. As the good person, so the sinner, the person who swears an oath is as the person who fears an oath.	*Everyone dies eventually, no matter who they are— whether they lived righteously or wickedly, whether they lived well and were ceremonially clean and able to worship God, or they were ceremonially unclean and unable to worship God, whether they offered sacrifices to God or refrained from offering sacrifices. Good people and sinful people will both die, whether they did what they promised God that they would do, or they were afraid to make such promises.*

ULT **Everything**
UST Everyone dies eventually, no matter who they are

The standard written Hebrew text as we have it today reads “Everything.” The ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “vapor” and place that word at the end of the previous verse. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of the ULT.
Support Reference: Textual Variants

ULT **one happening**
UST Everyone dies eventually, no matter who they are

The implication is that the **one happening** that comes to everyone is death. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the one event of death]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **for the righteous person and for the wicked person, for the good person and for the pure person and for the unclean person, and for the person who sacrifices and for the person who does not sacrifice**
UST whether they lived righteously or wickedly, whether they lived well and were ceremonially clean and able to worship God, or they were ceremonially unclean and unable to worship God, whether they offered sacrifices to God or refrained from offering sacrifices

Qoheleth is referring to all kinds of people by naming pairs of major components that are opposites, such as **the righteous person** and **the wicked person**, **the pure person** and **the unclean person**, and **the person who sacrifices** and **the person who does not sacrifice**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [for every kind of person, whether they are righteous or wicked, good and pure or unclean, whether they sacrifice or do not sacrifice]
Support Reference: Merism

ULT **for the good person and for the pure person**
UST whether they lived well and were ceremonially clean and able to worship God

The standard written Hebrew text as we have it today reads “for the good person and for the pure person.” The ULT follows that reading. Other ancient manuscripts read “for the good person and for the evil person and for the pure person.” If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to use the reading of the ULT.
Support Reference: Textual Variants

ULT **As the good person, so the sinner, the person who swears an oath**
UST Good people and sinful people will both die, whether they did what they promised God that they would do

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [As it is for the good person, so it is for the sinner; in the same way, as it is for the person who swears an oath, he]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **the … person who swears {an oath is} as the person who fears an oath**
UST whether they did what they promised God that they would do, or they were afraid to make such promises

The implication is that **the person who swears** an oath is someone who makes oaths carelessly, while **the person who fears an oath** is someone who respects oaths so much that he is careful about making them. Qoheleth means that the same thing happens to both kinds of people. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the person who carelessly swears an oath is as the person who is careful about making oaths]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
righteous	whether they lived righteously
wicked	or wickedly
good	whether they lived well
pure	and were ceremonially clean and able to worship God
sacrifices	sacrifices
sacrifice	sacrifices
sinner	sinful
fears	afraid
oath	to make such promises

Ecclesiastes 9:3

ULT	UST
This is a misfortune about everything that is done under the sun: That one happening belongs to everyone. And also, the heart of the sons of humanity is full of evil, and madness is in their heart during their lives—and after him to the dead!	*Yes, this is a lamentable part of being alive on this earth. Eventually everyone dies. But even more so, during the time that they are alive, it seems that everyone is fully intent on living like evil people. They also live like crazy people! And then after that, they die just like everyone else!*

ULT **about everything that is done**
UST of being alive

See how you translated this phrase in 1:13. This also occurs in verse 6.
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **under the sun**
UST on this earth

See how you translated **under the sun** in 1:3. This also occurs in verses 6, 9, 11, and 13.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the heart of the sons of humanity {is} full of evil, and madness {is} in their heart**
UST it seems that everyone is fully intent on living like evil people. They also live like crazy people

Qoheleth is speaking as if **the heart** of people were a container that is **full of evil** and that has **madness** in it. He means that people constantly think about and desire evil and foolish things. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the sons of humanity constantly think about and desire evil things, and they think about foolish things]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the sons of humanity**
UST it seems that everyone

See how you translated **the sons of humanity** in 1:13. This also occurs in verse 12.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **and madness**
UST They also live like crazy people

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **madness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [and what is senseless]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **and after him to the dead**
UST And then after that, they die just like everyone else

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [and after that, they go to the dead]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
is a misfortune	is a lamentable part

Ecclesiastes 9:4

ULT	UST
For whoever that is joined to all the living, there is hope; for a living dog— it is better than the dead lion,	*Yet as long as someone is alive, one will have the opportunity to enjoy good things. Because of this, it is better to be alive than to be dead. Even though people think little of dogs in comparison to lions, the dog that is alive is better off than the lion that is dead.*

ULT **whoever that is joined to all the living**
UST as long as someone is alive

Qoheleth is using **whoever that is joined to all the living** as a common expression of the culture to mean "whoever is still alive." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [whoever is still alive]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **whoever that is joined**
UST as long as someone is alive

The expression **is joined** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [whoever belongs]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **is joined**
UST as long as someone is alive

The phrase **is joined** is a translation of the correction that later Hebrew scribes recommended in the margin of the text. The written Hebrew text has a word with the same letters in a different order, which means "is chosen." The ULT follows the correction in the margin, and you may want to do the same or follow the reading of the major translation in your area. Alternate translation: [is chosen to belong]

Support Reference: Alternative Readings

ULT **for a living dog— it {is} better than the dead lion**
UST Because of this, it is better to be alive than to be dead. Even though people think little of dogs in comparison to lions, the dog that is alive is better off than the lion that is dead

The implication is that people in this culture despised dogs but considered the **lion** to be a noble and powerful animal. Qoheleth means that even the lowliest person who is alive is better off than the greatest person who has died. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [for even a living dog, which people despise, is better off than the dead lion, which people honor]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **there is hope**
UST one will have the opportunity to enjoy good things

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **hope**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [there is something that he can confidently expect]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
hope	will have the opportunity to enjoy good things
better	better
lion	lions

Ecclesiastes 9:5

ULT	UST
for the living know that they will die, but the dead—they are not knowing anything, and there is no longer for them a reward— even their memory is forgotten!	*This is because people who are still alive are aware that they will die someday, but dead people know nothing! Also, dead people have lost their opportunity to enjoy the good things that people can experience during their lives. Furthermore, people will forget about them!*

ULT **a reward**

UST to enjoy the good things that people can experience during their lives

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **reward**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [anything to gain for what they have done]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **their memory**

UST people will forget about them

Qoheleth is using the possessive form to describe the **memory** that other people have of those who have died, not the memory that the dead people themselves have. You may wish to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the memory of them]

Support Reference: Possession

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
know	are aware
reward	to enjoy the good things that people can experience during their lives

Ecclesiastes 9:6

ULT	UST
Even their love, even their hate, even their jealousy—already it has perished. And there is not for them a portion any longer in perpetuity among all that is done under the sun.	*While they are alive, people love other people. They hate people, and they envy people. However, the things that these people felt died long ago. Those who have died will never again have the chance to enjoy anything good that happens during people's lives.*

ULT **Even their love, even their hate, even their jealousy**
UST While they are alive, people love other people. They hate people, and they envy people

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **love**, **hate**, and **jealousy**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [Even the fact that they loved, hated, and were jealous]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **already it has perished**
UST However, the things that these people felt died long ago

Qoheleth is speaking as if the **love**, **hate**, and **jealousy** of dead people were living things that have **perished**. He means that these feelings have ended. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [already it has ended]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **And there is not for them a portion**
UST Those who have died will never … have the chance to enjoy anything good

Qoheleth is speaking as if the good things that people can experience in life were a **portion**, that is, a share of property that someone receives. He means that dead people can no longer take part in or enjoy anything that happens in this life. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And there is nothing for them to enjoy]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
love	love
jealousy	and they envy people
perished	However, the things that these people felt died long ago

Ecclesiastes 9:7

ULT	UST
Go! Eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a good heart, because the God has already accepted your deeds.	*So, go and live your life! Allow yourself to be happy when you eat your food and to enjoy the experience of drinking wine. Remember: God wants you to do this!*

ULT **Go! Eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a good heart**
UST So, go and live your life! Allow yourself to be happy when you eat your food and to enjoy the experience of drinking wine

These are imperatives, but they communicate encouragement rather than commands. If the imperatives do not communicate encouragement for your readers, then use a form in your language that communicates encouragement. Alternate translation: [You should feel free to go and eat your bread with joy and to drink your wine with a good heart]
Support Reference: Imperatives — Other Uses

ULT **Go**
UST So, go and live your life

Qoheleth is using **Go** as a common expression of the culture to mean "Come now." He is urging people to act, not telling them to leave a place. If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Come now]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **your bread**
UST your food

Qoheleth is using **bread** to represent food in general. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [your meals]
Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT **with joy**
UST Allow yourself to be happy

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **joy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [while being joyful]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **with a good heart**
UST to enjoy the experience

Here the **heart** represents the place where a person feels emotions. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [with a cheerful attitude]
Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **the God has already accepted your deeds**
> UST God wants you to do this

The implication is that by saying **God has already accepted your deeds**, Qoheleth means that God approves of people enjoying their food and wine in this way. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the God has already approved of your enjoying these things]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
bread	your food
joy	Allow yourself to be happy
wine	wine
good	to enjoy the experience
God	God

Ecclesiastes 9:8

ULT	UST
At every time let your clothes be white, and do not let oil be lacking on your head.	*Wear your best clothing all the time, and keep yourself groomed as if you were going to a party!*

ULT **let your clothes be white, and do not let oil be lacking on your head**
UST Wear your best clothing … and keep yourself groomed as if you were going to a party

Wearing white clothes and putting oil on the head were symbolic actions by which people showed that they were joyful and celebrating. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of these actions in the text of your translation or in a footnote. Alternate translation: [let your clothes be white to show that you are joyful, and do not let oil be lacking on your head as a sign that you are celebrating]

Support Reference: Symbolic Action

ULT **let your clothes be white, and do not let oil be lacking on your head**
UST Wear your best clothing … and keep yourself groomed as if you were going to a party

Qoheleth is saying what he wants the person he is addressing to do. Follow the decision of your team on how a speaker will express in this context what he wants someone to do. Alternate translation: [wear white clothes, and always put oil on your head]

Support Reference: Third-Person Imperatives

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
time	time
oil	and keep yourself groomed as if you were going to a party

Ecclesiastes 9:9

ULT	UST
See life with the wife whom you love all the days of your vaporous life which he has given to you under the sun—all the days of your vapor. For it is your portion in life and in your toil that you are a toiler under the sun.	*Enjoy the experience of living your fleeting life with your beloved wife. God has given you whatever time you continue to breathe, though it is as brief as the mist of my breath. God has apportioned this time for you to enjoy with your wife, even while you labor at your work.*

ULT **See life**
UST Enjoy the experience of living

Qoheleth is using **See life** as a common expression of the culture to mean "enjoy life." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Enjoy life]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **your vaporous life**
UST your fleeting life

See how you translated the similar expression in 5:7. Alternate translation: [your brief life]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the days of your vapor**
UST though it is as brief as the mist of my breath

See how you translated the similar expression in 7:15.
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **it {is} your portion**
UST God has apportioned … for you to enjoy with your wife

See how you translated the similar expression in 3:22.
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and in your toil**
UST even while you labor at your work

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **toil**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [and in what you work hard at]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
love	beloved

Ecclesiastes 9:10

ULT	UST
Everything that your hand finds to do, do it with your strength, because there is no deed or scheme of things or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going to there.	*Whatever you can do, do it with all your energy. You should do this because you will die eventually. When you die and your family buries you in the ground, you will no longer be able to accomplish anything or understand why life happens the way it does—or know or understand anything!*

ULT **Everything that your hand finds to do**
UST Whatever you can do

Qoheleth is using **Everything that your hand finds to do** as a common expression of the culture to mean "whatever you have the opportunity to do." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Everything that you have the opportunity to do]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **there is no deed or scheme of things or knowledge or wisdom**
UST you will no longer be able to accomplish anything or understand why life happens the way it does—or know or understand anything

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **deed**, **scheme of things**, **knowledge**, and **wisdom**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [no one does anything or plans how things work or knows anything or is wise]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **in Sheol where you are going to there**
UST you will die eventually. When you die and your family buries you in the ground

Qoheleth is referring to dying in a polite way by using the phrase **in Sheol where you are going to there**. Depending on what is helpful for your readers, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [in the grave where you are going when you die]
Support Reference: Euphemism

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
deed	you will … be able to accomplish anything
knowledge	or know
wisdom	or understand anything
Sheol	you will die eventually. When you die and your family buries you in the ground

Ecclesiastes 9:11

ULT	UST
I again saw under the sun: That not to the swift is the race, and not to the mighty is the war, and even not to wise people is bread, and even not to discerning people is wealth, and even not to understanding people is favor, for a time and the occurrence will happen to all of them.	*Once again, I witnessed this reality about life: The person who runs fastest does not always win the race, nor do the strongest soldiers always win the battle, nor do the wisest people always have enough food to eat, nor do the most insightful people always become financially prosperous, nor are the people who know the most always the most successful. No human being can control or predict what will happen to them.*

ULT **not to the swift {is} the race, and not to the mighty {is} the war**
UST The person who runs fastest does not always win the race, nor do the strongest soldiers always win the battle

The implication is that **the swift** do not always win **the race** and **the mighty** do not always win **the war**. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [not always do the swift win the race, and not always do the mighty win the war]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **to the swift {is} the race, and not to the mighty is**
UST The person who runs fastest does not always win the race, nor do the strongest soldiers always win

Qoheleth is using the adjectives **swift** and **mighty** as nouns to mean people who are swift and people who are mighty. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate these adjectives with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: [to people who are swift is the race and not to people who are mighty is]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

ULT **a time and the occurrence**
UST No human being can control or predict what will happen to them

The phrase **a time and the occurrence** expresses a single idea. The word **occurrence** tells more about **time**. Qoheleth means a time when something happens unexpectedly. If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this meaning in a different way. Alternate translation: [an unexpected time]
Support Reference: Hendiadys

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
mighty	nor do the strongest soldiers always win
to wise people is	nor do the wisest people always have
bread	enough food to eat
discerning	nor do the most insightful people always
understanding	nor are the people who know the most always
favor	the most successful
time	No human being can control or predict what will happen to them

Ecclesiastes 9:12

ULT	UST
For humanity does not even know his time. Like the fish that are caught in a troublesome net, and like the birds that are caught in the snare— like them, the sons of humanity are snared at a time of misfortune when it falls upon them suddenly.	*Even more so, no one can predict when he will die. People catch fish in deadly nets, and people catch birds in traps. Similarly, every human being will experience their inevitable death just like those fish and birds, like a deadly trap that seizes them unexpectedly.*

ULT **humanity does not even know his time**
UST Even more so, no one can predict when he will die

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific person by **his**. He means people in general. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [people do not even know their time]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **his time**
UST when he will die

The implication is that **his time** refers to the time when a person will die or when disaster will come upon him. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the time when he will die or when disaster will come upon him]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **Like the fish that are caught in a troublesome net, and like the birds that are caught**
UST People catch fish in deadly nets, and people catch birds

The expression **are caught** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Like the fish that people catch in a net and like the birds that hunters trap]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **the sons of humanity are snared**
UST every human being will experience … like a deadly trap

The expression **are snared** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [the sons of humanity fall into a snare]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **when it falls upon them suddenly**
UST that seizes them unexpectedly

Qoheleth is using **when it falls upon them suddenly** as a common expression of the culture to mean “when misfortune happens to them unexpectedly.” If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [when it happens to them unexpectedly]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
know	can predict
time	when he will die
troublesome	deadly
snare	traps
of misfortune	their inevitable death

Ecclesiastes 9:13

ULT	UST
Also, this I saw: Wisdom under the sun and great it was to me.	*I also observed this truth about wisdom in this life, and it made a lasting impact on me:*

ULT **this I saw: Wisdom under the sun**
UST I … observed this truth about wisdom in this life

The pronoun **this** refers to the example of **Wisdom** that Qoheleth describes in the next two verses. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [I saw the following example of wisdom under the sun]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **and great it {was} to me**
UST and it made a lasting impact on me

Qoheleth is using **great it was to me** as a common expression of the culture to mean "it impressed me greatly." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and it impressed me greatly]

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Wisdom	wisdom

Ecclesiastes 9:14

ULT	UST
There was a small city, and a few men were in it. And against it came a great king, and he surrounded it, and he built against it great siegeworks.	*There was once a small town, and only a few people lived there. Then a powerful king and his army attacked that town and besieged it on all sides. The army built massive ramps against the walls so that they could climb up and conquer the town.*

ULT **and a few men**
UST and only a few people

Here the masculine term **men** has a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use language in your translation that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: [and a few people]
Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
king	king
siegeworks	ramps … the … so that they could climb up and conquer the town

Ecclesiastes 9:15

ULT	UST
And he found in it a poor wise man, and he himself delivered the city with his wisdom. But a person did not remember that poor man.	*Now in that town, there was a man who was poor but wise nonetheless. Remarkably, the man thought wisely and counseled actions that rescued the town from the attack. However, in a little while nobody remembered the poor man who rescued them.*

ULT **And he found in it**
UST Now in that town, there was

The pronoun **he** refers to someone who **found** the poor wise man. This could mean: (1) the king from the previous verse found this man in the city. Alternate translation: [And the king found in it]; or (2) an unspecified person found this man in the city. Alternate translation: [And there was found in it]. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers.
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **and he himself delivered the city with his wisdom**
UST Remarkably, the man thought wisely and counseled actions that rescued the town from the attack

The implication is that the **wisdom** of the poor wise man was able to save the city from the king. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and he himself delivered the city from the king by giving wise advice]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **with his wisdom**
UST thought wisely and counseled actions

See how you translated the similar expression in 8:1.
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **But a person did not remember**
UST However, in a little while nobody remembered

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific **person**. He means people in general, so that no one remembered **that poor man**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [But no one remembered]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wise	but wise nonetheless
delivered	Remarkably … that rescued … from the attack
wisdom	thought wisely and counseled actions

Ecclesiastes 9:16

ULT	UST
And I said, I, "Better is wisdom than might, but the wisdom of the poor person is despised, and his words—they are not heard."	*So I concluded that it is more beneficial for people to be wise than to be strong. Nonetheless, it is also true that no one values the wise thinking of poor people, nor will they listen to what they say.*

ULT **And I said, I, "Better {is} wisdom than might, but the wisdom of the poor person {is} despised, and his words—they are not heard**
UST So I concluded that it is more beneficial for people to be wise than to be strong. Nonetheless, it is also true that no one values the wise thinking of poor people, nor will they listen to what they say

If it would be more natural in your language, you could express this as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [And I said that wisdom is better than might, but the wisdom of the poor person is despised, and his words are not heard]
Support Reference: Direct and Indirect Quotations

ULT **And I said, I**
UST So I concluded that

Qoheleth is stating the pronoun **I** separately, even though the verb translated as **said** already includes this meaning. He is doing that to emphasize that this is his own conclusion. If a speaker of your language would use an explicit pronoun for the same purpose, you may want to use that construction in your translation. If not, your language may have other ways of showing the meaning here. Alternate translation: [And I myself said]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **Better {is} wisdom than might**
UST it is more beneficial for people to be wise than to be strong

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **wisdom** and **might**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [Better is it to be wise than to be strong]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **but the wisdom of the poor person {is} despised**
UST Nonetheless, it is also true that no one values the wise thinking of poor people

The expression **{is} despised** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [but people despise the wisdom of the poor person]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **and his words—they are not heard**
UST nor will they listen to what they say

The expression **they are not heard** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and people do not listen to his words]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Better	it is more beneficial
wisdom	wise
might	than to be strong

Ecclesiastes 9:17

ULT	UST
The words of wise people in quietness are heeded more than the cry of a ruler among the fools.	*People will listen to a wise person who speaks softly more attentively than they will to a king who shouts at a crowd of foolish people.*

ULT **The words of wise people in quietness are heeded more than the cry of a ruler among the fools**

UST People will listen to a wise person who speaks softly more attentively than they will to a king who shouts at a crowd of foolish people

Here Qoheleth uses or invents a proverb in order to show that the quiet words of wise people are more valuable than the shouting of a ruler who leads foolish people. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [People listen more to the quiet words of the wise than to the shouting of a ruler over fools]

Support Reference: Proverbs

ULT **The words of wise people in quietness are heeded**

UST People will listen to a wise person who speaks softly … people

The expression **are heeded** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [People heed the words of wise people in quietness]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **in quietness**

UST softly

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **quietness**, you could express the same idea in another way. This could mean: (1) that wise people who speak their words quietly are heeded. Alternate translation: [spoken quietly]; or (2) that people listen calmly to the words of a wise person. Alternate translation: [calmly]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **more than the cry of a ruler among the fools**

UST more attentively than they will to a king who shouts at a crowd of foolish

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [more than the cry of a ruler among the fools is heeded]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **among the fools**

UST at a crowd of foolish

Qoheleth is using the adjective translated as **fools** as a noun to mean people who are foolish. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this adjective with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [among foolish people]

Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wise people	a wise person
cry	more attentively than they will … who shouts
of a ruler	to a king
fools	foolish

Ecclesiastes 10

Ecclesiastes 10 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 10 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter is a collection of short wisdom sayings that contrast the wise person with the foolish person, especially in how each one acts, works, and speaks, and in how rulers govern.

1. A little folly ruins much wisdom (1–3)
2. Rulers and those under them (4–7)
    1. Stay calm when a ruler is angry (4)
    2. Rulers who give high positions to the wrong people (5–7)
3. Wisdom and the dangers of ordinary work (8–11)
4. The words of the wise and the words of fools (12–15)
5. Sayings about rulers, work, and speech (16–20)
    1. Foolish rulers and noble rulers (16–17)
    2. Laziness, feasting, and money (18–19)
    3. Do not curse the king even in private (20)

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 10:1–20.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Right and left

In verse 2, the right side was associated with strength, protection, and favor and the left side with weakness and misfortune. If your readers would not understand this association, you could express the meaning plainly or explain it in a footnote.

Snake charming

In verse 11, the “master of the tongue” is a snake charmer, a person who used words or sounds to calm snakes so they would not bite. His skill is useless if the snake bites before he uses it.

Feasting in the morning

In verse 16, princes who “eat in the morning” are feasting when they should be working, which showed that they did not take their responsibilities seriously.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Proverbs

Most verses in this chapter are proverbs that are only loosely connected to one another. Translate them in a way that sounds like a wise saying in your language and keep each one short and memorable.

Ecclesiastes 10:1

ULT	UST
Flies of death cause a perfumer's oil to putrefy and bubble; weightier than wisdom or honor is a little foolishness.	*If only a few flies die in a vat of perfume, the entire batch can become rancid and stinking. Similarly, one foolish decision can have a disastrous effect on a lifetime of wise and honorable decisions.*

ULT **Flies of death**
UST If only a few flies die

Qoheleth is using the possessive form to describe **Flies** that are characterized by **death**. This could mean: (1) flies that have died. Alternate translation: [Dead flies]; or (2) flies that bring death or disease. Alternate translation: [Flies that bring death] If a speaker of your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could express this idea in another way.
Support Reference: Possession

ULT **weightier than wisdom or honor {is} a little foolishness**
UST Similarly, one foolish decision can have a disastrous effect on a lifetime of wise and honorable decisions

The point of this comparison is that just as **Flies of death** can spoil a whole container of **a perfumer's oil**, so **a little foolishness** can spoil the good that **wisdom** and **honor** have accomplished. Qoheleth implies this comparison by placing the two statements next to each other. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [in the same way, a little foolishness can spoil the good that wisdom or honor has accomplished]
Support Reference: Simile

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
oil	in a vat of perfume
wisdom	wise
honor	and honorable

Ecclesiastes 10:2

ULT	UST
The heart of a wise person, to his right, but a heart of a fool, to his left.	*A person's wise thinking can protect them, like the right hand of a warrior that grips his sword. Yet people who think foolishly are vulnerable to the outcomes of their own poor decision-making.*

ULT **The heart of … but a heart of**
UST A person's wise thinking … Yet people who think foolishly

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if a person's mind and will were his **heart**. It means that what a person thinks and desires guides the way he lives. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The mind of … but the mind of]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **a wise person … a fool**
UST A person's wise thinking … Yet people who think foolishly

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific **wise person** or a specific **fool**. He means wise people and foolish people in general. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [whoever is wise … whoever is foolish]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **to his right … to his left**
UST can protect them, like the right hand of a warrior that grips his sword … are vulnerable to the outcomes of their own poor decision-making

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the heart could turn **to his right** or **to his left**. In this culture, the right side represented strength and favor, and the left side represented weakness or misfortune. This could mean: (1) a wise person's understanding protects him, while a fool is exposed to harm. Alternate translation: [it can protect him … it leaves him defenseless]; or (2) a wise person is inclined toward what is good, while a fool is inclined toward what is evil. Alternate translation: [it leads him toward what is good … it leads him toward what is evil]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a wise person	A person's wise thinking
right	right
fool	Yet people who think foolishly
to his left	are vulnerable to the outcomes of their own poor decision-making

Ecclesiastes 10:3

ULT	UST
And even whenever the fool is walking on the road, his heart is lacking, and it says to everyone that he is a fool.	*Whenever foolish people travel on roads, they lack any common sense. They themselves make their stupidity obvious to everyone who sees them.*

ULT **his heart {is} lacking**

UST they lack any common sense

Qoheleth is using the expression that **his heart is lacking** as a common expression of the culture to mean "he lacks good sense." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [his mind lacks good sense]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **and it says to everyone {that} he**

UST They themselves … to everyone who sees them

Qoheleth is speaking of the fool's lack of sense as if it were a living thing that could speak to **everyone**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and his behavior shows everyone that he]

Support Reference: Personification

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
fool	foolish

Ecclesiastes 10:4

ULT	UST
If the spirit of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness will cause great sins to leave.	*Should someone powerful become enraged with you, do not abandon your responsibilities with him. Remember! Calm and composed responses can lessen another's fury at serious offenses.*

ULT **the spirit of the ruler rises against you**
UST someone powerful become enraged with you

Qoheleth is using **the spirit of the ruler rises against you** as a common expression of the culture to mean "the ruler becomes angry with you." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the ruler becomes angry with you]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **do not leave your place**
UST do not abandon your responsibilities with him

Qoheleth is using **do not leave your place** as a common expression of the culture to mean "do not abandon your position." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [do not resign from your post]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **calmness**
UST Calm and composed responses

If your language does not use a noun for the idea of **calmness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [remaining calm]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **will cause great sins to leave**
UST can lessen another's fury at serious offenses

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if **great sins** were things that could be caused **to leave**. This could mean: (1) staying calm will cause the ruler to overlook great offenses. Alternate translation: [can reduce the king's anger at the offenses]; or (2) staying calm will keep you from committing great sins, such as rebelling against the ruler. Alternate translation: [can keep great offenses from having their effect]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
spirit	become enraged
ruler	someone powerful
leave	do … abandon
sins	another's fury at … offenses

Ecclesiastes 10:5

ULT	UST
There is a misfortune I saw under the sun, like an unintentional sin that goes out from before the face of the authority.	*I have observed another lamentable situation in my life: Sometimes people in authority unintentionally make public mistakes.*

ULT **under the sun**
UST in my life

See how you translated **under the sun** in 1:3.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **like an unintentional sin**
UST unintentionally make … mistakes

The point of this comparison is that just as **an unintentional sin** that a ruler commits causes harm even though he did not intend it, so is the **misfortune** that Qoheleth saw harmful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [which was harmful like an unintentional sin]
Support Reference: Simile

ULT **from before the face of the authority**
UST Sometimes people in authority … public

Here, **the face** represents the presence of **the authority**. The expression means that the error comes from the ruler himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from the authority himself]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a misfortune	another lamentable situation
sin	unintentionally make … mistakes
authority	authority

Ecclesiastes 10:6

ULT	UST
Folly is placed into many high places, and rich people sit in the lowly place.	*They promote many foolish people to positions of authority, while they assign wealthy people to unimportant positions.*

ULT **Folly is placed**
UST They promote … foolish people

The expression **Folly is placed** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, it is the ruler mentioned in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [The ruler places folly] or [The ruler places foolish people]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **Folly**
UST foolish people

Here, **Folly** represents foolish people. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [The foolish person]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **into many high places, and rich {people} sit in the lowly place**
UST many … to positions of authority, while they assign wealthy people to unimportant positions

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if important positions were **high places** and unimportant positions were **the lowly place**. It means that foolish people are given positions of honor and authority, while rich people are given positions of little importance. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [into many positions of honor, and rich people sit in positions of little importance]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Folly	foolish
lowly	to unimportant positions

Ecclesiastes 10:7

ULT	UST
Indeed, I saw slaves on horses and princes walking like slaves on the ground.	*I have witnessed people promote slaves so that they ride on horses like rich people usually do. And yet, they force important officials to walk in the dirt like slaves usually do.*

ULT **Indeed, I saw slaves on horses and princes walking like slaves on the ground**
UST I have witnessed people promote slaves so that they ride on horses like rich people usually do. And yet, they force important officials to walk in the dirt like slaves usually do

Verses 6 and 7 mean basically the same thing. Verse 6 states the general idea, and verse 7 gives a specific example. Translate these phrases according to the decisions your team has made regarding translating parallelism in Hebrew poetry. Alternate translation: [Indeed, I saw the social order reversed, with slaves holding high positions and princes brought low]
Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **slaves on horses**
UST slaves so that they ride on horses like rich people usually do

The implication is that only important and wealthy people rode **horses**, while slaves walked. Qoheleth is saying that the normal order of society has been reversed. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [slaves riding on horses as if they were important and wealthy people]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
slaves	slaves
horses	horses
princes	officials
the ground	the dirt

Ecclesiastes 10:8

ULT	UST
One who digs a pit will fall into it, and one who breaks through a wall—a snake will bite him.	*If someone digs a hole in the ground, he might fall into it. If someone tears down a wall, a snake living inside the wall might bite him.*

> ULT **One who digs a pit will fall into it, and one who breaks through a wall—a snake will bite him**
>
> UST If someone digs a hole in the ground, he might fall into it. If someone tears down a wall, a snake living inside the wall might bite him

Here Qoheleth uses a proverb in order to warn that people who do risky actions often suffer the consequences of those actions. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [Whoever digs a hole may fall into it, and whoever tears down a wall may be bitten by a snake]

Support Reference: Proverbs

> ULT **a snake will bite him**
>
> UST a snake living inside the wall might bite him

The implication is that snakes often lived in the cracks of stone walls, so a person who **breaks through a wall** could be bitten by a snake hiding in it. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [a snake hiding in the cracks of that wall will bite him]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Ecclesiastes 10:9

ULT	UST
Indeed, one who pulls up stones will be hurt by them; one who splits wood will be endangered by them.	*If someone quarries rocks, the loosened rocks might fall and injure him. If someone chops wood, the split logs might wound him.*

ULT **Indeed, one who pulls up stones will be hurt by them; one who splits wood will be endangered by them**
UST If someone quarries rocks, the loosened rocks might fall and injure him. If someone chops wood, the split logs might wound him

Here Qoheleth uses or invents a proverb in order to teach that every kind of work carries its own risks, so a wise person takes care while doing it. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. This verse emphasizes the meaning of verse 8 by repeating the same idea using different words. Alternate translation: [Whoever moves stones may be injured by them; whoever chops logs may be harmed by them]
Support Reference: Proverbs

ULT **Indeed, one who pulls up stones will be hurt by them; one who splits wood will be endangered by them**
UST If someone quarries rocks, the loosened rocks might fall and injure him. If someone chops wood, the split logs might wound him

Verses 8 and 9 mean basically the same thing. Verse 9 emphasizes the meaning of verse 8 by repeating the same idea using different words. Translate these phrases according to the decisions your team has made regarding translating parallelism in Hebrew poetry. Alternate translation: [Indeed, one who pulls up stones or splits wood will be hurt by them]
Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **will be hurt by them**
UST the loosened rocks might fall and injure him

The expression **will be hurt** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The word **them** refers to the stones. Alternate translation: [will find that they hurt him]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **will be endangered by them**
UST the split logs might wound him

The expression **will be endangered** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The word **them** refers to the split pieces of wood. Alternate translation: [will find that the pieces endanger him]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
hurt	the loosened rocks might fall and injure him

Ecclesiastes 10:10

ULT	UST
If the iron is dull, but he himself does not lighten the faces, he must exert strength. But a profit to succeeding is wisdom.	*If a person's axe head is dull, and he has not sharpened its edges, then in order to chop something, he will have to exert more force. This all shows that being wise is the secret to success in using one's tools.*

ULT **but he himself does not lighten the faces**
UST and he has not sharpened its edges

Qoheleth is using **lighten the faces** as a common expression of the culture to mean "sharpen the cutting edge." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. The pronoun **he** refers to the person who is using the axe to cut wood. Alternate translation: [but the person using the axe does not sharpen its cutting edge]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **But a profit to succeeding {is} wisdom**
UST This all shows that being wise is the secret to success in using one's tools

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **profit**, **succeeding**, and **wisdom**, you could express the same ideas in another way. Alternate translation: [But if a person acts wisely, it will help him to succeed]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
iron	a person's axe head
profit	This all shows … is the secret
wisdom	wise

Ecclesiastes 10:11

ULT	UST
If the snake bites without a charm, then there is no profit for the master of the tongue.	*If a snake bites someone before he can calm it, then an ability to calm snakes is of no use to him.*

ULT **without a charm**
UST before he can calm it

The implication is that the snake bites someone before the snake charmer has used **a charm** to calm it. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [before the snake charmer has used a charm to calm it]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **for the master of the tongue**
UST an ability to calm snakes

Qoheleth is using **the master of the tongue** as a common expression of the culture to mean "the one who charms snakes with his words." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [for the snake charmer]

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
snake	snake
profit	is of … use to him
master	an ability to calm snakes
tongue	an ability to calm snakes

Ecclesiastes 10:12

ULT	UST
The words of the mouth of a wise person are favor, but the lips of a fool will swallow him.	*People will honor wise people because of the way in which they speak. However, the things that foolish people say will inevitably harm them, as if their own lips were to swallow them.*

ULT **The words of {the} mouth of a wise {person are} favor, but {the} lips of a fool will swallow him**

UST People will honor wise people because of the way in which they speak. However, the things that foolish people say will inevitably harm them, as if their own lips were to swallow them

Here Qoheleth uses a proverb in order to teach that wise people speak in ways that bring them goodwill, while fools destroy themselves by what they say. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [What a wise person says brings him goodwill, but what a fool says will destroy him]

Support Reference: Proverbs

ULT **are favor**

UST People will honor

If your language does not use a noun for the idea of **favor**, you could express the same idea in another way. This could mean: (1) the words of a wise person are gracious and pleasing. Alternate translation: [are gracious and pleasing]; or (2) the words of a wise person win him the goodwill of others. Alternate translation: [brings him goodwill]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a wise person	wise people
favor	People will honor
fool	foolish

Ecclesiastes 10:13

ULT	UST
The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his mouth is evil insanity,	*When foolish people begin to talk, they say stupid things, but by the time they are finished, they have said things that are madness and exceedingly harmful.*

ULT **The beginning of the words of his mouth {is} foolishness, and {the} end of his mouth {is} evil insanity**

UST When foolish people begin to talk, they say stupid things, but by the time they are finished, they have said things that are madness and exceedingly harmful

Qoheleth is referring to the whole of a fool's speech by naming two extremes, **The beginning of the words of his mouth** and **the end of his mouth**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [At first the words of his mouth are foolishness, and in the end what he says is evil insanity]

Support Reference: Merism

ULT **is evil insanity**

UST things that are madness and exceedingly harmful

If your language does not use a noun for the idea of **insanity**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [is wickedly insane]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
evil	and exceedingly

Ecclesiastes 10:14

ULT	UST
but the fool multiplies words. Humanity does not know what will be, and that which will be after him—who will declare it to him?	*Yet the foolish person will continue talking. Nobody knows what might happen in the future. After all, there is no human being who can tell someone about what will happen to them tomorrow!*

ULT **Humanity**
UST Nobody knows

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific person when he says **Humanity** and **him**. He means people in general, not the fool mentioned earlier in the verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [A person]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **and that which will be after him**
UST After all … what will happen to them tomorrow

Qoheleth is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [and does not know what will happen after he is gone]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **who will declare it**
UST there is no human being who can tell … about

Qoheleth is using the question form for emphasis. He means that no one can tell a person what will happen after him. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [no one at all can declare it]
Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
fool	foolish
multiplies	will continue talking
know	knows
declare	who can tell … about

Ecclesiastes 10:15

ULT	UST
The toil of foolish people wearies him, so that he does not know how to go to a city.	*Foolish people become very tired by the work that they do, with the result that they are even unable to find the road to their town.*

ULT **wearies him**
UST become very tired

The pronoun **him** refers to each one of the **foolish** people mentioned earlier in the verse. Qoheleth changes from the plural to the singular here. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [wearies each one of them]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **he does not know {how} to go to a city**
UST they are even unable to find the road to their town

Qoheleth is using the expression **he does not know how to go to a city** as a common expression of the culture to mean "he is so foolish that he cannot even find his way to town." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [he is too foolish to find even the most obvious path]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
foolish	Foolish
know	they are even … to find

Ecclesiastes 10:16

ULT	UST
Woe to you, land, that your king is a youth and your princes eat in the morning.	*It is terrible for the people of a nation when their ruler acts like a boy, and when their leaders use their power to consume large meals at inappropriate times.*

ULT Woe to you
UST It is terrible for the people of a nation

Qoheleth is using a phrase that expresses a strong feeling of grief about the trouble that will come to a land with such leaders. There may be an equivalent word or phrase in your language that you can use in your translation to convey this feeling. Alternate translation: [How terrible it will be for you]
Support Reference: Exclamations

ULT land
UST for the people of a nation

Qoheleth is speaking to a **land** that he knows cannot hear him. He is doing this to communicate to the people listening to him that he feels very strongly about the harm that bad rulers cause to a nation. He is using **land** to mean the people who live in it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as if he were speaking directly to the people about the land. Alternate translation: [people of the land]
Support Reference: Apostrophe

ULT is a youth
UST acts like a boy

The implication is that a king who is **a youth** is not able to rule well. This could mean: (1) the king is young and inexperienced. Alternate translation: [is too young and inexperienced to rule well]; or (2) the king is a person of low birth, such as a servant, since the word translated **youth** can also mean "servant." Alternate translation: [is not able to rule well]. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers.
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT and your princes eat in the morning
UST and when their leaders use their power to consume large meals at inappropriate times

The implication is that **your princes** are feasting **in the morning**, when they should be working to govern the land. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and your princes feast in the morning when they should be governing you]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Woe	It is terrible
land	for the people of a nation
king	when their ruler
is a youth	acts like a boy
princes	and when their leaders
eat	use their power to consume large meals

Ecclesiastes 10:17

ULT	UST
Blessed are you, land, that your king is a son of nobles and that your princes will eat at the time with might and not with drunkenness.	*But it is wonderful for a nation when its ruler comes from a worthy family, and when its leaders host large dinners only at the appropriate moments— eating and drinking in a dignified manner and not in drunken revelry.*

ULT **Blessed are you, land, that your king {is} a son of nobles and {that} your princes will eat at the time with might and not with drunkenness**

UST But it is wonderful for a nation when its ruler comes from a worthy family, and when its leaders host large dinners only at the appropriate moments— eating and drinking in a dignified manner and not in drunken revelry

Verses 16 and 17 mean basically the same thing. For emphasis, Qoheleth is saying it first negatively and then positively. If a speaker of your language would not use repetition like this, in your translation you can convey the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [Blessed are you, land, that your king is a son of nobles and that your princes will eat at the proper time only to gain strength]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **Blessed are you**

UST But it is wonderful for a nation

Qoheleth is using a phrase that expresses a strong feeling of happiness for a land that has good leaders. There may be an equivalent word or phrase in your language that you can use in your translation to convey this feeling. Alternate translation: [How happy you are]

Support Reference: Exclamations

ULT **is a son of nobles**

UST comes from a worthy family

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if a descendant of noble people were their **son**. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is from a noble family]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **at the time**

UST only at the appropriate moments

The implication is that the princes eat and drink only at the proper time for meals, not early in the morning as described in the previous verse. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [at the proper time for meals]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **with might and not with drunkenness**

UST eating and drinking in a dignified manner and not in drunken revelry

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **might** and **drunkenness**, you could express the same ideas in another way. This could mean that the princes eat: (1) to gain strength, rather than to get drunk. Alternate translation: [to become strong and not to get drunk]; or (2) with self-control, rather than in a drunken way. Alternate translation: [with moderation and not over-indulgence]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Blessed	But it is wonderful for a nation
land	But it is wonderful for a nation
king	when its ruler
nobles	a worthy family
princes	and when its leaders
might	eating and drinking in a dignified manner
with drunkenness	in drunken revelry

Ecclesiastes 10:18

ULT	UST
With laziness, the beams of the roof sink, and in idleness of hands, the house will leak.	*It is like people say: "Lazy homeowners will neglect their roofs to the point that they sag and collapse; the idle lifestyle of house owners will cause rainwater to leak into the house."*

ULT **With laziness, the beams of the roof sink, and in idleness of hands, the house will leak**

UST It is like people say: "Lazy homeowners will neglect their roofs to the point that they sag and collapse; the idle lifestyle of house owners will cause rainwater to leak into the house

Here Qoheleth uses or invents a proverb in order to teach that neglecting needed work leads to damage and loss. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [When people are lazy, the roof timbers give way, and when people's hands do nothing, the house lets in rain]

Support Reference: Proverbs

ULT **With laziness**

UST It is like people say: "Lazy homeowners

If your language does not use a noun for the idea of **laziness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [When people are lazy]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **and in idleness of hands**

UST the idle lifestyle of house owners

Qoheleth is using **hands** to represent the people who should be working with them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and when people are idle]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
house	house

Ecclesiastes 10:19

ULT	UST
For laughter, people are making bread, and wine gladdens life, but silver answers everything.	*Eating food can make people so happy that they laugh, and drinking wine can make one's life joyful. However, people who have wealth can respond to all of their problems.*

ULT **bread**
UST Eating food

Qoheleth is using **bread** to represent food in general, especially the food served at a feast. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [a feast]
Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT **but silver**
UST However, people who have wealth

Here, **silver** represents money. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [but money]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **answers everything**
UST can respond to all of their problems

Qoheleth is speaking of **silver** as if it were a living thing that could answer people. He means that money can provide everything that people need. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is useful for obtaining everything]
Support Reference: Personification

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
bread	Eating food
wine	wine
gladdens	joyful
silver	However, people who have wealth

Ecclesiastes 10:20

ULT	UST
Even in your thought, do not belittle a king, and in the room of your bed, do not belittle a rich person, for a bird of the heavens will carry the voice, and a master of wings will declare the word.	*So, you should never dishonor the king. Do not even think about it! Neither should you speak ill of wealthy people, even when you are alone in your bedroom. After all it is possible that a little winged bird will overhear what you are saying and tell everyone what you said.*

ULT **in your thought**
UST Do not … think about it

The pronoun **your** refers to anyone who reads Qoheleth's words. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [in your thought, my reader]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **a bird of the heavens will carry the voice**
UST a little winged bird will overhear what you are saying

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if **a bird of the heavens** could **carry the voice** of a person to others. It means that what you say in private may be reported to the people you speak about in ways you would not expect. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [what you say may be reported as if a bird of the heavens had carried it]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and a master of wings**
UST a little winged bird

Qoheleth is using **a master of wings** as a common expression of the culture to mean "a bird." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and a winged creature]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
king	king
heavens	a little winged bird
carry	will overhear
declare	and tell everyone

Ecclesiastes 11

Ecclesiastes 11 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 11 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter urges readers to act diligently and generously even though they cannot know what the future holds, and then to enjoy life, especially in youth, while remembering that God will judge them.

1. Acting wisely despite an uncertain future (1–6)
    1. Give generously, since no one knows what misfortune may come (1–2)
    2. Do not wait for perfect conditions before working (3–4)
    3. No one knows what God is doing, so keep working (5–6)
2. Enjoy life while remembering the days of darkness (7–8)
3. Counsel to the young man: enjoy your youth, but know that God will judge you (9–10)

The counsel to the young man in verses 9–10 continues into 12:1–8, so translators may want to keep the end of this chapter connected with the beginning of the next.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 11:1–4 and 11:6–8.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Vapor

The Hebrew word rendered “vapor” is this book’s key term for what is fleeting and insubstantial, and it appears again in this chapter in verses 8 and 10. Render it consistently through the book.

God’s judgment

In verse 9, Qoheleth tells the young man to enjoy life but to know that God will judge him for all that he does. The call to enjoy life is therefore not permission to live carelessly.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

What people cannot know

The phrase “you do not know” or “you are not knowing” recurs in verses 2, 5, and 6, and it ties the chapter’s advice together: because people cannot know the future or the work of God, they should act wisely and diligently now. If possible, translate these phrases in a similar way so that readers can see the connection.

Proverbs with uncertain meaning

The sayings in verses 1–2 are brief and figurative, and scholars understand them in different ways, such as being generous to others or spreading out one's trade or investments. Translate them in a way that allows for these meanings if possible. (See: Proverbs)

Ecclesiastes 11:1

ULT	UST
Throw your bread on the face of the waters, for in many days you will find it.	*Be generous with what you have, because eventually others will also be generous to you.*

ULT **Throw your bread on the face of the waters, for in many days you will find it**
UST Be generous with what you have, because eventually others will also be generous to you

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if a person's goods or efforts were **bread** thrown **on the face of the waters**, by which he means that they are given away in some sense. This could refer to: (1) being generous to others, which will bring a reward later, as in the UST, or (2) being willing to risk making an investment in something that should bring a profit at a future time. Alternate translation: [make investments now, because they will bring profit to you later]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
bread	with what you have

Ecclesiastes 11:2

ULT	UST
Give a portion to seven and even to eight, for you do not know what will be a misfortune on the earth.	*Give a share of your goods to seven or eight people, because in this world you never know what bad things might happen to you.*

ULT **to seven and even to eight**
UST to seven or eight people

Qoheleth is using **to seven and even to eight** as a common expression of the culture to mean "to many." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to many people]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **for you do not know what will be a misfortune on the earth**
UST because in this world you never know what bad things might happen to you

The implication is that these seven or eight people will help you when you are in need because you helped them. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [for you do not know what will be a misfortune on the earth, and when it happens, they will help you]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
know	know
a misfortune	bad things
earth	in this world … might happen to you

Ecclesiastes 11:3

ULT	UST
If the clouds are filled with rain, they will pour out on the earth. And whether a tree will fall in the south or in the north, the place where the tree will fall—there it will be.	*It will rain only when the clouds are ready to do so. Similarly, a fallen tree will remain in the place where it happened to topple over—wherever that might be.*

ULT **the clouds are filled with rain**
UST It will rain only … the clouds are ready to do so

The expression **are filled** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [the clouds are full of rain]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **in the south or in the north**
UST Similarly … wherever that might be

Qoheleth is referring to all of the places where a tree might fall by naming two major components, **the south** and **the north**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in one direction or another]

Support Reference: Merism

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
earth	It will rain only

Ecclesiastes 11:4

ULT	UST
One who attends to the wind will not sow, and one who watches the clouds will not harvest.	*If someone watches for changes in the wind, waiting for the perfect moment to plant, they will never plant their crops. Likewise, if someone watches the clouds, waiting for the perfect moment to harvest, they will never harvest their crops.*

ULT **One who attends {to the} wind will not sow, and one who watches {the} clouds will not harvest**

UST If someone watches for changes in the wind, waiting for the perfect moment to plant, they will never plant their crops. Likewise, if someone watches the clouds, waiting for the perfect moment to harvest, they will never harvest their crops

Here Qoheleth uses a proverb in order to teach that people who wait for perfect conditions will never accomplish anything. Translate this proverb in a way that will be recognized as a proverb and be meaningful in your language and culture. Alternate translation: [One who keeps waiting for a perfect wind will never sow, and one who keeps waiting for perfect skies will never harvest]

Support Reference: Proverbs

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
One who attends to	watches
sow	plant
watches	watches
harvest	harvest

Ecclesiastes 11:5

ULT	UST
Just as you are not knowing what is the way of the wind, as the bones come into the womb of the full woman, so thus you do not know the work of the God who does everything.	*Now no one understands where the wind comes from or where it goes, nor does anyone understand how a life forms in a woman's womb. In this way, human beings cannot fully understand what God is doing in our lives. After all, God is in charge of everything that happens.*

ULT **is the way of the wind**
UST where the wind comes from or where it goes

The implication is that **the way of the wind** is something that people cannot understand. This could mean: (1) how the wind moves, where it comes from, and where it goes. Alternate translation: [is the path of the wind, where it comes from and where it goes]; or (2) how the breath of life enters the body of an unborn child, since the word translated **wind** can also mean "spirit" or "breath." Alternate translation: [is the breath of life, where it comes from and how it gives life]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **as the bones**
UST nor does anyone understand how a life

Qoheleth is using **the bones** to represent the whole body of the unborn baby. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [as the parts of the baby's body]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT **the full woman**
UST a woman's

Qoheleth is using **the full woman** as a common expression of the culture to mean "the pregnant woman." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the woman who is pregnant]

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
knowing	no one understands
wind	wind
womb	womb
work	what … is doing in our lives
God	God

Ecclesiastes 11:6

ULT	UST
In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not let your hand rest, for you are not knowing whether this one will prosper— this one or this one— or whether two of them as one will be good.	*Plant your crops while it is still morning, and do not stop planting until you are done— even through the evening, because you do not know which crops will grow better. One batch of crops might grow better than the other, or perhaps all of your crops will grow well.*

ULT **In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening**
UST Plant your crops while it is still morning, and … until you are done— even through the evening

Qoheleth is referring to all of the day by naming two major components, **In the morning** and **in the evening**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [From morning until evening sow your seed, and]
Support Reference: Merism

ULT **do not let your hand rest**
UST do not stop planting

Here, **hand** represents the person working with their hands. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [do not stop working]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **this one or this one**
UST One batch of crops might grow better than the other

The first **this one** refers to the seed sown in the morning, while the second **this one** refers to the seed sown in the evening. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the morning seed or the evening seed]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
sow	Plant
seed	your crops
knowing	know
prosper	will grow better
good	will grow well

Ecclesiastes 11:7

ULT	UST
And light is sweet, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun.	*It is a wonderful thing to be alive, just like the warm light of the sun is good for people.*

ULT **And light {is} sweet**
UST It is a wonderful thing to be alive

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if **light**, which represents being alive, were something that tastes **sweet**. It means that being alive is pleasant. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And being alive is pleasant]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and {it is} good for the eyes to see the sun**
UST just like the warm light of the sun is good for people

Qoheleth is using **it is good for the eyes to see the sun** as a common expression of the culture to mean "it is good to be alive." If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and it is good to be living]

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
good	good

Ecclesiastes 11:8

ULT	UST
For if the man will live many years, in all of them let him rejoice, but let him remember the days of darkness that they will be many. Everything that is coming is vapor.	*So should anyone live for many years, that person should enjoy each one of them. However he should not allow himself to forget either the difficult moments in the past or that he will grow old and die. He will surely have many moments as difficult as the dark of night. However they will be as temporary as the mist.*

ULT **the man**
UST anyone

Qoheleth is not referring to a specific **man**. He means people in general. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an expression that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [a person]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **let him rejoice, but let him remember**
UST that person should enjoy … However he should not allow himself to forget

Qoheleth is saying what he wants any person who lives many years to do. Alternate translation: [I desire that he rejoice, but he should remember]
Support Reference: Third-Person Imperatives

ULT **the days of darkness**
UST either the difficult moments in the past or that he will grow old and die … as difficult as the dark of night

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if a time of death or trouble were **darkness**. This could mean: (1) the time after a person dies, when he will no longer see the light of the sun. Alternate translation: [the days when he will be dead]; or (2) times of trouble and sorrow during a person's life. Alternate translation: [the days of trouble in his life]. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly.
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **Everything that is coming {is} vapor**
UST However they will be as temporary as the mist

See the Introduction to Ecclesiastes for more information on this term. See how you translated this in 1:2 Alternate translation: [Everything that is coming is temporary and quickly passes away]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
years	years
rejoice	that person should enjoy
days	either the difficult moments in the past or that he will grow old and die … as difficult as the dark of night

Ecclesiastes 11:9

ULT	UST
Rejoice young man in your youth and let your heart make you glad in the days of your young adulthood. And walk in the ways of your heart and in the sight of your eyes, but know that, on account of all these things, the God will bring you into judgment.	*So, you, young man—let yourself be happy while you are young. Allow yourself to enjoy being alive before you grow old. Pursue the things that you love to do but never forget that our God will judge you one day. He will discern whether you have enjoyed well your time or squandered it.*

ULT **young man**
UST So, you, young man

Here the masculine term **young man** has a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use language in your translation that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: [young person]
Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **and let your heart make you glad**
UST Allow yourself to enjoy being alive

Qoheleth is saying what he wants the young man's **heart** to do. Alternate translation: [and I want your heart to make you glad]
Support Reference: Third-Person Imperatives

ULT **And walk in the ways of your heart and in the sight of your eyes**
UST Pursue the things that you love to do

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if the way a person lives were walking on a path. He speaks of doing what a person desires as walking **in the ways of your heart** and of doing what a person sees and likes as walking **in the sight of your eyes**. It means that the young man should live by doing what he wants and what he sees that he likes. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And live by doing what you desire and what you see that you like]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **will bring you into judgment**
UST will judge you one day

If your language does not use a noun for the idea of **judgment**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [will bring you before him and judge you]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Rejoice	let yourself be happy
glad	Allow … to enjoy being alive
days	before you grow old
know	but never forget
God	God
judgment	judge

Ecclesiastes 11:10

ULT	UST
And remove anger from your heart and take misfortune away from your flesh, for youth and dark hair are vapor.	*Moreover, do not allow yourself to feel angry about life, and do not pay attention to the pains in your body. Remember: Being a young man who lacks gray hair is as fleeting as the mist!*

ULT **And remove anger from your heart and take misfortune away from your flesh**
UST Moreover, do not allow yourself to feel angry about life, and do not pay attention to the pains in your body

Here Qoheleth is speaking as if **anger** and **misfortune** were objects that a person could take away from his **heart** and his **flesh**. It means that the young man should not let himself stay angry or let troubles affect him. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And do not stay angry, and do not let troubles affect your body]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and dark hair**
UST who lacks gray hair

Here, **dark hair** represents "the prime of life." If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and the prime of life]

Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
misfortune	the pains

Ecclesiastes 12

Ecclesiastes 12 Introduction

Ecclesiastes 12 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter completes Qoheleth's counsel to the young person from 11:9–10, repeats the book's opening refrain, and then closes the book with words about Qoheleth and a final command to fear God.

1. Remember your Creator before old age and death come (1–7)
    1. Before the days of misfortune come (1–2)
    2. Pictures of the weakness of old age (3–5)
    3. Pictures of death (6–7)
2. The final refrain: everything is vapor (8)
3. Words about Qoheleth and the sayings of the wise (9–12)
    1. Qoheleth's work as a teacher (9–10)
    2. The value and limits of wise sayings (11–12)
4. The conclusion: fear God and keep his commandments (13–14)

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 12:1–7 and 12:13–14.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Vapor

The refrain in verse 8 repeats the words of 1:2, so that the book's key term for what is fleeting and insubstantial frames everything Qoheleth has said. Render it the same way you did in chapter 1.

Death as a return

In verse 7, the body that God formed from dust returns to the earth, and the spirit that God gave returns to him. Verse 5 similarly calls the grave a person's "eternal home."

Fearing God and God's judgment

The book ends by telling people to fear God and keep his commandments, because God will bring every deed into judgment. This is reverent submission to God, not terror.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Pictures of old age

Verses 2–6 describe old age and death through a long series of images, such as a house whose guards tremble, grinders that stop working, and a lamp and a well that break. Many interpreters understand these as pictures of a weakening body, while others take them as a literal household and town in decline. If possible, keep the images so that readers can see this extended picture.

Qoheleth spoken about in the third person

From verse 8 to the end of the book, someone speaks about Qoheleth instead of Qoheleth speaking for himself. Make sure that it is clear in your translation that a different speaker is now describing Qoheleth and his teaching.

Ecclesiastes 12:1

ULT	UST
So, remember your Creator in the days of your young adulthood, when the days of misfortune have not come and the years arrive of which you will say, "There is not for me pleasure in them,"	*Therefore, while you are young, live without forgetting God who gave you your life. Do this before old age makes life difficult and painful. At that time, you might say, "I no longer enjoy being alive."*

ULT **So, remember your Creator**
UST Therefore … live without forgetting God who gave you your life

Qoheleth is using **remember** as a common expression of the culture to mean "keep in mind and honor." He is not talking about recalling something that a person has forgotten. If this phrase does not have that meaning for your readers, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [So, honor your Creator and keep him in mind]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **when the days of misfortune have not come and the years arrive**
UST Do this before old age makes life difficult and painful. At that time

Qoheleth is using the phrase **when the days of misfortune have not come** to mean "before the days of misfortune come." The negation also applies to **the years arrive**, so the meaning is "before the years arrive." Your language may have a connecting word or phrase that you can use to show that the young person should remember his Creator before this time comes. Alternate translation: [before the days of misfortune come and before the years arrive]
Support Reference: Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

ULT **the days of misfortune**
UST old age makes life difficult and painful

The implication is that **the days of misfortune** are the time of old age, when a person experiences weakness, pain, and other troubles. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the days of old age when you will have weakness and pain]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **you will say**
UST you might say

The term **you will say** introduces a direct quotation. In your translation, use a natural way of introducing direct quotations in your language. It may not be necessary to represent this term explicitly.
Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Creator	God who gave you your life
days	while you are young
misfortune	old age makes life difficult and painful
years	At that time

Ecclesiastes 12:2

ULT	UST
when the sun and the light and the moon and the stars have not darkened and the clouds return after the rain,	*Do this before the light from the sun, moon, and stars fades out and the clouds disappear, having given all their rain.*

ULT **the sun and the light and the moon and the stars have not darkened**
UST the light from the sun, moon, and stars fades out

Qoheleth is speaking as if what happens to a person in old age were the sun, the moon, and the stars becoming **darkened**. This could mean: (1) that the joy and strength of a person's life fades in old age, just as the lights in the sky grow dark. Alternate translation: [your joy and strength have not faded like the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars growing dark]; or (2) that an old person's eyesight grows dim, so that even the lights in the sky seem dark. Alternate translation: [your eyes have not grown so dim that the sun, the moon, and the stars seem dark to you]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and the clouds return after the rain**
UST and the clouds disappear, having given all their rain

Qoheleth is speaking as if the troubles of old age were **the clouds** that **return after the rain**. He means that in old age one trouble follows another without relief, just as storm clouds come back again even after it has already rained. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and one trouble keeps coming after another without relief]

Support Reference: Metaphor

Ecclesiastes 12:3

ULT	UST
in the day when the guards of the house will tremble and the men of valor will be bent over and the women grinders cease because they are few and those who look at the window will grow dark	*At that time, your arms that stand guard at your house will shake. The men who had strength will weaken. The grinders who mill grain will cease their task because too few of them remain. People looking out from their windows will see darkness.*

ULT **when the guards of the house will tremble**
UST your arms that stand guard at your house will shake

This could mean: (1) that Qoheleth is speaking of a person's body as if it were a **house** and of the person's arms, which protect the body, as if they were **guards of the house**. In old age the arms become weak and tremble. Alternate translation: [when your arms, which protect your body, will tremble]; or (2) that Qoheleth is describing literal household guards who shake with weakness or fear in a time of sadness and decline. Alternate translation: [when the men who guard the house will shake]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and the men of valor will be bent over**
UST The men who had strength will weaken

This could mean: (1) that Qoheleth is speaking of a person's legs or back as if they were **men of valor**, that is strong men. In old age the legs and back become weak and bent. Alternate translation: [and your legs and back, which were once strong, will become weak and bent]; or (2) that Qoheleth is describing literal strong men who cower in a time of sadness and decline. Alternate translation: [and the strong warriors will cower]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and the women grinders cease because they are few**
UST The grinders who mill grain will cease their task because too few of them remain

This could mean: (1) that Qoheleth is speaking of a person's teeth as if they were **women grinders** who grind grain. In old age only a few teeth are left, so a person can no longer chew well. Alternate translation: [and your teeth stop chewing because only a few of them are left]; or (2) that Qoheleth is describing literal women who grind grain and who stop working because only a few of them remain. Alternate translation: [and the women who grind grain stop working because there are only a few of them]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and those who look at the window will grow dark**
UST People looking out from their windows will see darkness

This could mean: (1) that Qoheleth is speaking of a person's eyes as if they were people **who look at the window**. In old age the eyes **grow dark**, that is they no longer see well. Alternate translation: [and your eyes, which look out at the world, will grow dim]; or (2) that Qoheleth is describing literal people looking out of windows who become gloomy in a time of sadness and decline. Alternate translation: [and the people who look out from the windows will become gloomy]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
day	At that time
guards	guard
house	house
tremble	shake
valor	who had strength

Ecclesiastes 12:4

ULT	UST
and the doors will be shut in the street, when the sound of the grinding is low and a person rises at the sound of the bird and all the daughters of song are stooped;	*Everybody will close the doors of their houses. The sound of people grinding grain will be too faint to hear. People will awaken to the crowing of birds. People will bow down as they sing mournful songs.*

ULT **and {the} doors will be shut in the street**
UST Everybody will close the doors of their houses

This could mean: (1) that Qoheleth is speaking of a person's ears or lips as if they were **doors** that are shut. In old age a person hears less of what happens **in the street**, or speaks less. Alternate translation: [and your ears will be closed to the sounds in the street]; or (2) that Qoheleth is describing literal doors that open onto the street and that people shut in a time of sadness and decline. Alternate translation: [and people will shut the doors that open onto the street]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **when the sound of the grinding {is} low**
UST The sound of people grinding grain will be too faint to hear

This could mean: (1) that Qoheleth is speaking of an old person's hearing becoming faint, so that even **the sound of the grinding is low**. Alternate translation: [when you can barely hear the sound of people grinding grain]; or (2) that Qoheleth is describing the literal sound of a mill growing quiet because people are no longer grinding grain. Alternate translation: [when the sound of people grinding grain becomes quiet]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and a person rises at the sound of the bird**
UST People will awaken to the crowing of birds

This could mean: (1) that the implication is that old people sleep lightly and wake up early, even at a small sound such as a bird singing. Alternate translation: [and a person wakes up early at even the small sound of a bird]; or (2) that the implication is that an old person's voice becomes thin and high, so that it sounds like the voice of a bird. Alternate translation: [and a person's voice becomes thin like the sound of a bird]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **and all the daughters of song are stooped**
UST People will bow down as they sing mournful songs

Here, **daughters of song** refers either to songs or to singers. This could mean: (1) that Qoheleth is speaking of songs as if they were women who are **stooped**, that is bowed down low. In old age a person's singing voice becomes weak, or the person can no longer hear songs well. Alternate translation: [and your voice will become too weak to sing any song]; or (2) that Qoheleth is describing singers who bow down in grief in a time of sadness and decline. Alternate translation: [and all the women who sing will bow down in grief]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **and all the daughters of song are stooped**
> UST People will bow down as they sing mournful songs

The expression **are stooped** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and all the daughters of song bow down low]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the doors	the doors of their houses

Ecclesiastes 12:5

ULT	UST
also, they are afraid of a high thing and terrors are in the way and the almond tree blossoms and the locust moves along and the caper-fruit fails— for humanity is going to his eternal home and the mourners go around in the street—	*People will even fear high places. It will be dangerous to walk the roads. The flowers of almond trees will become white as they ripen. Grasshoppers will drag themselves on the ground. The caperberry will fail to heal. This is because people are dying. Their relatives bury their bodies, and people circle the streets as they grieve.*

ULT **they are afraid of a high {thing} and terrors {are} in the way**

UST People will … fear high places. It will be dangerous to walk the roads

The implication is that old people are afraid of climbing up to **a high thing** and are afraid of the dangers they might meet when they walk outside, so that **terrors are in the way**. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [old people are afraid of climbing up to a high place, and they fear dangers when they walk outside]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **and the almond tree blossoms**

UST The flowers of almond trees will become white as they ripen

Qoheleth is speaking as if the white hair of an old person were **the almond tree** that **blossoms**. He means that, as an almond tree becomes covered with white blossoms, an old person's hair turns white. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and their hair turns white]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and the locust moves along**

UST Grasshoppers will drag themselves on the ground

This could mean: (1) that Qoheleth is speaking of an old person as if he were **the locust** that drags itself along slowly. In old age a person walks stiffly and with difficulty. Alternate translation: [and the old person drags himself along like a locust that can barely move], or (2) that even something as light as a locust becomes a burden to an old person. Alternate translation: [and even a locust becomes a heavy burden]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and the caper-fruit fails**

UST The caperberry will fail to heal

Qoheleth is speaking as if a person's desire were **the caper-fruit**, which people ate in order to increase their appetite. He means that in old age a person no longer desires food or other pleasures, just as the caper-fruit can fail to make a person hungry. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and a person no longer desires food or other pleasures]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **is going to his eternal home**
> UST people are dying. Their relatives bury their bodies

Qoheleth is referring to dying in a polite way by using the phrase **is going to his eternal home**. The **eternal home** is the grave, where a person's body stays forever. Depending on what is helpful for your readers, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [is going to die]

Support Reference: Euphemism

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
afraid	fear
terrors	It will be dangerous
are in the way	to walk the roads
locust	Grasshoppers
eternal	people are dying. Their relatives bury their bodies
home	people are dying. Their relatives bury their bodies
mourners	and people … as they grieve

Ecclesiastes 12:6

ULT	UST
before the cord of silver is removed and the bowl of gold is broken and the pitcher is shattered at the fountain and the wheel is crushed at the cistern	*Remember God before your life ends— like a silver chain that snaps or a golden bowl that falls and breaks; like a jug that shatters against a well, or the wheel of a reservoir that cracks.*

ULT **the cord of silver is removed and the bowl of gold is broken**
UST a silver chain that snaps or a golden bowl that falls and breaks

Qoheleth is speaking as if a person's life were a lamp, a **bowl of gold** that hangs on a **cord of silver**. He means that just as the lamp falls and breaks when the cord is removed, a person's life ends when he dies. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [a person dies, just as a lamp falls and breaks when its cord is removed]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **is removed**
UST that snaps

The phrase **is removed** is a translation of the standard written Hebrew text as we have it today. There is however a correction, "is snapped," in the margin of the text that Hebrew scribes have recommended. This correction fits well with the image of a cord that breaks and lets a lamp fall. You may want to follow this correction in your translation, or you may want to follow the major translation in your area. Alternate translation: [is snapped]

Support Reference: Alternative Readings

ULT **and the pitcher is shattered at the fountain and the wheel is crushed at the cistern**
UST like a jug that shatters against a well, or the wheel of a reservoir that cracks

Qoheleth is speaking as if a person's life were **the pitcher** that people use to draw water **at the fountain** and **the wheel** that people use to lift water **at the cistern**. He means that just as these things can no longer bring up water once they are broken, a person's life ends when he dies. If this meaning would not be clear in your language, you could use a comparable expression or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and a person's life comes to an end the way a broken pitcher and a crushed wheel can no longer draw up water]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and the pitcher is shattered at the fountain and the wheel is crushed at the cistern**
UST like a jug that shatters against a well, or the wheel of a reservoir that cracks

The expressions **is shattered** and **is crushed** are passive verbal forms. If it would be unnatural to use those forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and the pitcher shatters at the fountain, and the wheel breaks apart at the cistern]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
silver	silver
gold	golden
fountain	against a well
cistern	of a reservoir

Ecclesiastes 12:7

ULT	UST
and the dust returns to the earth as that it was and the spirit returns to God who gave it.	*At that time, our bodies will decay and become dirt again, and our spirits will return to God who gave them.*

ULT **and the dust returns to the earth as that it was**
UST At that time, our bodies will decay and become dirt again

Here, **the dust** represents the body which God formed from dust. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and the body returns to the earth as the dust that it was]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
earth	At that time, our bodies will decay and become dirt
spirit	spirits
returns	will return
God	God

Ecclesiastes 12:8

ULT	UST
“Vapor of vapors!” says the Qoheleth. “Everything is vapor!”	*So, Qoheleth said: “All of life is as temporary and insubstantial as the mist of my breath! Everything is emptiness!”*

ULT **the Qoheleth**
UST Qoheleth

See how you translated this name in 1:1.
Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **Vapor of vapors**
UST All of life is as temporary and insubstantial as the mist of my breath

See how you translated the similar expression in 1:2.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **Everything {is} vapor**
UST Everything is emptiness

See how you translated the similar expression in 1:2.
Support Reference: Hyperbole

Ecclesiastes 12:9

ULT	UST
More than that Qoheleth was wise, again he taught the people knowledge, and he weighed and he searched. He ordered many proverbs.	*So, not only did people recognize that Qoheleth was a wise man, but he also taught his fellow Israelites many truths. He studied and considered many things during his life and wrote down many of the proverbs that he had collected.*

ULT **More {than} that Qoheleth was wise, again he taught**
UST So, not only did people recognize that Qoheleth was a wise man, but he also taught

The phrase **More than that** means "in addition to the fact that." The author is saying that besides the fact that **Qoheleth was wise**, he also **taught the people knowledge**. If the connection between this statement and the previous one is not clear, you may want to use a different connecting word to show how this statement relates to what comes before it. Alternate translation: [In addition to being wise, Qoheleth also taught]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

ULT **and he weighed and he searched. He ordered many proverbs**
UST He studied and considered many things during his life and wrote down many of the proverbs that he had collected

The author is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You can supply these words from the context if that would be clearer in your language. Here, **weighed** means "carefully evaluated." Alternate translation: [and he carefully evaluated proverbs, and he searched them out and set them in order]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wise	did people recognize that … was a wise man
knowledge	many truths
searched	and considered many things during his life
proverbs	proverbs

Ecclesiastes 12:10

ULT	UST
Qoheleth sought to find words of pleasure, and words of truth were written rightly.	*Qoheleth labored so that he would only use suitable words which were also pleasant. The words that he wrote are reliable and true.*

ULT **words of pleasure**
UST suitable words which were also pleasant

The author is using the possessive form to describe **words** that are characterized by **pleasure**, that is, words that are pleasing or fitting. If a speaker of your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could express this idea in another way. Alternate translation: [pleasing words]
Support Reference: Possession

ULT **and words of truth were written**
UST The words that he wrote are reliable and true

The expression **were written** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The context indicates that Qoheleth was the one who wrote these words. Alternate translation: [and he wrote words of truth]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **words of truth**
UST The words that he wrote are reliable and true

If your language does not use a noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [words that are true]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
sought	labored
truth	The words that he wrote are reliable and true

Ecclesiastes 12:11

ULT	UST
The words of wise people are like goads, and like nails implanted are masters of collections. They are given by one Shepherd.	*Wise people teach us in a way that provokes a change in one's behavior, just like the sharp tools that people use to spur large animals to move. The written collections of the things that wise people have taught are as enduring as nails that someone drives into wood. God is the one who gives these wise insights.*

ULT **The words of wise {people are} like goads**
UST Wise people teach us in a way that provokes a change in one's behavior, just like the sharp tools that people use to spur large animals to move

The point of this comparison is that just as **goads** are pointed sticks that prod cattle to move in the right direction, so the **words of wise people** prod people to think and live in the right way. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [The words of wise people prod people to think and live in the right way, as goads prod cattle to move in the right direction]
Support Reference: Simile

ULT **and like nails implanted**
UST are as enduring as nails that someone drives into wood

The point of this comparison is that just as **nails** that someone has driven firmly into wood stay fixed in place, so the collected sayings of wise people are firm and lasting. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [and as firm and lasting as nails driven deeply into wood]
Support Reference: Simile

ULT **and like nails implanted**
UST are as enduring as nails that someone drives into wood

The expression **implanted** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and like nails that someone has driven in firmly]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **are masters of collections**
UST The written collections of the things that wise people have taught

The author is using **masters of collections** as a common expression of the culture. This could mean: (1) that the expression refers to the collected sayings of wise people. Alternate translation: [are the collected sayings of wise people]; or (2) that the expression refers to the people who collect wise sayings. Alternate translation: [are those who collect wise sayings]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **They are given by one Shepherd**
UST God is the one who gives these wise insights

The expression **are given** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [One Shepherd gives them]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **one Shepherd**
UST God

The author is speaking as if the one who gives wise sayings were a **Shepherd** who guides his sheep. This could mean: (1) that **one Shepherd** refers to God, who is the source of all wisdom and who guides his people as a shepherd guides sheep. Alternate translation: [God, who guides his people like a shepherd]; or (2) that the expression refers to a wise teacher or king who guides people with wise sayings. Alternate translation: [one wise teacher, who guides people like a shepherd]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
wise people	Wise people
masters	The written collections of the things that wise people have taught
Shepherd	God

Ecclesiastes 12:12

ULT	UST
But more than them my son, be warned—of the making of many scrolls there is no end, and much study is weariness of flesh.	*However, my child, understand that you will discover nothing profitable by listening to the teachings of so-called wise people. People will never stop writing books, and attempting to study them all will exhaust you.*

ULT **than them**
UST you will discover nothing profitable by listening to the teachings of so-called wise people

The pronoun **them** refers to the words of wise people mentioned in the previous verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [than the words of wise people]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **my son**
UST my child

Here the masculine term **son** has a generic sense that includes both men and women. The author is using it to address anyone who learns from him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use language in your translation that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: [my student]
Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **be warned**
UST understand that

The expression **be warned** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I warn you]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **is weariness of flesh**
UST will exhaust you

If your language does not use a noun for the idea of **weariness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [makes the body very tired]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
warned	understand that
scrolls	books

Ecclesiastes 12:13

ULT	UST
The end of the matter, everything has been heard: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of humanity.	*This is the last of Qoheleth's lectures, now that you've heard everything: Fearfully submit yourself to God, so that you live your life the way he asks. Do this because this is the duty of every human!*

ULT **this is the whole of humanity**
UST this is the duty of every human

The author is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. This could mean: (1) that the author means that fearing God and keeping his commandments is the whole duty of every person. Alternate translation: [this is the whole duty of every person]; or (2) that the author means that this is what every person was created for. Alternate translation: [this is what every person was made for]; or (3) that the author means that this applies to every person. Alternate translation: [this applies to every person]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Fear	Fearfully submit yourself
God	God

Ecclesiastes 12:14

ULT	UST
For every deed the God will bring into judgment concerning everything hidden, whether good or whether evil.	*This is because God will judge everything that humans have done, even things that people have done secretly— good decisions and evil decisions alike.*

ULT **will bring into judgment**
UST will judge

See how you translated this phrase in 11:9.
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **everything hidden**
UST even things that people have done secretly

The expression **hidden** is a passive verbal form. If it would be unnatural to use that form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The context indicates that people have hidden these things. Alternate translation: [everything that people have hidden]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **whether good or whether evil**
UST good decisions and evil decisions alike

The author is referring to all of the things that people do by naming two major components, **good** and **evil**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [no matter what kind of deed it is]
Support Reference: Merism

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
God	God
judgment	judge
good	good
evil	evil

Appendix: Translation Academy

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:12

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**.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:3 Ecclesiastes 1:11 Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 1:17 Ecclesiastes 1:18 Ecclesiastes 2:11 Ecclesiastes 2:16 Ecclesiastes 2:19 Ecclesiastes 2:21 Ecclesiastes 2:23 Ecclesiastes 3:8 Ecclesiastes 3:8 Ecclesiastes 3:9 Ecclesiastes 3:10 Ecclesiastes 3:11 Ecclesiastes 3:11 Ecclesiastes 3:13 Ecclesiastes 3:13 Ecclesiastes 3:16 Ecclesiastes 3:19 Ecclesiastes 3:19 Ecclesiastes 4:1 Ecclesiastes 4:1 Ecclesiastes 4:4 Ecclesiastes 4:6 Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 4:9 Ecclesiastes 4:9 Ecclesiastes 5:8 Ecclesiastes 5:14 Ecclesiastes 5:16 Ecclesiastes 5:17 Ecclesiastes 5:20 Ecclesiastes 6:2 Ecclesiastes 6:5 Ecclesiastes 6:7 Ecclesiastes 7:3 Ecclesiastes 7:11 Ecclesiastes 7:15 Ecclesiastes 7:23 Ecclesiastes 7:29 Ecclesiastes 8:1 Ecclesiastes 8:1 Ecclesiastes 8:6 Ecclesiastes 8:15 Ecclesiastes 9:1 Ecclesiastes 9:3 Ecclesiastes 9:4 Ecclesiastes 9:5 Ecclesiastes 9:6 Ecclesiastes 9:7 Ecclesiastes 9:9 Ecclesiastes 9:10 Ecclesiastes 9:15 Ecclesiastes 9:16 Ecclesiastes 9:17 Ecclesiastes 10:4 Ecclesiastes 10:10 Ecclesiastes 10:12 Ecclesiastes 10:13 Ecclesiastes 10:17 Ecclesiastes 10:18 Ecclesiastes 11:9 Ecclesiastes 12:10 Ecclesiastes 12:12 Ecclesiastes 12:14

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:8 Ecclesiastes 1:9 Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 2:16 Ecclesiastes 2:17 Ecclesiastes 3:2 Ecclesiastes 3:15 Ecclesiastes 4:1 Ecclesiastes 4:3 Ecclesiastes 4:12 Ecclesiastes 4:13 Ecclesiastes 4:14 Ecclesiastes 4:14 Ecclesiastes 5:9 Ecclesiastes 5:9 Ecclesiastes 5:13 Ecclesiastes 6:3 Ecclesiastes 6:4 Ecclesiastes 6:7 Ecclesiastes 6:10 Ecclesiastes 6:10 Ecclesiastes 7:1 Ecclesiastes 7:16 Ecclesiastes 7:26 Ecclesiastes 8:9 Ecclesiastes 8:10 Ecclesiastes 8:11 Ecclesiastes 8:14 Ecclesiastes 8:16 Ecclesiastes 9:3 Ecclesiastes 9:4 Ecclesiastes 9:12 Ecclesiastes 9:12 Ecclesiastes 9:16 Ecclesiastes 9:16 Ecclesiastes 9:17 Ecclesiastes 10:6 Ecclesiastes 10:9 Ecclesiastes 10:9 Ecclesiastes 11:3 Ecclesiastes 12:4 Ecclesiastes 12:6 Ecclesiastes 12:10 Ecclesiastes 12:11 Ecclesiastes 12:11 Ecclesiastes 12:12 Ecclesiastes 12:14

Apostrophe

Description

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

Examples from the Bible

> Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling these mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34a ULT)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

> He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: “**Altar**, **altar**! This is what Yahweh says, ‘See, … on you they will burn human bones.’” (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider

using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells **them** his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him. See the example below.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar**, **altar**! This is what Yahweh says, 'See, … on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)
>
> > He said this about the altar: "This is what Yahweh says **about this altar.** 'See, … they will burn people's bones on **it**.'"
>
> **Mountains of Gilboa**, let there not be dew or rain on **you.** (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)
>
> > **As for these mountains of Gilboa**, let there not be dew or rain on **them**.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:2 Ecclesiastes 10:16

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!"

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 1:16
Ecclesiastes 2:26 Ecclesiastes 4:4
Ecclesiastes 7:25 Ecclesiastes 7:25

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:2 Ecclesiastes 3:2 Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 5:3 Ecclesiastes 5:5 Ecclesiastes 5:7 Ecclesiastes 5:10 Ecclesiastes 6:5 Ecclesiastes 7:1 Ecclesiastes 7:10 Ecclesiastes 7:15 Ecclesiastes 7:26 Ecclesiastes 7:27 Ecclesiastes 7:28 Ecclesiastes 9:2 Ecclesiastes 9:3 Ecclesiastes 9:17 Ecclesiastes 10:14 Ecclesiastes 12:9 Ecclesiastes 12:13

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

> … they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons "were dead." It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

> … where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

> But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?" (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

> … where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:
>
> > "… where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**"
> >
> > "… where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**"

But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?" (Luke 1:34 ULT)

> But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man**?"

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

> They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)
>
> > "They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa."

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:20 Ecclesiastes 5:15 Ecclesiastes 6:4 Ecclesiastes 6:6 Ecclesiastes 7:2 Ecclesiastes 9:10 Ecclesiastes 12:5

Exclamations

Description

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

> Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)

> When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, “This has never been seen before in Israel!” (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have “Oh” and “Ah.” The word “oh” here shows the speaker’s amazement.

> **Oh**, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word “Alas” below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)

Some exclamations start with a question word such as “how” or “why,” even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God’s judgments are.

> **How** unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”
(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.
(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)
>
> > "You **are** such a worthless person!"
>
> Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)
>
> > "Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!"

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word "wow" shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression "Oh no" shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

> They were extremely astonished, saying, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7:37 ULT)
>
> > "They were extremely astonished, saying, '**Wow**! He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'"
>
> Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)
>
> > "**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

> "**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> > "Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me**? For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"
> > "**Help**, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

> How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)
>
> > "His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!"

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> > Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. **He was terrified** and said, "**Alas**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:2 Ecclesiastes 2:15
Ecclesiastes 2:16 Ecclesiastes 4:10
Ecclesiastes 10:16 Ecclesiastes 10:17

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Assumed knowledge is whatever a speaker assumes his audience knows before he speaks and gives them some kind of information. The speaker does not give the audience this information because he believes that they already know it.

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:2 Ecclesiastes 5:4 Ecclesiastes 5:6 Ecclesiastes 5:8 Ecclesiastes 5:9
Ecclesiastes 5:14 Ecclesiastes 5:19
Ecclesiastes 5:20 Ecclesiastes 6:3
Ecclesiastes 6:10 Ecclesiastes 7:1
Ecclesiastes 7:5 Ecclesiastes 7:11
Ecclesiastes 7:16 Ecclesiastes 7:21
Ecclesiastes 7:26 Ecclesiastes 8:10
Ecclesiastes 8:10 Ecclesiastes 8:14
Ecclesiastes 9:2 Ecclesiastes 9:2 Ecclesiastes 9:4 Ecclesiastes 9:7 Ecclesiastes 9:11
Ecclesiastes 9:12 Ecclesiastes 9:15
Ecclesiastes 10:7 Ecclesiastes 10:8
Ecclesiastes 10:11 Ecclesiastes 10:16
Ecclesiastes 10:16 Ecclesiastes 10:17
Ecclesiastes 11:2 Ecclesiastes 11:5
Ecclesiastes 12:1 Ecclesiastes 12:4
Ecclesiastes 12:5

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, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like “man,” “brother,” and “he” can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

(1) Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.
(2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
(3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

> The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)
>
> > “The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies.”
> > “Wise **people** die just like fools die.”

(2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

> For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.
>
> > "For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia."

(3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

> "If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, "he," "himself," and "his" to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, "they," "themselves," and "their" in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

> > "If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me."

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 2:24
Ecclesiastes 5:19 Ecclesiastes 9:14
Ecclesiastes 11:9 Ecclesiastes 12:12

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."

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:8 Ecclesiastes 2:12 Ecclesiastes 5:3 Ecclesiastes 5:10 Ecclesiastes 5:12 Ecclesiastes 6:2 Ecclesiastes 7:5 Ecclesiastes 8:6 Ecclesiastes 9:12 Ecclesiastes 9:15 Ecclesiastes 10:2 Ecclesiastes 10:14 Ecclesiastes 11:8

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 mouth and wisdom** … (Luke 21:15a ULT)
>
> > For I will give you **wise words** …
>
> Walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)
>
> > You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own glorious kingdom**.

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

> For I will give you **a mouth and wisdom** … (Luke 21:15a ULT)
>
> > for I will give you **words of wisdom**.
>
> You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you into **his own kingdom and glory**. (1 Thessalonians 2:12b ULT)
>
> > You should walk in a manner that is worthy of God, who calls you to **his own kingdom of glory**.

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

> If you are willing and obedient … (Isaiah 1:19a ULT)
>
> > If you are **willingly obedient** …

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

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

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

> > if you **obey willingly** …

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

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

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

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:8 Ecclesiastes 9:11

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:2 Ecclesiastes 1:8 Ecclesiastes 4:1 Ecclesiastes 4:16 Ecclesiastes 6:3 Ecclesiastes 6:6 Ecclesiastes 7:19 Ecclesiastes 7:28 Ecclesiastes 8:12 Ecclesiastes 12:8

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:6

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**

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:2 Ecclesiastes 1:3 Ecclesiastes 1:9 Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 1:16 Ecclesiastes 1:17 Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 2:7 Ecclesiastes 2:14 Ecclesiastes 2:24 Ecclesiastes 3:1 Ecclesiastes 3:10 Ecclesiastes 3:15 Ecclesiastes 3:16 Ecclesiastes 3:17 Ecclesiastes 3:18 Ecclesiastes 3:18 Ecclesiastes 3:19 Ecclesiastes 3:21 Ecclesiastes 4:1 Ecclesiastes 4:5 Ecclesiastes 4:14 Ecclesiastes 5:1 Ecclesiastes 5:6 Ecclesiastes 5:11 Ecclesiastes 5:13 Ecclesiastes 6:1 Ecclesiastes 6:5 Ecclesiastes 6:6 Ecclesiastes 6:8 Ecclesiastes 6:9 Ecclesiastes 6:9 Ecclesiastes 6:12 Ecclesiastes 7:2 Ecclesiastes 7:3 Ecclesiastes 7:8 Ecclesiastes 7:8 Ecclesiastes 7:9 Ecclesiastes 7:11 Ecclesiastes 7:14 Ecclesiastes 7:14 Ecclesiastes 7:17 Ecclesiastes 7:18 Ecclesiastes 7:18 Ecclesiastes 7:21 Ecclesiastes 7:22 Ecclesiastes 7:23 Ecclesiastes 8:1 Ecclesiastes 8:3 Ecclesiastes 8:5 Ecclesiastes 8:9 Ecclesiastes 8:9 Ecclesiastes 8:11 Ecclesiastes 8:12 Ecclesiastes 8:16 Ecclesiastes 8:17 Ecclesiastes 9:1 Ecclesiastes 9:3 Ecclesiastes 9:3 Ecclesiastes 9:4 Ecclesiastes 9:7 Ecclesiastes 9:9 Ecclesiastes 9:10 Ecclesiastes 9:12 Ecclesiastes 9:13 Ecclesiastes 10:3 Ecclesiastes 10:4 Ecclesiastes 10:4 Ecclesiastes 10:5 Ecclesiastes 10:10 Ecclesiastes 10:11 Ecclesiastes 10:15 Ecclesiastes 10:20 Ecclesiastes 11:2 Ecclesiastes 11:5 Ecclesiastes 11:7 Ecclesiastes 12:1 Ecclesiastes 12:8 Ecclesiastes 12:11

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."

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:7

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:8 Ecclesiastes 11:8
Ecclesiastes 11:9

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!

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:20 Ecclesiastes 7:21
Ecclesiastes 7:28

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**.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:4 Ecclesiastes 1:6 Ecclesiastes 1:11 Ecclesiastes 3:11 Ecclesiastes 3:14 Ecclesiastes 5:12 Ecclesiastes 7:14 Ecclesiastes 8:16 Ecclesiastes 9:2 Ecclesiastes 10:13 Ecclesiastes 11:3 Ecclesiastes 11:6 Ecclesiastes 12:14

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:14 Ecclesiastes 1:15 Ecclesiastes 1:17 Ecclesiastes 2:1 Ecclesiastes 2:1 Ecclesiastes 2:1 Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 2:10 Ecclesiastes 2:11 Ecclesiastes 2:14 Ecclesiastes 2:23 Ecclesiastes 3:11 Ecclesiastes 3:18 Ecclesiastes 3:19 Ecclesiastes 3:20 Ecclesiastes 3:22 Ecclesiastes 4:4 Ecclesiastes 4:5 Ecclesiastes 4:6 Ecclesiastes 4:6 Ecclesiastes 4:7 Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 4:12 Ecclesiastes 4:16 Ecclesiastes 5:1 Ecclesiastes 5:2 Ecclesiastes 5:7 Ecclesiastes 5:11 Ecclesiastes 5:12 Ecclesiastes 5:13 Ecclesiastes 5:16 Ecclesiastes 5:17 Ecclesiastes 5:18 Ecclesiastes 5:20 Ecclesiastes 6:2 Ecclesiastes 6:2 Ecclesiastes 6:4 Ecclesiastes 6:9 Ecclesiastes 7:3 Ecclesiastes 7:4 Ecclesiastes 7:6 Ecclesiastes 7:7 Ecclesiastes 7:12 Ecclesiastes 7:13 Ecclesiastes 7:15 Ecclesiastes 7:18 Ecclesiastes 7:19 Ecclesiastes 7:24 Ecclesiastes 7:26 Ecclesiastes 7:26 Ecclesiastes 7:26 Ecclesiastes 7:29 Ecclesiastes 8:1 Ecclesiastes 8:5 Ecclesiastes 8:10 Ecclesiastes 8:11 Ecclesiastes 8:14 Ecclesiastes 9:3 Ecclesiastes 9:6 Ecclesiastes 9:6 Ecclesiastes 9:7 Ecclesiastes 9:9 Ecclesiastes 9:9 Ecclesiastes 9:9 Ecclesiastes 10:2 Ecclesiastes 10:2 Ecclesiastes 10:4 Ecclesiastes 10:6 Ecclesiastes 10:17 Ecclesiastes 10:20 Ecclesiastes 11:1 Ecclesiastes 11:7 Ecclesiastes 11:8 Ecclesiastes 11:8 Ecclesiastes 11:9 Ecclesiastes 11:10 Ecclesiastes 12:2 Ecclesiastes 12:2 Ecclesiastes 12:3 Ecclesiastes 12:3 Ecclesiastes 12:3 Ecclesiastes 12:3 Ecclesiastes 12:4 Ecclesiastes 12:4 Ecclesiastes 12:4 Ecclesiastes 12:5 Ecclesiastes 12:5 Ecclesiastes 12:5 Ecclesiastes 12:6 Ecclesiastes 12:6 Ecclesiastes 12:11

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:10 Ecclesiastes 1:16 Ecclesiastes 2:7 Ecclesiastes 2:11 Ecclesiastes 2:18 Ecclesiastes 2:24 Ecclesiastes 2:26 Ecclesiastes 3:14 Ecclesiastes 4:1 Ecclesiastes 4:1 Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 5:2 Ecclesiastes 5:2 Ecclesiastes 5:3 Ecclesiastes 5:6 Ecclesiastes 5:6 Ecclesiastes 5:10 Ecclesiastes 5:14 Ecclesiastes 6:2 Ecclesiastes 6:7 Ecclesiastes 6:7 Ecclesiastes 7:1 Ecclesiastes 7:2 Ecclesiastes 7:12 Ecclesiastes 7:26 Ecclesiastes 7:28 Ecclesiastes 8:2 Ecclesiastes 8:3 Ecclesiastes 9:1 Ecclesiastes 10:5 Ecclesiastes 10:6 Ecclesiastes 10:19 Ecclesiastes 11:6 Ecclesiastes 11:10 Ecclesiastes 12:7

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**.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:15 Ecclesiastes 6:8 Ecclesiastes 6:8 Ecclesiastes 7:2 Ecclesiastes 7:19 Ecclesiastes 7:22 Ecclesiastes 9:1 Ecclesiastes 9:11 Ecclesiastes 9:17

Parallelism

Description

Parallelism is a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "doublet" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same

thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

> Your word is a lamp to my feet
>
> and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

> You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
>
> you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

> Yahweh sees everything a person does
>
> and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The first phrase and the second phrase mean the same thing. There are three ideas that are the same between these two phrases. "Sees" corresponds to "watches," "everything…does" corresponds to "all the paths…takes," and "a person" corresponds to "he."

> Praise Yahweh, all you nations;
>
> exalt him, all you peoples! (Psalm 117:1 ULT)

Both parts of this verse tell people everywhere to praise Yahweh. The words 'Praise' and 'exalt' mean the same thing. The words 'Yahweh' and 'him' refer to the same person. The terms 'all you nations' and 'all you peoples' refer to the same people.

> For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people,
>
> and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2b ULT)

The two parts of this verse say that Yahweh has a serious disagreement with his people, Israel. These are not two different disagreements or two different groups of people.

Translation Strategies

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

(1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as "truly" or "certainly."
(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like "very," "completely," or "all."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.

> Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.

> > Until now you have deceived me with your lies.
>
> Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The phrase “all the paths he takes” is a metaphor for “all he does.”

> > Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.
>
> For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULT)

This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:

> > For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.

(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”

> Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.
>
> You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)
>
> > You have certainly made him to rule over everything that you have created.

(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

> Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)
>
> > All you have done is lie to me.
>
> Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:8 Ecclesiastes 3:16 Ecclesiastes 5:3 Ecclesiastes 6:3 Ecclesiastes 7:7 Ecclesiastes 10:7 Ecclesiastes 10:9 Ecclesiastes 10:17

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

> Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

> Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

> You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

> You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

> Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:5 Ecclesiastes 1:6 Ecclesiastes 1:16 Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 2:9 Ecclesiastes 5:12 Ecclesiastes 7:7 Ecclesiastes 7:9 Ecclesiastes 7:12 Ecclesiastes 7:25 Ecclesiastes 8:8 Ecclesiastes 8:15 Ecclesiastes 10:3 Ecclesiastes 10:19

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**.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:5 Ecclesiastes 2:8 Ecclesiastes 4:4 Ecclesiastes 5:9 Ecclesiastes 7:12 Ecclesiastes 8:2 Ecclesiastes 9:5 Ecclesiastes 10:1 Ecclesiastes 12:10

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:15 Ecclesiastes 3:17
Ecclesiastes 3:18 Ecclesiastes 6:3
Ecclesiastes 7:23 Ecclesiastes 8:4
Ecclesiastes 9:16

Quotes within Quotes

Description

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we say there are "layers" of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

1. When there is a quote within a quote, the listener needs to know who the pronouns refer to. For example: if a quote that is inside a quote has the word "I," the listener needs to know whether "I" refers to the speaker of the inner quote or the outer quote.
2. Some languages make this clear by using different kinds of quotes when there are quotes within quotes. They may use direct quotes for some and indirect quotes for others.
3. Some languages do not use indirect quotes.

Examples From the Bible

A quotation with only one layer

> But Paul said, "I, however, was indeed born a citizen." (Acts 22:28b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

> Jesus answered and said to them, "Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name. They will say, 'I am the Christ,' and will lead many astray." (Matthew 24:4-5 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to his disciples. The second layer is what other people will say.

> Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king." (John 18:37b ULT)

The outermost layer is what Jesus said to Pilate. The second layer is what Pilate said about Jesus.

A quotation with three layers

> Abraham said, "… I said to her, 'You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, **"He is my brother."**'" (Genesis 20:11a, 13 ULT)

The outermost layer is what Abraham responded to Abimelech. The second layer is what Abraham had told his wife. The third layer is what he wanted his wife to say. (We have bolded the third layer.)

A quotation with four layers

> They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: **'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal- Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'**"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

The outermost layer is what the messengers said to the king. The second layer is what the man who had met the messengers told them. The third is what that man wanted the messengers to say to the king. The fourth is what Yahweh said. (We have bolded the fourth layer.)

Translation Strategies

Some languages use only direct quotes. Other languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes. In those languages it might sound strange and perhaps even be confusing if there are many layers of direct quotes.

(1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes.
(2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. (See Direct and Indirect Quotations.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate all of the quotes as direct quotes. In the example below we have bolded the indirect quotes in the ULT and the quotes that we have changed to direct quotes below it.

> Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul, saying, "There is a certain man was left here as a prisoner by Felix. So I am uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked **if he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there to be judged concerning these things**. But when Paul appealed **to keep him in custody for the decision of the emperor**, I ordered him **to be held in custody until when I could send him to Caesar**." (Acts 25:14b, 20-21 ULT)
>
> > Festus presented Paul's case to the king. He said, "A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner. I was uncertain about the things concerning this matter. I asked him, **'Will you go to Jerusalem to be judged there concerning these things?'** But when Paul said, **'I want to be kept in custody for the emperor's decision,'** I told the guard, **'Keep him in custody until when I can send him to Caesar.'**"

(2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes. In English the word "that" can come before indirect quotes. It is bolded in the examples below. The pronouns that changed because of the indirect quote are also bolded.

> And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Speak to them and say, 'During the evenings you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread. And you will know that I am Yahweh your God.'" (Exodus 16:11-12 ULT)
>
> > And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel. Tell them **that** during the evenings **they** will eat meat, and in the morning **they** will be satisfied with bread. And **they** will know that I am Yahweh **their** God.'"
>
> They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"'"" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)
>
> > They told him **that** a man had come to meet **them** who said to **them**, "Go back to the king who sent you, and tell him **that** Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:10

Reduplication

Description

Writers and speakers in the Bible sometimes repeat the same word or forms of the same word. This is to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of the action that the word describes, or to otherwise increase the emotional impact of the word.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages may not repeat words to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of an action, or they may not repeat words to increase the level of emotion that they communicate. In these cases, repeated words may appear to be a mistake or may indicate that the speaker is unable to speak correctly.

Examples From the Bible

To the woman he said, “To multiply I will multiply your pain and your childbearing…” (Genesis 3:16 ULT)

The speaker is repeating forms of the verb “multiply” in order to intensify the idea of multiplying.

To be circumcised he must be circumcised (Genesis 17:13)

The speaker is repeating forms of the verb “circumcise” in order to increase the certainty that this must happen.

Begin, possess, to possess his land (Deuteronomy 2:31 ULT)

Moses repeats the word “possess” to emphasize the completeness of the action of possessing the land.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Psalm 22:1 ULT)

The writer repeats “my God” to increase the level of emotion that he wants to communicate; he is crying out desperately to God.

“Fallen, fallen has Babylon the Great…” (Revelation 14:8 ULT)

The angel repeats the word “fallen” in order to show deep emotion in this lament for the ruined city of Babylon.

Translation Strategies

If repeating words would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then do the same in your translation. If not, here are some other options:

(1) If your language would not repeat words to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of an action, then use a different word or phrase to add that meaning.
(2) If your language would not repeat words to increase emotional intensity, then use an emotional word to do that.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language would not repeat words to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of an action, then use a different word or phrase to add that meaning.

> To the woman he said, “To multiply I will multiply your pain and your childbearing…” (Genesis 3:16 ULT)
>
> > To the woman he said, “I will greatly multiply your pain and your childbearing…”

> To be circumcised he must be circumcised (Genesis 17:13 ULT)
>
> > He certainly must be circumcised
> > Or By all means, he must be circumcised

> Begin, possess, to possess his land (Deuteronomy 2:31 ULT)
>
> > Begin to completely possess his land
> > Or Enter his land until you completely possess it

(2) If your language would not repeat words to increase emotional intensity, then use an emotional word to do that.

> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Psalm 22:1 ULT)

> You are my God! Why, then, have you forsaken me?
> Or My God, oh, why have you forsaken me?

> "Fallen, fallen has Babylon the Great…" (Revelation 14:8 ULT)

> "Alas, Babylon the Great has fallen!

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:24

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?

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:3 Ecclesiastes 1:10
Ecclesiastes 2:2 Ecclesiastes 2:12
Ecclesiastes 2:15 Ecclesiastes 2:19
Ecclesiastes 2:22 Ecclesiastes 2:25
Ecclesiastes 3:9 Ecclesiastes 3:21
Ecclesiastes 3:22 Ecclesiastes 4:8
Ecclesiastes 5:11 Ecclesiastes 5:16
Ecclesiastes 6:6 Ecclesiastes 6:8 Ecclesiastes 6:8 Ecclesiastes 6:11 Ecclesiastes 6:12
Ecclesiastes 6:12 Ecclesiastes 7:17
Ecclesiastes 7:24 Ecclesiastes 8:1
Ecclesiastes 8:4 Ecclesiastes 8:7 Ecclesiastes 10:14

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!

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:13 Ecclesiastes 6:12
Ecclesiastes 7:6 Ecclesiastes 8:13
Ecclesiastes 10:1 Ecclesiastes 10:5
Ecclesiastes 12:11 Ecclesiastes 12:11

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)
>
> > **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him …
>
> Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)
>
> > I looked on all the deeds that **I** had accomplished

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:4 Ecclesiastes 2:8 Ecclesiastes 5:6 Ecclesiastes 5:15 Ecclesiastes 9:7 Ecclesiastes 10:18 Ecclesiastes 10:19 Ecclesiastes 11:5

Connect — Hypothetical 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.

Hypothetical Condition

Description

A Hypothetical Condition is a condition in which the second event (the "then" clause) will only take place if the first event (the "if" clause) takes place or is fulfilled in some way. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

It is important that translators understand whether or not something is a Hypothetical Condition so that they translate it in the correct way. For example, some of God's promises to Israel were conditional, based on whether or not Israel obeyed God. However, many of God's promises to Israel were not conditional; God would keep these promises whether or not the Israelites obeyed. It is important that you (the translator) know the difference between these two types of promises and communicate each one accurately in your own language. Also, sometimes conditions are stated in an order different than the order in which they would happen. If the target language would state the clauses in a different order, then you will need to make that adjustment.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

There are two hypothetical conditions in this frame. In both of these conditions, the

first event (the “if clause”) is stated after the “then” clause. If this is unnatural or confusing, the clauses can be restated in the more natural order. The first hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites obeyed God, then God would bless and protect them. The second hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites did not obey God, then God would punish them.

> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? (Genesis 4:7a ULT)

If Cain does what is right, then he will be accepted. The only way for Cain to be accepted is by doing what is right.

> … **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. (Acts 5:38b-39aULT)

There are two hypothetical conditions here: (1) If it is true that this plan is of men, then it will be overthrown; (2) If it is true that this plan is of God, then it cannot be overthrown.

Translation Strategies

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

> God promised to bless the people and protect them **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

> > If the people obeyed these laws, God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, God said that he would punish them.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

> God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

> > If the people obeyed these laws, **then** God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, **then** God said that he would punish them.

> … **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; (Acts 5:38b-39a ULT)

> > … **if** this plan or this work is of men, **then** it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, **then** you will not be able to overthrow them;

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:10 Ecclesiastes 6:3

Connect — Exception Clauses

Exceptional Relationship

Description

Exceptional relationship connectors exclude one or more items or people from a group.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

English indicates exceptional relationships by first describing a group (Part 1) and then stating what is not in that group by using words like “except,” “but not,” “other than,” “besides,” “unless,” “however … not,” and “only” (Part 2). Some languages do not indicate in this way that one or more items or people are excluded from a group. Instead, they have other ways of doing this. In some languages this type of construction does not make sense because the exception in Part 2 seems to contradict the statement in Part 1. Translators need to understand who (or what) is in the group and who (or what) is excluded in order to be able to accurately communicate this in their language.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)
>
> But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4b ULT)
>
> David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not** a man escaped **except for** 400 young men, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)
>
> The man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob said, “I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me.” (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If the way that Exceptional Clauses are marked in the source language is also clear in your language, then translate the Exceptional Clauses in the same way.

(1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”
(2) Reverse the order of the clauses so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

Examples of Translation Strategy Applied

(1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”

> David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not a man escaped except for 400 young men**, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

- Part 1: (**Not** a man escaped)
- Part 2: (**except for** 400 young men)

> > David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Only** 400 young men escaped; they rode on camels and fled.

> But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4 ULT)
>
> > But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for **you are first in line to redeem it {only you can redeem it}**, and I am after you.

> The man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob said, “I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me.” (Genesis 32:26 ULT)
>
> > The man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob said, “I will let you go **only if** you bless me.”

(2) Reverse the order of the clauses, so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

> God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)
>
> > God told Adam that he could **not** eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but he could eat from **any other** tree in the garden.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:12 Ecclesiastes 8:15

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 8:6 Ecclesiastes 8:17

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 be wise** in everything in which you walk. (Joshua 1:7c ULT)

The purpose of not turning away from the instructions that Moses gave to the Israelites was so that they would be wise.

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

The purpose of the vine growers killing the heir was so they could take his inheritance. They state both events as a plan, joining them only with "and." Then the word "so" marks the reporting of the first event, but the second event (the goal or purpose) is not stated.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses Goal or Purpose relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the construction of the Goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.
(2) If the order of the statements makes the Goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the construction of the goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.

> "Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her!" (Ruth 2:16 ULT)
>
> > "Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **so that she can glean it**, and do not rebuke her!"

> The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15 ULT)
>
> > The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem **so that we can see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us."

(2) If the order of the statements makes the goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

> "… if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17bULT)
>
> > "… 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**.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:11

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:1

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:9

Alternative Readings

Description

In some places in the traditional Hebrew text of the Bible as we have it today, there are words or phrases that some scribes or translators have thought to be incorrect or unacceptable in some way. Their proposals for what the text was originally can be put into three groups.

1. Corrections of the scribes

Sometimes it seems that the earlier scribe made an error while copying the text, and so a later scribe recommended a correction. In other cases, a later scribe wanted to update the spelling, grammar, or vocabulary, or he wanted to replace objectionable words with something more acceptable. In many cases, the later scribes put notes in the margin that tell people who are reading the Scriptures out loud to say something different from what is in the written text. Scribes developed this system both to preserve wording that they thought might be original and to encourage readers to speak a more acceptable or understandable word or phrase.

1. Readings from ancient translations

Sometimes there are words or phrases in the Hebrew text that do not seem to make sense or it seems that there are words missing. In these cases, we can look to ancient translations of the Hebrew that may have been made before the problem entered the Hebrew text, such as the ancient Greek and Syriac translations. It may be that these translations preserve the original reading in these places.

1. Proposals of modern scholars

Some of the words or phrases that do not seem to make sense in the Hebrew text as we have it today are equally problematic in the ancient translations. This may mean that the problem entered the Hebrew text before the ancient translation was made. In some of these cases, scholars have proposed that the scribe mistook one word for a different word that has a very similar spelling. Also, the original Hebrew text contained only the consonants of the words and the vowels

were added hundreds of years later. In some cases, it seems that the later scribe divided the consonants incorrectly or added the vowels of the wrong word. In these cases, scholars have proposed that a simple correction would be to group the consonants differently or to change the vowels.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

In order to make the best translation possible, translators need to know what is the best source text for their translation. Wherever there may be errors or problems in the source text, they need to know what both ancient scribes and modern scholars consider to be the most likely solution to that problem that best represents what the original text said.

Examples from the Bible

> **when** they spoke to him day after day, he did not listen to them. (Esther 3:4 text)

In the margin of the Hebrew text, a scribe has suggested a different word:

> **as** they spoke to him day after day, he did not listen to them. (Esther 3:4 margin)

In the following examples of the Hebrew text from Ruth, Naomi is speaking to Ruth about visiting Boaz at the threshing floor. In the Hebrew text, Naomi speaks as though she were doing these actions herself. This may be because the child that will be born to Ruth and Boaz will be considered to belong to Naomi (Ruth 4:16-17). But to avoid confusion, a scribe made a note in the margin to read the text as instructions to Ruth:

> **I will go down** to the threshing floor (Ruth 3:3 text)

> **go down** to the threshing floor (Ruth 3:3 margin)

> Then go and uncover his feet **and I will lie down** (Ruth 3:4 text)

> Then go and uncover his feet **and lie down** (Ruth 3:4 margin)

In the following examples, it seems that the Hebrew scribe skipped over the numbers. They can be supplied, however, from some manuscripts of the ancient Greek translation:

> Saul {was} a son of **a year** in his becoming king, and he reigned over Israel **two years**. (1 Sam 13:1 ULT)

> Saul {was} a son of **thirty years** in his becoming king, and he reigned over Israel **forty-two years**. (ancient Greek translation)

In Psalm 103:5, the word “ornaments” does not seem to make any sense. It seems that the scribe mistook it for a similar word that means “existence.” Modern scholars propose using that other word instead:

> The one satisfying your **ornaments** with good; (Psalm 103:5 ULT)

> The one satisfying your **existence** with good; (proposed alternate reading)

Translation Strategies

• Decide which reading to follow: Discuss as a team whether you will translate the written text or translate the reading that marginal notes or modern scholars suggest. It may be best to decide this on a case-by-case basis. If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region and the readers of your translation will be familiar with it, consider using the readings that it translates.

• Use footnotes for significant differences: If the written text and the marginal or suggested text have different meanings or implications that could affect readers’ understanding of the text, provide a footnote to explain both readings.

• Consider how your translation will sound when read aloud: Even if you decide generally to translate the written text, you may wish to follow the marginal instructions and substitute different language when the written text uses words that might not be appropriate for public reading. You can put the reading of the written text in a footnote.

• Consult church communities and leaders for difficult cases: For readings that may be controversial or theologically sensitive, discuss options with church communities

and leaders as part of the translation-checking process.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(Ruth 3:4) Then go and uncover his feet and lie down^1^

^1^From the marginal reading. The Hebrew says, "…and I will lie down."

(1 Samuel 13:1) Saul {was} a son of thirty years in his becoming king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years.^2^

^2^From the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew says, "Saul {was} a son of a year in his becoming king, and he reigned over Israel two years."

(Psalm 103:5) The one satisfying your ornaments with good;^3^

^3^The original reading may have been, "The one satisfying your existence with good;"

This page answers the question:

Why does the ULT have some different readings from other Bible translations?

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

• Textual Variants (How to handle differences between manuscripts)

• Create Accurate Translations (Ensuring the meaning is faithfully communicated)

• Create Church-Approved Translations (Involving church networks in the translation process)

Next we recommend you learn about:

• Create Authoritative Translations

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:4 Ecclesiastes 12:6

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:1 Ecclesiastes 7:27
Ecclesiastes 12:8

Symbolic Action

Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean “yes” or turn their heads from side to side to mean “no.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In other cultures it means “yes.”

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

Examples From the Bible

> And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

> Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.
(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.
(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)
>
> > Jairus fell down at Jesus’ feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.

> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)
>
> > Jairus showed Jesus great respect.

> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.

> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:8

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.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:25 Ecclesiastes 8:10
Ecclesiastes 9:2 Ecclesiastes 9:2

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**

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:5

Foreground Information

Description

When people tell a story, make an argument, or make a request, sometimes they need to tell their listeners that something that they have said or are about to say is the most important part of the story or argument or request. That type of information is called **foreground information**. It is the information that is most important for the listeners to understand or act on. People will often use a specific word or phrase to signal that this part is foreground information.

Examples

The bolded phrases in the examples below signal that what follows is foreground information. That is, what follows these phrases is the most important part of a story or argument or the specific request that someone has been leading up to by providing other information.

We've worked hard on this rose garden, fertilizing and watering the soil and pruning the branches. The bushes are beautiful and healthy, and we thought everything was fine. **But listen to this.** I just spotted two Japanese beetles on one of the bushes. We need to spray the bushes right away to kill those beetles and keep any more from coming and destroying the buds and blossoms.

Our community projects went pretty well last year, but I think they could have gone better. I've recognized that you are good at organizing people to work together. **So here is what I was hoping you would do.** Would you take a look at each of our projects and suggest ways that we could carry them out even better?

Reasons This Is A translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of signaling what is foreground information.
- You (the translator) need to be able to recognize which information in the Bible is foreground information so that you can signal it correctly in your language.
- You will need to translate biblical stories, arguments, and requests in a way that enables your own readers to recognize what information in them is foreground information.

Examples From the Bible

Ezra 5:7–17 presents a letter that Persian officials responsible for the area of Judea sent to the Persian emperor Darius. In that letter, those officials report that the Jews were rebuilding Yahweh's temple and that a previous emperor, Cyrus, had given them permission. The Persian officials doubt this, so then they write:

> "**And now,** if it is good to the king, let a search be made in the house of the treasures of the king which is there in Babylon, if it is that a decree was set by Cyrus the king to build this house of God in Jerusalem. And let him send to us the will of the king concerning this." (Ezra 5:17 ULT)

Most of this letter provides background information to help Darius understand why the officials are making their request. The expression "And now" signals that what follows is their specific request.

In 1 Corinthians 7:1–24, Paul addresses the Corinthians' belief that it was more spiritual not to be married than to be married. He discusses the advantages and disadvantages of being married and of being single. He uses other situations in life as illustrations. He then says,

> "**Brothers,** each one in that which he was called, let him remain with God in this" (1 Corinthians 7:24 ULT).

Paul uses the expression "Brothers" to signal that what follows is the essential point of this argument: if people are already married, they should remain married, since it is not more spiritual to be single.

In Joshua 7, the Israelites attack the small city of Ai, but they are defeated. Yahweh tells Joshua that this happened because one of the Israelites sinned against him by taking plunder from the city of Jericho, which he had forbidden. Yahweh identifies a man named Achan as the one who sinned. When Joshua confronts him, Achan confesses. He describes how he found a

valuable garment and some silver and gold in Jericho and took them. He then says,

> "**And behold,** they are hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent" (Joshua 7:21 ULT).

Achan uses the expression "And behold" to signal that what follows is the main point of the story that is his confession: he kept the plunder and hid it, showing that he knew that it was wrong to take it.

Translation Strategies

To keep your translation clear and natural, you will need to study how people tell stories and make arguments and requests in your language. Observe how speakers of your language mark foreground information. You may need to write down some stories, arguments, and requests in order to study this. Observe what kinds of words, phrases, or other markers in your language signal that something is foreground information. Do these same things when you translate so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is foreground information. (2) Reorder the information as appropriate, so that the foreground information comes at the most natural place for your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is foreground information.

> "**And now,** if it is good to the king, let a search be made in the house of the treasures of the king which is there in Babylon," (Ezra 5:17 ULT)

> "**Accordingly,** if it is good to the king, let a search be made in the house of the treasures of the king which is there in Babylon," (Ezra 5:17) Or "**We suggest that,** if it is good to the king, let a search be made in the house of the treasures of the king which is there in Babylon," (Ezra 5:17)

> "**Brothers,** each one in that which he was called, let him remain with God in this" (1 Corinthians 7:24 ULT).

> "**So then, brothers**, each one in that which he was called, let him remain with God in this" (1 Corinthians 7:24). Or "**Therefore, my fellow believers,** each one in that which he was called, let him remain with God in this" (1 Corinthians 7:24).

> "**And behold,** they are hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent" (Joshua 7:21 ULT).

> "**So look,** they are hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent" (Joshua 7:21). Or "**And now you will find that** they are hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent" (Joshua 7:21).

(2) Reorder the information as appropriate, so that the foreground information comes at the most natural place for your language.

> "**And now,** if it is good to the king, let a search be made in the house of the treasures of the king which is there in Babylon, if it is that a decree was set by Cyrus the king to build this house of God in Jerusalem. And let him send to us the will of the king concerning this." (Ezra 5:17 ULT).

> "If it is good to the king, let a search be made in the house of the treasures of the king which is there in Babylon, if it is that a decree was set by Cyrus the king to build this house of God in Jerusalem. And let him send to us the will of the king concerning this. **This is our request.**" (Ezra 5:17 ULT).

In James 4:11–12, James first states his main point, signaled as foreground by the term "brothers," and he then gives reasons for it. (In this instance, the term "brothers" follows the foreground information.)

> "Do not speak against one another, **brothers.** The one speaking against a brother or judging his brother speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge, the one being able to save and to destroy. But who are you, the one judging your neighbor?" (James 4:11–12 ULT)

In some languages, it may be clearer or more natural for the main point to come after the reasons. It might also be clearer for the expression that signals foreground information to precede that information.

The one speaking against a brother or judging his brother speaks against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver and judge, the one being able to save and to destroy. But who are you, the one judging your neighbor? **Brothers,** do not speak against one another. (James 4:11–12, reordered)

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:14 Ecclesiastes 2:1
Ecclesiastes 4:1 Ecclesiastes 5:18

Poetry

Description

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

In poetry we commonly find:

- many figures of speech such as Apostrophe
- arrangements of clauses into particular patterns such as:
  - parallel lines (See Parallelism)
  - acrostics (beginning lines with successive letters of the alphabet)
  - chiasms (in which the first line relates to the last line, the second to the next-to-last line, etc.):

> You should not give what is holy to the dogs,
>
> > and should not throw your pearls in front of the pigs.
> >
> > Otherwise they will trample them under their feet,
>
> and having turned, they might tear you to pieces. (Matt 7:6 ULT)

- repetition of some or all of a line:

> Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. (Psalm 148:2-3 ULT)

- lines of similar length:

> Listen to my call to you,
>
> Yahweh; think about my groanings.
>
> Listen to the sound of my call, my King and my God,
>
> for it is to you that I pray. (Psalm 5:1-2 ULT)

- the same sound used at the end or at the beginning of two or more lines:

> "Twinkle, twinkle little **star**. How I wonder what you **are**." (from an English rhyme)

- the same sound repeated many times:

> "Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater" (from an English rhyme)

- The same root word used as both a verb and as a noun:

> Your old men will **dream dreams** (Joel 2:28 ULT)

> Yahweh,…**light lightning** and scatter them (Psalm 144:5-6 ULT)

We also find:

- old words and expressions
- dramatic imagery
- different use of grammar — including:
  - incomplete sentences
  - lack of connective words

Some places to look for poetry in your language

1. Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games
2. Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors
3. Prayers, blessings, and curses
4. Old legends

Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as much as poetry does. Popular speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language, you may need to write it without the poetry.
- Different languages use different poetic devices. A poetic device that conveys elegance or emotion in a biblical language may be confusing or misunderstood in another language.
- In some languages, using poetry for a particular part of the Bible would make it much more powerful.

Examples From the Bible

The Bible uses poetry for songs, teaching, and prophecy. Almost all of the books of the Old Testament have poetry in them and many of the books are completely made up of poetry.

> … for you saw my affliction; you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7b ULT)

This example of Parallelism has two lines that mean the same thing.

> Yahweh, judge the nations; vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High. (Psalm 7:8 ULT)

This example of parallelism shows the contrast between what David wants God to do to him and what he wants God to do to the unrighteous nations. (See Parallelism.)

> Keep your servant also from arrogant sins; let them not rule over me. (Psalm 19:13a ULT)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See Personification.)

> Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good,
>
> for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
>
> Oh, give thanks to the God of gods,
>
> for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
>
> Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords,
>
> for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
>
> (Psalm 136:1-3 ULT)

This example repeats the phrases “give thanks” and “his covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

Translation Strategies

If the style of poetry that is used in the source text would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other ways of translating it.

(1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry.
(2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.
(3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

If you use poetry it may be more beautiful.

If you use ordinary speech it may be more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of mockers. But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 ULT)

The following are examples of how people might translate Psalm 1:1-2.

(1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry. (The style in this example has words that sound similar at the end of each line.)

> “Happy is the person not encouraged **to sin**, Disrespect for God he will not **begin**, To those who laugh at God he is **no kin.** God is his constant **delight**, He does what God says **is right**, He thinks of it all day **and night**.”

(2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

> This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people nor stop along the road to speak with sinners nor join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather, he takes great joy in Yahweh’s law, and he meditates on it day and night.

(3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

> The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or join with those who do not respect God. Instead, they love to obey Yahweh’s law, and they think about it all the time.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:3 Ecclesiastes 2:11
Ecclesiastes 2:14 Ecclesiastes 5:4
Ecclesiastes 5:18 Ecclesiastes 7:6

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 the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. **This man** came to Jesus at night. Jesus replied and said to **him** … (John 3:1, 2a, 3a ULT)

In John 3, Nicodemus is first referred to with noun phrases and his name. Then he is referred to with the noun phrase “this man.” Then he is referred to with the pronoun “him.”

Each language has its rules and exceptions to this usual way of referring to people and things.

- In some languages, the first time something is referred to in a paragraph or chapter, it is referred to with a noun rather than a pronoun.
- The main character is the person whom a story is about. In some languages, after a main character is introduced in a story, he is usually referred to with a pronoun. Some languages have special pronouns that refer only to the main character.
- In some languages, marking on the verb helps people know who the subject is. (See Verbs.) In some of these languages, listeners rely on this marking to help them understand who the subject is. Speakers will use a pronoun, noun phrase, or proper name only when they want either to emphasize or to clarify who the subject is.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- If translators use a pronoun at the wrong time for their language, readers might not know about whom the writer is talking.
- If translators too frequently refer to a main character by name, listeners of some languages might not realize that the person is a main character, or they might think that there is a new character with the same name.
- If translators use pronouns, nouns, or names at the wrong time, people might think that there is some special emphasis on the person or thing to which it refers.

Examples From the Bible

The example below occurs at the beginning of a chapter. In some languages it might not be clear to whom the pronouns refer.

> Then Jesus entered into the synagogue again, and there was a man who had a withered hand. Some people watched **him** closely to see if **he** would heal **him** on the Sabbath so that they might accuse **him**. (Mark 3:1-2 ULT)

In the example below, two men are named in the first sentence. It might not be clear whom “he” in the second sentence refers to.

> Now after some days had passed, **King Agrippa** and Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay their respects to **Festus**. After **he** had been there for many days, Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul. (Acts 25:13-14)

Jesus is the main character of the book of Matthew, but in the verses below he is referred to four times by name. This may lead speakers of some languages to think that Jesus is not the main character. Or it might lead them to think that there is more than one person named Jesus in this story. Or it might lead them to think that there is some kind of emphasis on him, even though there is no emphasis.

> At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **Jesus** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.
(2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.

> Again **he** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **him** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:1-2)
>
> > Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

(2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

> At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **Jesus** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

This may be translated as:

> At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **him**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **he** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?” Then **he** left from there and went into their synagogue.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:10 Ecclesiastes 2:19
Ecclesiastes 2:26 Ecclesiastes 3:11
Ecclesiastes 3:12 Ecclesiastes 3:18
Ecclesiastes 3:19 Ecclesiastes 3:22
Ecclesiastes 4:1 Ecclesiastes 4:12
Ecclesiastes 4:14 Ecclesiastes 4:15
Ecclesiastes 4:16 Ecclesiastes 5:6
Ecclesiastes 5:18 Ecclesiastes 5:19
Ecclesiastes 6:5 Ecclesiastes 6:12
Ecclesiastes 7:14 Ecclesiastes 7:18
Ecclesiastes 7:21 Ecclesiastes 7:22
Ecclesiastes 7:25 Ecclesiastes 7:26
Ecclesiastes 7:29 Ecclesiastes 8:9
Ecclesiastes 8:10 Ecclesiastes 8:15
Ecclesiastes 8:16 Ecclesiastes 9:13
Ecclesiastes 9:15 Ecclesiastes 9:16
Ecclesiastes 10:15 Ecclesiastes 10:20
Ecclesiastes 11:6 Ecclesiastes 12:12

Proverbs

Description

Proverbs are short sayings that give wise advice or teach something that is generally true about life. People enjoy proverbs because they give a lot of wisdom in few words. Proverbs in the Bible often use metaphor and parallelism. Proverbs should not be understood as absolute and unchangeable laws. Rather, proverbs offer general advice to a person about how to live his life.

> Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers over all offenses. (Proverbs 10:12 ULT)

Here is another example from the book of Proverbs.

> Look at the ant, you lazy person, consider her ways, and be wise. It has no commander, officer, or ruler, yet it prepares its food in the summer, and during the harvest it stores up what it will eat. (Proverbs 6:6-8 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying proverbs. There are many proverbs in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say proverbs in your language so that people recognize them as proverbs and understand what they teach.

Examples From the Bible

> A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
>
> and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

This means that it is better to be a good person and to have a good reputation than it is to have a lot of money.

> Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes,
>
> so is the sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26 ULT)

This means that a lazy person is very annoying to those who send him to do something.

> The way of Yahweh protects those who have integrity,
>
> but it is destruction for the wicked. (Proverbs 10:29 ULT)

This means that Yahweh protects people who do what is right, but he destroys those who are wicked.

Translation Strategies

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

(1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.
(2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.
(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.
(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.

> A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
>
> and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

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

> It is better to have a good name than to have great riches,
>
> and to be favored by people than to have silver and gold.

> Wise people choose a good name over great riches,
>
> and favor over silver and gold.

> Try to have a good reputation rather than great riches.

> Will riches really help you?
>
> I would rather have a good reputation.

(2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

> Like **snow in summer** or rain in harvest,
>
> so a fool does not deserve honor. (Proverbs 26:1 ULT)

> It is not natural for **a cold wind to blow in the hot season** or for it to rain in the harvest season;
>
> And it is not natural to honor a foolish person.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

> Do not boast about tomorrow,
>
> for you do not know what a day may bring. (Proverbs 27:1a ULT)

> Do not count your chickens before they hatch.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

> There is a generation that curses their father
>
> and does not bless their mother.
>
> There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes,
>
> and yet they are not washed of their filth. (Proverbs 30:11-12 ULT)

> People who do not respect their parents think that they are righteous,
>
> and they do not turn away from their sin.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:5 Ecclesiastes 4:6 Ecclesiastes 4:13 Ecclesiastes 6:7 Ecclesiastes 6:9 Ecclesiastes 7:1 Ecclesiastes 7:20 Ecclesiastes 9:17 Ecclesiastes 10:8 Ecclesiastes 10:9 Ecclesiastes 10:12 Ecclesiastes 10:18 Ecclesiastes 11 Introduction Ecclesiastes 11:4

Quotations and Quote Margins

Description

When saying that someone said something, we often tell who spoke, whom they spoke to, and what they said. The information about who spoke and whom they spoke to is called the quote margin. What the person said is the quotation. (This is also called a quote.) In some languages the quote margin may come first, last, or even in between two parts of the quotation.

The quote margins are bolded below.

- **She said**, "The food is ready. Come and eat."
- "The food is ready. Come and eat," **she said**.
- "The food is ready," **she said.** "Come and eat."

Also in some languages, the quote margin may have more than one verb meaning "said."

> But his mother **answered** and **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

When writing that someone said something, some languages put the quote (what was said) in quotation marks called inverted commas (" "). Some languages use other symbols around the quotation, such as these angle quote marks (« »), or something else.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators need to put the quote margin where it is most clear and natural in their language.
- Translators need to decide whether they want the quote margin to have one or two verbs meaning "said."
- Translators need to decide which marks to use around the quotation.

Examples From the Bible

Quote margin before the quote

> **Then Zechariah said to the angel**, "How will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in her days." (Luke 1:18 ULT)

> Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and **they said to him**, "Teacher, what should we do?" (Luke 3:12 ULT)

> So **he said to them**, "Collect nothing more than what you have been ordered." (Luke 3:13 ULT)

Quote margin after the quote

> Yahweh relented concerning this. "It will not happen," **he said**. (Amos 7:3 ULT)

Quote margin between two parts of the quote

> "I will hide my face from them," **he said,** "and I will see what their end will be; for they are a perverse generation, children who are unfaithful." (Deuteronomy 32:20 ULT)

> For look, days are coming—**this is Yahweh's declaration**—when I will restore the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah. (Jeremiah 30:3a ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) Decide where to put the quote margin.
(2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Decide where to put the quote margin.

> **He said**, "Therefore, those among you who are leaders should go down with us. If there is something wrong with the man, let them accuse him." (Acts 25:5 ULT)

> > "Therefore, those who can should go there with us," **he said**. "If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

> > "Therefore, those who can should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him," **he said**.

> "Therefore, those who can," **he said**, "should go there with us. If there is something wrong with the man, you should accuse him."

(2) Decide whether to use one or two words meaning "said."

> But his mother **answered and said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John." (Luke 1:60 ULT)

> But his mother **replied**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

> But his mother **said**, "No. Rather, he will be called John."

> But his mother **answered** like this. "No. Rather, he will be called John," she **said**.

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:16 Ecclesiastes 7:27
Ecclesiastes 12:1

Appendix: Translation Words

appoint, appointed

Definition:

The terms “appoint” and “appointed” refer to choosing someone to fulfill a specific task or role.

- To “be appointed” can also refer to being “chosen” to receive something, as in “appointed to eternal life.” That people were “appointed to eternal life” means they were chosen to receive eternal life.
- The phrase “appointed time” refers to God’s “chosen time” or “planned time” for something to happen.
- The word “appoint” may also mean to “command” or “assign” someone to do something.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “appoint” could include “choose” or “assign” or “formally choose” or “designate.”
- The term “appointed” could be translated as “assigned” or “planned” or “specifically chose.”
- The phrase “be appointed” could also be translated as “be chosen.”

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 8:11
- Acts 3:20
- Acts 6:2
- Acts 13:48
- Genesis 41:33-34
- Numbers 3:9-10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0561, H0977, H2163, H2296, H2706, H2708, H2710, H3198, H3245, H3259, H3677, H3983, H4150, H4151, H4152, H4483, H4487, H4662, H5324, H5344, H5414, H5567, H5975, H6310, H6485, H6565, H6635, H6680, H6923, H6942, H6966, H7760, H7896, G03220, G06060, G12990, G13030, G19350, G25250, G27490, G42870, G42960, G43840, G49290, G50210, G50870

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:8

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:19 Ecclesiastes 8:8
Ecclesiastes 8:9 Ecclesiastes 10:5

bless, blessed, blessing

Definition:

To “bless” someone or something means to cause good and beneficial things to happen to the person or thing that is being blessed.

- Blessing someone also means expressing a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to that person.
- In Bible times, a father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children.
- When people “bless” God or express a desire that God be blessed, this means they are praising him.
- The term “bless” is sometimes used for consecrating food before it is eaten, or for thanking and praising God for the food.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “bless” could also be translated as to “provide abundantly for” or to “be very kind and favorable toward.”
- “God has brought great blessing to” could be translated as “God has given many good things to” or “God has provided abundantly for” or “God has caused many good things to happen to”.
- “He is blessed” could be translated as “he will greatly benefit” or “he will experience good things” or “God will cause him to flourish.”
- “Blessed is the person who” could be translated as “How good it is for the person who.”
- Expressions like “blessed be the Lord” could be translated as “May the Lord be praised” or “Praise the Lord” or “I praise the Lord.”
- In the context of blessing food, this could be translated as “thanked God for the food” or “praised God for giving them food” or “consecrated the food by praising God for it.”

(See also: praise)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 10:16
- Acts 13:34
- Ephesians 1:3
- Genesis 14:20
- Isaiah 44:3
- James 1:25
- Luke 6:20
- Matthew 26:26
- Nehemiah 9:5
- Romans 4:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:7** God saw that it was good and he **blessed** them.
- **1:15** God made Adam and Eve in his own image. He **blessed** them and told them, “Have many children and grandchildren and fill the earth.”
- **1:16** So God rested from all he had been doing. He **blessed** the seventh day and made it holy, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **4:4** “I will make your name great. I will **bless** those who **bless** you and curse those who curse you. All families on earth will be **blessed** because of you.”
- **4:7** Melchizedek **blessed** Abram and said, “May God Most High who owns heaven and earth **bless** Abram.”
- **7:3** Isaac wanted to give his **blessing** to Esau.
- **8:5** Even in prison, Joseph remained faithful to God, and God **blessed** him.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0833, H0835, H1288, H1289, H1293, G17570, G21270, G21280, G21290, G31060, G31070, G31080, G60500

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:17

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:14

call, called

Definition:

The terms “call” and “called,” in this sense, mean to name a place, person, or being. When referring to a person or thing the terms “call” and “called” can refer either to initially giving someone or something a name for the first time or to saying that thing or persons pre-existing name or title.

- The Bible sometimes uses these terms in the context of naming someone. For example, “His name is called John,” means “He is named John” or “His name is John.”
- To be “called by the name of” means that someone is given the name of someone else. God says that he has called his people by his name.

Translation Suggestions:

- “You must call his name” can also be translated as “you must name him.”
- “His name is called” could also be translated as “his name is” or “he is named.”
- The expression “you are called by my name” could be translated as “I have given you my name, showing that you belong to me.”
- You could translates Jesus’ words “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’” as “You address me as ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’” or something similar to show that the word “call” in this context means to “address” someone by a specific name or title.

(See also: call to summon)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7121, G25640, G30040, G55810

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:10

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:17

eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever

Definition:

The terms “everlasting” and “eternal” have very similar meanings and refer to something that will always exist or that lasts forever.

- The term “eternity” refers to a state of being that has no beginning or end. It can also refer to life that never ends.
- After this present life on earth, humans will spend eternity either in heaven with God or in hell apart from God.
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” are used in the New Testament to refer to living forever with God in heaven.

The term “forever” refers to never-ending time.

- The phrase “forever and ever” has the idea of time that never ends and expresses what eternity or eternal life is like. It emphasizes that something will always happen or exist. It refers to time that never ends.
- God said that David’s throne would last “forever.” This is referred to the fact that David’s descendant Jesus will reign as king forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “eternal” or “everlasting” could include “unending” or “never stopping” or “always continuing.”

- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” could also be translated as “life that never ends” or “life that continues without stopping” or “the raising up of our bodies to live forever.”

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “eternity” could include “existing outside of time” or “unending life” or “life in heaven.”

- Also consider how this word is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: How to Translate Unknowns)

- “Forever” could also be translated by “always” or “never ending.”

- The phrase “will last forever” could also be translated as “always exist” or “will never stop” or “will always continue.”

- The emphatic phrase “forever and ever” could also be translated as “for always and always” or “not ever ending” or “which never, ever ends.”

- David’s throne lasting forever could be translated as “David’s descendant will reign forever” or “a descendant of David will always be reigning.”

(See also: David, reign, life)

Bible References:

- Genesis 17:8
- Genesis 48:4
- Exodus 15:17
- 2 Samuel 3:28-30
- 1 Kings 2:32-33
- Job 4:20-21
- Psalms 21:4
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Isaiah 40:27-28
- Daniel 7:18
- Luke 18:18
- Acts 13:46
- Romans 5:21
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Hebrews 10:11-14
- 1 John 1:2
- 1 John 5:12
- Revelation 1:4-6
- Revelation 22:3-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit **eternal life**?”
- **28:1** One day, a rich young ruler came up to Jesus and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to have **eternal life**?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only One who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have **eternal life**, obey God’s laws.”

- **28:10** Jesus answered, “Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or property for my name’s sake, will receive 100 times more and will also receive **eternal life**.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H4481, H5331, H5703, H5705, H5769, H5865, H5957, H6924, G01260, G01650, G01660, G13360

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:5

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 2:17 Ecclesiastes 3:16 Ecclesiastes 3:17 Ecclesiastes 4:3 Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 5:1 Ecclesiastes 5:13 Ecclesiastes 5:14 Ecclesiastes 5:16 Ecclesiastes 6:1 Ecclesiastes 6:2 Ecclesiastes 7:14 Ecclesiastes 7:15 Ecclesiastes 7:17 Ecclesiastes 7:25 Ecclesiastes 8:3 Ecclesiastes 8:5 Ecclesiastes 8:6 Ecclesiastes 8:8 Ecclesiastes 8:10 Ecclesiastes 8:11 Ecclesiastes 8:12 Ecclesiastes 8:13 Ecclesiastes 8:14 Ecclesiastes 9:2 Ecclesiastes 9:3 Ecclesiastes 9:12 Ecclesiastes 9:12 Ecclesiastes 10:5 Ecclesiastes 10:13 Ecclesiastes 11:2 Ecclesiastes 11:10 Ecclesiastes 12:1 Ecclesiastes 12:14

favor, favorable, favoritism

Definition:

The term “favor” generally means approval. Someone who favors another person regards that person positively and approves of them.

- Jesus grew up “in favor with” God and men. This means that both God and others approved of his character and behavior.
- The expression “find favor” with someone means that someone is approved of by that person.
- When a king shows favor to someone, it often means that he approves of that person’s request and grants it.
- A “favor” can also be a gesture or action towards or for another person for their benefit.
- The term “favoritism” means an attitude of acting favorably toward some people but not others. It means the inclination to pick one person over another or one thing over another because the person or item is preferred. Generally, favoritism is considered unfair.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate the term “favor” could include “approval” or “blessing” or “benefit.”
- The “favorable year of Yahweh” could be translated as “the year (or time) when Yahweh will bring great blessing.”
- The term “favoritism” could be translated as “partiality” or “being prejudiced” or “unjust treatment.” This word is related to the word “favorite,” which means to prefer above all others.

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 2:25-26
- 2 Chronicles 19:7
- 2 Corinthians 1:11
- Acts 24:27
- Genesis 41:16
- Genesis 47:25
- Genesis 50:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0995, H1156, H1293, H1779, H1921, H2580, H2603, H2896, H5278, H5375, H5414, H5922, H6213, H6437, H6440, H7521, H7522, H7965, G11840, G36850, G43800, G43820, G54850, G54860

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:3 Ecclesiastes 9:11 Ecclesiastes 10:12

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:14 Ecclesiastes 5:7
Ecclesiastes 7:18 Ecclesiastes 8:12
Ecclesiastes 8:13 Ecclesiastes 9:2
Ecclesiastes 12:5 Ecclesiastes 12:13

fool, foolish, folly

Definition:

The term “fool” refers to a person who often makes wrong choices, especially choosing to disobey. The term “foolish” describes a person or behavior that is not wise.

- In the Bible, the term “fool” usually refers to a person who does not believe or obey God. This is often contrasted to the wise person, who trusts in God and obeys God.
- In the Psalms, David describes a fool as a person who does not believe in God, one who ignores all the evidence of God in his creation.
- The Old Testament book of Proverbs also gives many descriptions of what a fool, or foolish person, is like.
- The term “folly” refers to an action that is not wise because it is against God’s will. Often “folly” also includes the meaning of something that is ridiculous or dangerous.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “fool” could be translated as “foolish person” or “unwise person” or “senseless person” or “ungodly person.”
- Ways to translate “foolish” could include “lacking understanding” or “unwise” or “senseless.”

(See also: wise)

Bible References:

- Ecclesiastes 1:17
- Ephesians 5:15
- Galatians 3:3
- Genesis 31:28
- Matthew 7:26
- Matthew 25:8
- Proverbs 13:16
- Psalms 49:13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0191, H0196, H0200, H1198, H1984, H2973, H3684, H3687, H3688, H3689, H3690, H5014, H5034, H5036, H5039, H5528, H5529, H5530, H5531, H6612, H8417, H8602, H8604, G04530, G04540, G07810, G08010, G08770, G08780, G27570, G31500, G31540, G34710, G34720, G34730, G34740, G39120

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:17 Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 2:12 Ecclesiastes 2:13 Ecclesiastes 2:14 Ecclesiastes 2:15 Ecclesiastes 2:16 Ecclesiastes 2:19 Ecclesiastes 4:5 Ecclesiastes 4:13 Ecclesiastes 5:1 Ecclesiastes 5:3 Ecclesiastes 5:4 Ecclesiastes 6:8 Ecclesiastes 7:4 Ecclesiastes 7:5 Ecclesiastes 7:6 Ecclesiastes 7:9 Ecclesiastes 7:17 Ecclesiastes 7:25 Ecclesiastes 9:17 Ecclesiastes 10:2 Ecclesiastes 10:3 Ecclesiastes 10:6 Ecclesiastes 10:12 Ecclesiastes 10:14 Ecclesiastes 10:15

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:4 Ecclesiastes 5:5

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 2:24 Ecclesiastes 2:26 Ecclesiastes 3:10 Ecclesiastes 3:11 Ecclesiastes 3:13 Ecclesiastes 3:14 Ecclesiastes 3:15 Ecclesiastes 3:17 Ecclesiastes 3:18 Ecclesiastes 5:2 Ecclesiastes 5:4 Ecclesiastes 5:6 Ecclesiastes 5:7 Ecclesiastes 5:18 Ecclesiastes 5:19 Ecclesiastes 5:19 Ecclesiastes 5:20 Ecclesiastes 6:2 Ecclesiastes 7:13 Ecclesiastes 7:14 Ecclesiastes 7:18 Ecclesiastes 7:26 Ecclesiastes 7:29 Ecclesiastes 8:2 Ecclesiastes 8:12 Ecclesiastes 8:13 Ecclesiastes 8:15 Ecclesiastes 8:17 Ecclesiastes 9:1 Ecclesiastes 9:7 Ecclesiastes 11:5 Ecclesiastes 11:9 Ecclesiastes 12:7 Ecclesiastes 12:13 Ecclesiastes 12:14

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:1 Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 2:24 Ecclesiastes 2:24 Ecclesiastes 2:26 Ecclesiastes 3:12 Ecclesiastes 3:13 Ecclesiastes 3:22 Ecclesiastes 4:3 Ecclesiastes 4:6 Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 4:9 Ecclesiastes 4:13 Ecclesiastes 5:1 Ecclesiastes 5:5 Ecclesiastes 5:11 Ecclesiastes 5:18 Ecclesiastes 6:3 Ecclesiastes 6:3 Ecclesiastes 6:9 Ecclesiastes 6:12 Ecclesiastes 7:1 Ecclesiastes 7:1 Ecclesiastes 7:2 Ecclesiastes 7:3 Ecclesiastes 7:5 Ecclesiastes 7:8 Ecclesiastes 7:10 Ecclesiastes 7:11 Ecclesiastes 7:14 Ecclesiastes 7:18 Ecclesiastes 7:20 Ecclesiastes 7:26 Ecclesiastes 8:12 Ecclesiastes 8:13 Ecclesiastes 8:15 Ecclesiastes 9:2 Ecclesiastes 9:4 Ecclesiastes 9:7 Ecclesiastes 9:16 Ecclesiastes 10:2 Ecclesiastes 11:6 Ecclesiastes 11:7 Ecclesiastes 12:14

Hades, Sheol

Definition:

The terms “Hades” (in Greek) and “Sheol” (in Hebrew) are proper names for the place where the spirits of dead people would go after they had died.

- In these ancient cultures, people thought of this as an underground dwelling place where the spirits of dead people existed in a shadowy, semi-conscious form.
- Although these terms are place names, in the Bible they often mean the same thing as “death” or “the grave.”
- Throughout most of biblical history, “Sheol” and “Hades” refer to a neutral place where all of the dead go to await judgment, both the righteous and the unrighteous. In the New Testament, however, “Hades” begins to be seen as a place for only the unrighteous, in contrast with “Abraham’s side” (Luke 16:22) or “paradise” (Luke 23:43), which describe the place for the righteous.

Translation Suggestions

- Both “Sheol” and “Hades” can be translated in various ways, depending on the context. Some possibilities include: “place of the dead,” “place for dead spirits,” “the underworld,” “the pit,” “the grave,” or “death.”
- Some translations keep the proper names “Sheol” and “Hades,” spelling them to fit the sound patterns of the language of translation. (See: How to Translate Unknowns).
- A phrase could also be added to each term to explain it. Examples of doing this are, “Sheol, place where dead people are” and “Hades, place of death.”

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: death, heaven, hell, tomb)

Bible References:

- Acts 2:31
- Genesis 44:29
- Jonah 2:2
- Luke 10:15
- Luke 16:23
- Matthew 11:23
- Matthew 16:18
- Revelation 1:18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7585, G00860

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:10

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 3:1 Ecclesiastes 5:2 Ecclesiastes 10:20

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 8:10

honor

Definition:

The terms “honor” and “to honor” refer to giving someone respect, esteem, or reverence.

- Honor is usually given to someone who is of higher status and importance, such as a king or God.
- God instructs Christians to honor others.
- Children are instructed to honor their parents in ways that include respecting them and obeying them.
- The terms “honor” and “glory” are often used together, especially when referring to Jesus. These may be two different ways of referring to the same thing.
- Ways of honoring God include thanking and praising him, and showing him respect by obeying him and living in a way that shows how great he is.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “honor” could include “respect” or “esteem” or “high regard.”
- The term to “honor” could be translated as to “show special respect to” or to “cause to be praised” or to “show high regard for” or to “highly value.”

(See also: dishonor, glory, praise)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 2:8
- Acts 19:17
- John 4:44
- John 12:26
- Mark 6:4
- Matthew 15:6

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1420, H1921, H1922, H1923, H1926, H1927, H1935, H2082, H2142, H3366, H3367, H3368, H3372, H3373, H3374, H3444, H3513, H3519, H3655, H3678, H5081, H5375, H5457, H6213, H6286, H6437, H6942, H6944, H6965, H7236, H7613, H7812, H8597, H8416, G08200, G13910, G13920, G17840, G21510, G25700, G31700, G44110, G45860, G50910, G50920, G50930, G53990

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:2 Ecclesiastes 10:1

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:4

house of God, your house, his house, Yahweh's house, a house for my name, the house for my name, the house, a house, a house of Yahweh

Short Title: house of God, Yahweh's house, house of Yahweh

Definition:

In the Bible, the phrases "house of God" (God's house) and "house of Yahweh (Yahweh's house)" refer to a place where God is worshiped.

- This term is also used more specifically to refer to the tabernacle or the temple.
- The terms "house of God" and "house of Yahweh" refer to the tabernacle or temple. These expressions can also refer generally to a central place where Yahweh was worshipped.
- The Bible often uses the phrases "your house" and "his house" to refer to the temple of Yahweh.
- The phrases "the house for my name," "a house for my name," and "a house of Yahweh" all refer to the temple of Yahweh.
- In some contexts, such as in 1 Chronicles 17:25 and 29:16, the phrase "a house" refers to the temple of Yahweh.
- In some contexts, such as in 1 Kings 8:44 and 2 Chronicles 6:4, the phrase "the house" refers to the temple of Yahweh.

Translation Suggestions:

- When referring to a place of worship, this term could be translated as "a house for worshiping God" or "a place for worshiping God."
- If it is referring to the temple or tabernacle, this could be translated as "the temple (or tabernacle) where God is worshiped" (or "where God is present" or "where God meets with his people").
- The word "house" may be important to use in the translation in order to communicate that God "dwells" there, that is, his spirit is in that place to meet with his people and to be worshiped by them.

- The phrase “house of Yahweh” could be translated as “Yahweh’s temple” or “place where Yahweh is worshiped” or “place where Yahweh meets with his people” or “where Yahweh dwells.” The phrase “house of God” could be translated in a similar way.

(See also: people of God, tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 3:14-15
- 2 Chronicles 23:8-9
- Ezra 5:13
- Genesis 28:17
- Judges 18:30-31
- Mark 2:26
- Matthew 12:4

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0426, H0430, H1004, H1005, H3068, G23160, G36240

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:1

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:11

jealous, jealousy

Definition:

The terms “jealous” and “jealousy” in this sense refer to a strong desire to protect the purity of a relationship. They can also refer to a strong desire to keep possession of something or someone (See Numbers 11:29).

- The term “jealous” is used to describe the angry feeling that a person has toward their spouse when they suspect that their spouse has been unfaithful in their marriage (See Numbers 5:14).
- The terms “jealous” and “jealousy” are often used to describe God’s strong desire that his covenant people love him, remain spiritually faithful to him, and keep him foremost in their affections.
- When used in the Bible, these terms often refer to God’s strong desire for his people to remain pure and unstained by sin.
- God is “jealous” for his glory, desiring that he be treated with honor and reverence.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “jealous” could include “strong protective desire” or “possessive desire.”
- The term “jealousy” could be translated as “strong protective feeling” or “possessive feeling.”
- When talking about God, make sure the translation of these terms does not give a negative meaning of being resentful or envious of someone else.

(See also: envy)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7065, H7067, H7068, H7072, G22050, G22060, G38630

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:6

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:17 Ecclesiastes 5:8
Ecclesiastes 11:9 Ecclesiastes 12:14

just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification

Definition:

"Just" and "justice" refer to treating people fairly according to God's laws. Human laws that reflect God's standard of right behavior toward others are also just.

- To be "just" is to act in a fair and right way toward others. It also implies honesty and integrity to do what is morally right in God's eyes.
- To act "justly" means to treat people in a way that is right, good, and proper according to God's laws.
- To receive "justice" means to be treated fairly under the law, either being protected by the law or being punished for breaking the law.
- Sometimes the term "just" has the broader meaning of "righteous" or "following God's laws."

The terms "unjust" and "unjustly" refer to treating people in an unfair and often harmful manner.

- An "injustice" is something bad that is done to someone that the person did not deserve. It refers to treating people unfairly.
- Injustice also means that some people are treated badly while others are treated well.
- Someone who is acting in an unjust way is being "partial" or "prejudiced" because he is not treating people equally.

The terms "justify" and "justification" refer to causing a guilty person to be righteous. Only God can truly justify people.

- When God justifies people, he forgives their sins and makes it as though they have no sin. He justifies sinners who repent and trust in Jesus to save them from their sins.
- "Justification" refers to what God does when he forgives a person's sins and declares that person to be righteous in his sight.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate "just" could include "morally right" or "fair."
- The term "justice" could be translated as "fair treatment" or "deserved consequences."
- To "act justly" could be translated as "treat fairly" or "behave in a just way."
- In some contexts, "just" could be translated as "righteous" or "upright."
- Depending on the context, "unjust" could also be translated as "unfair" or "partial" or "unrighteous."
- The phrase "the unjust" could be translated as "the unjust ones" or "unjust people" or "people who treat others unfairly" or "unrighteous people" or "people who disobey God."
- The term "unjustly" could be translated as "in an unfair manner" or "wrongly" or "unfairly."
- Ways to translate "injustice" could include, "wrong treatment" or "unfair treatment" or "acting unfairly." (See: abstractnouns)
- Other ways to translate "justify" could include "declare (someone) to be righteous" or "cause (someone) to be righteous."
- The term "justification" could be translated as "being declared righteous" or "becoming righteous" or "causing people to be righteous."
- The phrase "resulting in justification" could be translated as "so that God justified many people" or "which resulted in God causing people to be righteous."
- The phrase "for our justification" could be translated as "in order that we could be made righteous by God."

(See also: forgive, guilt, judge, righteous, righteous)

Bible References:

- Genesis 44:16
- 1 Chronicles 18:14
- Isaiah 4:3-4
- Jeremiah 22:3
- Ezekiel 18:16-17
- Micah 3:8
- Matthew 5:43-45
- Matthew 11:19
- Matthew 23:23-24
- Luke 18:3
- Luke 18:8
- Luke 18:13-14
- Luke 21:20-22
- Luke 23:41
- Acts 13:38-39
- Acts 28:4
- Romans 4:1-3
- Galatians 3:6-9
- Galatians 3:11
- Galatians 5:3-4
- Titus 3:6-7
- Hebrews 6:10
- James 2:24
- Revelation 15:3-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:9** David ruled with **justice** and faithfulness for many years, and God blessed him.
- **18:13** Some of these kings (of Judah) were good men who ruled **justly** and worshiped God.
- **19:16** They (the prophets) all told the people to stop worshiping idols and to start showing **justice** and mercy to others.
- **50:17** Jesus will rule his kingdom with peace and **justice**, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H2555, H3477, H4941, H5765, H5766, H5767, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6666, H8003, H8264, H8636, G00910, G00930, G00940, G13420, G13440, G13450, G13460, G13470, G17380

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:16 Ecclesiastes 7:29

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:11 Ecclesiastes 5:13
Ecclesiastes 8:8 Ecclesiastes 10:11
Ecclesiastes 12:11

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:8 Ecclesiastes 9:1 Ecclesiastes 9:6 Ecclesiastes 9:9

perish

Definition:

The term "perish" means to die or be destroyed, usually as the result of violence or disaster. In the New Testament, it often has the spiritual meaning of being lost or separated from the people of God.

Spiritual Meaning of "Perish:"

- People who are "perishing" are those who have refused to trust in Jesus for their salvation.
- Those who "perish" will not live eternally with God in heaven. Instead, they will live eternally in hell under God's punishment.
- Everyone will die physically, but only those who do not trust in Jesus for their salvation will perish eternally.
- When "perish" is used in a spiritual sense, make sure that your translation expresses this differently than dying physically.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include "be lost from God's people," "die eternally," "be punished in hell," or "be destroyed."
- Try to use a term or expression that does not only mean "die physically" or "cease to exist."

(See also: death, everlasting)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:23
- 2 Corinthians 2:16-17
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- Jeremiah 18:18
- Psalms 49:18-20
- Zechariah 9:5-7
- Zechariah 13:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0006, H0007, H0008, H1478, H1820, H1826, H5486, H5595, H6544, H8045, G05990, G06220, G06840, G08530, G13110, G27040, G48810, G53560

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:15 Ecclesiastes 9:6

pure, purify, purification

Definition:

To be “pure” means to have no flaw or to have nothing mixed in that is not supposed to be there. To purify something is to cleanse it and remove anything that contaminates or pollutes it.

- In regard to Old Testament laws, “purify” and “purification” refer mainly to the cleansing from things that make an object or a person ritually unclean, such as disease, body fluids, or childbirth.
- The Old Testament also had laws telling people how to be purified from sin, usually by the sacrifice of an animal. This was only temporary and the sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again.
- In the New Testament, to be purified often refers to being cleansed from sin.
- The only way that people can be completely and permanently purified from sin is through repenting and receiving God’s forgiveness, through trusting in Jesus and his sacrifice.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “purify” could be translated as “make pure” or “cleanse” or “cleanse from all contamination” or “get rid of all sin.”
- A phrase such as “when the time for their purification was over” could be translated as “when they had purified themselves by waiting the required number of days.”
- The phrase “provided purification for sins” could be translated as “provided a way for people to be completely cleansed from their sin.”
- Other ways to translate “purification” could include “cleansing” or “spiritual washing” or “becoming ritually clean.”

(See also: atonement, clean, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 1:5
- Exodus 31:6-9
- Hebrews 9:13-15
- James 4:8

- Luke 2:22
- Revelation 14:4

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1249, H1252, H1253, H1305, H1865, H2134, H2135, H2141, H2212, H2398, H2403, H2561, H2889, H2890, H2891, H2892, H2893, H3795, H3800, H4795, H5343, H5462, H6337, H6884, H6942, H8562, G00480, G00490, G00530, G00540, G15060, G25110, G25120, G25130, G25140

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:2

restore, restoration

Definition:

The terms "restore" and "restoration" refer to causing something to return to its original place or condition.

- When a diseased body part is restored, this means it has been "healed."
- A broken relationship that is restored has been "reconciled." God restores sinful people and brings them back to himself.
- If people have been restored to their home country, they have been "brought back" or "returned" to that country.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate "restore" could include "renew" or "repay" or "return" or "heal" or "bring back."
- Other expressions for this term could be "make new" or "make like new again."
- When property is "restored," it has been "repaired" or "replaced" or "given back" to its owner.
- Depending on the context, "restoration" could be translated as "renewal" or "healing" or "reconciliation."

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 5:10
- Acts 3:21
- Acts 15:15-18
- Isaiah 49:5-6
- Jeremiah 15:19-21
- Lamentations 5:22
- Leviticus 6:5-7
- Luke 19:8
- Matthew 12:13
- Psalm 80:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7725, H7999, H8421, G06000, G26750

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:15 Ecclesiastes 12:7

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:16 Ecclesiastes 3:17
Ecclesiastes 7:15 Ecclesiastes 7:16
Ecclesiastes 7:20 Ecclesiastes 8:14
Ecclesiastes 9:1 Ecclesiastes 9:2

save, saved, safe, salvation, rescue

Definition:

The term "save" refers to keeping someone from experiencing something bad or harmful. To "be safe" means to be protected from harm or danger.

- In a physical sense, people can be saved or rescued from harm, danger, or death.
- In a spiritual sense, if a person has been "saved," then God, through Jesus' death on the cross, has forgiven him and rescued him from being punished in hell for his sin.
- People can save or rescue people from danger, but only God can save people from being punished eternally for their sins.

The term "salvation" refers to being saved or rescued from evil and danger.

- In the Bible, "salvation" usually refers to the spiritual and eternal deliverance granted by God to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus.
- The Bible also talks about God saving or delivering his people from their physical enemies.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate "save" could include "deliver" or "keep from harm" or "take out of harm's way" or "keep from dying."

- In the expression "whoever would save his life," the term "save" could also be translated as "preserve" or "protect."

- The term "safe" could be translated as "protected from danger" or "in a place where nothing can harm."

- The term "salvation" could also be translated using words related to "save" or "rescue," as in "God's saving people (from being punished for their sins)" or "God's rescuing his people (from their enemies)."

- "God is my salvation" could be translated as "God is the one who saves me."
- "You will draw water from the wells of salvation" could be translated as "You will be refreshed as with water because God is rescuing you."

(See also: cross, deliver, punish, sin, Savior)

Bible References:

- Genesis 49:18
- Genesis 47:25-26
- Psalms 80:3
- Jeremiah 16:19-21
- Micah 6:3-5
- Luke 2:30
- Luke 8:36-37
- Acts 4:12
- Acts 28:28
- Acts 2:21
- Romans 1:16
- Romans 10:10
- Ephesians 6:17
- Philippians 1:28
- 1 Timothy 1:15-17
- Revelation 19:1-2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:8** Moses tried to **save** his fellow Israelite.
- **11:2** God provided a way to **save** the firstborn son of anyone who believed in him.
- **12:5** Moses told the Israelites, "Stop being afraid! God will fight for you today and **save** you."
- **12:13** The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to praise God because he **saved** them from the Egyptian army.
- **16:17** This pattern repeated many times: the Israelites would sin, God would punish them, they would repent, and God would send a deliverer to **save** them.
- **44:8** "You crucified Jesus, but God raised him to life again! You rejected him, but there is no other way to be **saved** except through the power of Jesus!"
- **47:11** The jailer trembled as he came to Paul and Silas and asked, "What must I do to be **saved**?" Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the Master, and you and your family will be **saved**."
- **49:12** Good works cannot **save** you.

- **49:13** God will **save** everyone who believes in Jesus and receives him as their Master. But he will not **save** anyone who does not believe in him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0983, H2421, H2502, H3444, H3467, H3468, H4190, H4422, H4931, H5338, H6308, H6403, H7682, H7951, H7965, H8104, H8199, H8668, G08030, G08040, G08060, G12950, G15080, G49820, G49910, G49920, G51980

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 8:8

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:26 Ecclesiastes 5:6
Ecclesiastes 7:20 Ecclesiastes 7:26
Ecclesiastes 8:12 Ecclesiastes 9:2
Ecclesiastes 10:4 Ecclesiastes 10:5

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 6:2 Ecclesiastes 6:3 Ecclesiastes 6:9 Ecclesiastes 7:28

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:24 Ecclesiastes 3:19
Ecclesiastes 3:21 Ecclesiastes 4:6
Ecclesiastes 7:9 Ecclesiastes 10:4
Ecclesiastes 11:5 Ecclesiastes 12:7

temple, house, house of God

Definition:

A temple is a building dedicated to the worship of a specific diety where that diety was thought to dwell. Nations around Israel had temples dedicated to their various gods. The temple in Israel was a building surrounded by walled courtyards where the Israelites came to pray and to offer sacrifices to God. It was located on Mount Moriah in the city of Jerusalem.

- Often the term “temple” referred to the whole temple complex, including the courtyards that surrounded the main building. Sometimes it referred only to the building.
- The temple building had two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.
- God referred to the temple as his dwelling place.
- King Solomon built the first temple during his reign. It was supposed to be the permanent place of worship in Jerusalem.

Translation Suggestions:

- Usually when the text says that people were “in the temple,” it is referring to the courtyards outside the building. This could be translated as “in the temple courtyards” or “in the temple complex.”
- Where it refers specifically to the building itself, some translations translate “temple” as “temple building,” to make it the reference clear.
- Ways to translate “temple” could include, “God’s holy house” or “sacred worship place.”
- Often in the Bible, the temple is referred to as “the house of Yahweh” or “the house of God.”

(See also: sacrifice, Solomon, Babylon, Holy Spirit, tabernacle, courtyard, Zion, house)

Bible References:

- Acts 3:2
- Acts 3:8
- Ezekiel 45:18-20
- Luke 19:46
- Nehemiah 10:28
- Psalm 79:1-3

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:6** David wanted to build a **temple** where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices.
- **18:2** In Jerusalem, Solomon built the **Temple** for which his father David had planned and gathered materials. Instead of at the Tent of Meeting, people now worshiped God and offered sacrifices to him at the **Temple**. God came and was present in the **Temple**, and he lived there with his people.
- **20:7** They (Babylonians) captured the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the **Temple**, and took away all the treasures.
- **20:13** When the people arrived in Jerusalem, they rebuilt the **Temple** and the wall around the city.
- **25:4** Then Satan took Jesus to the highest point on the **Temple** and said, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘God will command his angels to carry you so your foot does not hit a stone.’”
- **40:7** When he died, there was an earthquake and the large curtain that separated the people from the presence of God in the **Temple** was torn in two, from the top to the bottom.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1004, H1964, H1965, G14930, G24110, G34850

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:4

test, tested, testing, testing in the fire

Definition:

The term “test” refers to a difficult or painful experience that reveals a person’s strengths and weaknesses.

- God tests people, but he does not tempt them to sin. Satan, however, tempts people to sin.
- God sometimes uses tests to expose people’s sin. A test helps a person to turn away from sin and to draw closer to God.
- Gold and other metals are tested with fire to find out how pure and strong they are. This is a picture of how God uses painful circumstances to test his people.
- To “put to the test” can mean, “challenge something or someone to prove its value.”
- In the context of putting God to the test, it means to try to make him do a miracle for us, taking advantage of his mercy.
- Jesus told Satan that it is wrong to put God to the test. He is the almighty, holy God who is above everything and everyone.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term to “test” could also be translated as, to “challenge” or to “cause to experience difficulties” or to “prove.”
- Ways to translate “a test” could be, “a challenge” or “a difficult experience.”
- To “put to the test” could be translated as to “test” or to “set up a challenge” or to “force to prove oneself.”
- In the context of testing God, this could be translated as “trying to force God to prove his love.”
- In some contexts, when God is not the subject, the term “test” can mean “tempt.”

(See also: tempt)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:1
- 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- Acts 15:10
- Genesis 22:1
- Isaiah 7:13
- James 1:12
- Lamentations 3:40-43
- Malachi 3:10
- Philippians 1:10
- Psalm 26:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5254, H5713, H5715, H5749, H6030, H8584, G12420, G12630, G13030, G13820, G19570, G31400, G31410, G31420, G31430, G39840, G43030, G44510, G48280, G60200

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:1 Ecclesiastes 3:18
Ecclesiastes 7:23

trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness

Definition:

To “trust” something or someone is to believe that the thing or person is true or dependable. That belief is also called “trust.” A “trustworthy” person is one you can trust to do and say what is right and true, and therefore one who has the quality of “trustworthiness.”

- Trust is closely related to faith. If we trust someone, we have faith in that person to do what they promised to do.
- Having trust in someone also means depending on that person.
- To “trust in” Jesus means to believe that he is God, to believe that he died on the cross to pay for our sins, and to rely on him to save us.
- A “trustworthy saying” refers to something that is said that can be counted on to be true.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “trust” could include “believe” or “have faith” or “have confidence” or “depend on.”
- The phrase “put your trust in” is very similar in meaning to “trust in.”
- The term “trustworthy” could be translated as “dependable” or “reliable” or “can always be trusted.”

(See also: believe, confidence, faith, faithful, true)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:22-24
- 1 Timothy 4:9
- Hosea 10:12-13
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Nehemiah 13:13
- Psalm 31:5
- Titus 3:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they **trusted** in God and believed that Moses was a prophet of God.
- **14:15** Joshua was a good leader because he **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **17:2** David was a humble and righteous man who **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **34:6** Then Jesus told a story about people who **trusted** in their own good deeds and despised other people.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0539, H0982, H1556, H2620, H2622, H3176, H4009, H4268, H7365, G16790, G38720, G39820, G40060, G41000, G42760

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:10

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 1:16
Ecclesiastes 1:17 Ecclesiastes 1:18
Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 2:9 Ecclesiastes 2:12 Ecclesiastes 2:13 Ecclesiastes 2:14
Ecclesiastes 2:15 Ecclesiastes 2:19
Ecclesiastes 2:21 Ecclesiastes 2:26
Ecclesiastes 4:13 Ecclesiastes 7:10
Ecclesiastes 7:11 Ecclesiastes 7:12
Ecclesiastes 7:16 Ecclesiastes 7:19
Ecclesiastes 7:23 Ecclesiastes 7:25
Ecclesiastes 8:1 Ecclesiastes 8:16
Ecclesiastes 8:17 Ecclesiastes 9:1
Ecclesiastes 9:10 Ecclesiastes 9:13
Ecclesiastes 9:15 Ecclesiastes 9:16
Ecclesiastes 10:1 Ecclesiastes 10:10

woe

Definition:

The term “woe” refers to a feeling of great distress. It also gives a warning that someone will experience severe trouble.

- The expression “woe to” is followed by a warning to people that they will experience suffering as punishment for their sins.
- In several places in the Bible, the word “woe” is repeated, to emphasize an especially terrible judgment.
- A person who says “woe is me” or “woe to me” is expressing sorrow about severe suffering.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “woe” could also be translated as “great sorrow” or “sadness” or “calamity” or “disaster.”
- Other ways to translate the expression “Woe to (name of city)” could include, “How terrible it will be for (name of city)” or “The people in (that city) will be severely punished” or “Those people will suffer greatly.”
- The expression, “Woe is me!” or “Woe to me!” could be translated as “How sad I am!” or “I am so sad!” or “How terrible this is for me!”
- The expression “Woe to you” could also be translated as “You will suffer terribly” or “You will experience terrible troubles.”

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 13:17-18
- Habakkuk 2:12
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Jeremiah 45:1-3
- Jude 1:9-11
- Luke 6:24
- Luke 17:1-2
- Matthew 23:23

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0188, H0190, H0337, H0480, H1929, H1945, H1958, G37590

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:10 Ecclesiastes 10:16

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:17

Adam

Definition:

Adam was the first person whom God created. He and his wife Eve were made in the image of God.

- God formed Adam from dirt and breathed life into him.
- Adam's name sounds similar to the Hebrew word for "red dirt" or "ground."
- The name "Adam" is the same as the Old Testament word for "mankind" or "human being."
- All people are descendants of Adam and Eve.
- Adam and Eve disobeyed God. This separated them from God and caused sin and death to come into the world.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: death, descendant, Eve, image of God, life)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 2:14
- Genesis 3:17
- Genesis 5:1
- Genesis 11:5
- Luke 3:38
- Romans 5:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:9** Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image to be like us."
- **1:10** This man's name was **Adam**. God planted a garden where **Adam** could live, and put him there to care for it.
- **1:12** Then God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." But none of the animals could be **Adam's** helper.
- **2:11** And God clothed **Adam** and Eve with animal skins.
- **2:12** So God sent **Adam** and Eve away from the beautiful garden.
- **49:8** When **Adam** and Eve sinned, it affected all of their descendants.
- **50:16** Because **Adam** and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into this world, God cursed it and decided to destroy it.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0120, G00760

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:26

David

Definition:

David was the second king of Israel and he loved and served God. He was the main writer of the book of Psalms.

- When David was still a young boy caring for his family's sheep, God chose him to become the next king of Israel.
- David became a great fighter and led the Israelite army in battles against their enemies. His defeat of Goliath the Philistine is well known.
- King Saul tried to kill David, but God protected him, and made him king after Saul's death.
- David committed a terrible sin, but he repented and God forgave him.
- Jesus, the Messiah, is called the "Son of David" because he is a descendant of King David.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Goliath, Philistines, Saul (OT))

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 17:12-13
- 1 Samuel 20:34
- 2 Samuel 5:2
- 2 Timothy 2:8
- Acts 2:25
- Acts 13:22
- Luke 1:32
- Mark 2:26

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:2** God chose a young Israelite named **David** to be king after Saul. **David** was a shepherd from the town of Bethlehem. … **David** was a humble and righteous man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **17:3** **David** was also a great soldier and leader. When **David** was still a young man, he fought against a giant named Goliath.
- **17:4** Saul became jealous of the people's love for **David**. Saul tried many times to kill him, so **David** hid from Saul.

- **17:5** God blessed **David** and made him successful. **David** fought many battles and God helped him defeat Israel's enemies.
- **17:6** **David** wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices.
- **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.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what **David** had done, so he sent the prophet Nathan to tell **David** how evil his sin was. **David** repented of his sin and God forgave him. For the rest of his life, **David** followed and obeyed God, even in difficult times.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1732, G11380

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:1

Jerusalem

Definition:

Jerusalem was originally an ancient Canaanite city that later became the most important city in Israel. It is located about 34 kilometers west of the Salt Sea and just north of Bethlehem. It is still the capital city of Israel today.

- The name "Jerusalem" is first mentioned in the book of Joshua. Other Old Testament names for this city include "Salem" "city of Jebus," and "Zion." Both "Jerusalem" and "Salem," have the root meaning of "peace."
- Jerusalem was originally a Jebusite fortress called "Zion" which King David captured and made into his capital city.
- It was in Jerusalem that David's son Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, which was the mountain where Abraham had offered his son Isaac to God. The temple was rebuilt there after it was destroyed by the Babylonians.
- Because the temple was in Jerusalem, the major Jewish festivals were celebrated there.
- People normally referred to going "up" to Jerusalem since it is located in the mountains.

(See also: Babylon, Christ, David, Jebusites, Jesus, Solomon, temple, Zion)

Bible References:

- Galatians 4:26-27
- John 2:13
- Luke 4:9-11
- Luke 13:5
- Mark 3:7-8
- Mark 3:20-22
- Matthew 3:6
- Matthew 4:23-25
- Matthew 20:17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:5** David conquered **Jerusalem** and made it his capital city.
- **18:2** In **Jerusalem**, Solomon built the Temple for which his father David had planned and gathered materials.

- **20:7** They (Babylonians) captured the city of **Jerusalem**, destroyed the Temple, and took away all the treasures of the city and the Temple.
- **20:12** So, after seventy years in exile, a small group of Jews returned to the city of **Jerusalem** in Judah.
- **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.
- **38:2** After Jesus and the disciples arrived in **Jerusalem**, Judas went to the Jewish leaders and offered to betray Jesus to them in exchange for money.
- **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."
- **42:11** Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he told his disciples, "Stay in **Jerusalem** until you receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3389, H3390, G24140, G24150, G24190

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:1 Ecclesiastes 1:16
Ecclesiastes 2:7 Ecclesiastes 2:9

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:13 Ecclesiastes 12:12

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:13 Ecclesiastes 7:22

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:10 Ecclesiastes 1:11 Ecclesiastes 3:1 Ecclesiastes 3:2 Ecclesiastes 3:8 Ecclesiastes 3:11 Ecclesiastes 3:17 Ecclesiastes 7:17 Ecclesiastes 8:5 Ecclesiastes 8:6 Ecclesiastes 8:9 Ecclesiastes 9:8 Ecclesiastes 9:11 Ecclesiastes 9:12

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:14 Ecclesiastes 7:1

bear, bears, bore, borne, bearer, bearing, carry

Definition:

Used in this sense, the term “bear” means to carry something.

- To “bear a burden” means to carry something heavy.
- The term “burden bearers” refers to men who carry heavy things and could be translated as “burden carriers” or “carriers.”
- The term “armor bearer” could be translated as “armor carrier.”
- The phrase “bearer of news” could be translated as “carrier of news.”
- Depending on context, this term could be translated as “carry” or “bring.”

(See also: strength)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5375

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:20

beast

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “beast” is often just another way of saying “animal.”

- A wild beast is a type of animal that lives freely in the forest or fields and has not been trained by people.
- A domestic beast is an animal that lives with people and is kept for food or for performing work, such as plowing fields. Often the term “livestock” is used to refer to this kind of animal.
- The Old Testament book of Daniel and the New Testament book of Revelation describe visions which have beasts that represent evil powers and authorities that oppose God. (See: Metaphor)
- Some of these beasts are described as having strange features, such as several heads and many horns. They often have power and authority, indicating that they may represent countries, nations, or other political powers.
- Ways to translate this could include “creature” or “created thing” or “animal” or “wild animal,” depending on the context.

(See also: authority, Daniel, livestock, nation, power, reveal, Beelzebul)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:32
- 1 Samuel 17:44
- 2 Chronicles 25:18
- Jeremiah 16:1-4
- Leviticus 7:21
- Psalms 49:12-13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0338, H0929, H1165, H2123, H2416, H2423, H2874, H3753, H4806, H7409, G22260, G23410, G23420, G29340, G49680, G50740

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:18

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:17 Ecclesiastes 5:18
Ecclesiastes 5:20 Ecclesiastes 7:1
Ecclesiastes 7:10 Ecclesiastes 7:15
Ecclesiastes 8:8 Ecclesiastes 8:12
Ecclesiastes 11:8 Ecclesiastes 11:9
Ecclesiastes 12:1 Ecclesiastes 12:3

year

Definition:

When used literally, the term “year” in the Bible refers to a period of time lasting 354 days. This is according to the lunar calendar system which is based on the time it takes for the moon to go around the earth.

- A year in the modern-day solar calendar lasts 365 days divided into twelve months, based on the amount of time it takes for the earth to travel around the sun.
- In both calendar systems a year has twelve months. But an extra thirteenth month is sometimes added to the year in the lunar calendar to make up for the fact that a lunar year is eleven days less than a solar year. This helps keep the two calendars more in line with each other.
- In the Bible, the term “year” is also used in a figurative sense to refer to a general time when a special event takes place. Examples of this include, “the year of Yahweh” or “in the year of drought” or “the favorable year of the Lord.” In these contexts, “year” could be translated as “time” or “season” or “time period.”

(See also: month)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 23:31
- Acts 19:8-10
- Daniel 8:1
- Exodus 12:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H7620, H7657, H8140, H8141, G17630, G20940

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:3 Ecclesiastes 6:6 Ecclesiastes 11:8 Ecclesiastes 12:1

bread

Definition:

Bread is a food made from flour mixed with water and oil to form a dough. The dough is then shaped into a loaf and baked.

- When the term “loaf” occurs by itself, it means “loaf of bread.”
- Bread dough is usually made with something that makes it rise, such as yeast. However, bread can also be made without yeast so that it does not rise. This is called “unleavened bread” in the Bible. The ancient Israelites ate “unleavened bread” during the passover meal.
- Since bread was the main food for many people in biblical times, this term is also used in the Bible to refer to food in general. (See: Synecdoche) Many times the term “bread” can be translated more generally as “food.”
- The phrase “bread of the presence” refers to twelve loaves of bread that were placed on a golden table in the tabernacle or temple building as a sacrifice to God. These loaves represented the twelve tribes of Israel and were only for the priests to eat. This could be translated as “bread showing that God lived among them.”
- The term “bread from heaven” refers to the special white food called “manna” that God provided for the Israelites when they were wandering through the desert. Jesus also called himself the “bread that came down from heaven” and the “bread of life.”

(See also: Passover, tabernacle, temple, unleavened bread, yeast)

Bible References:

- Acts 2:46
- Acts 27:35
- Exodus 16:15
- Luke 9:13
- Mark 6:38
- Matthew 4:4
- Matthew 11:18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2557, H3899, H4635, H4682, G01060, G07400, G42860

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:7 Ecclesiastes 9:11
Ecclesiastes 10:19 Ecclesiastes 11:1

bribe, bribery, payoff, payoffs

Definition:

To “bribe” means to give someone something of value, such as money, to influence that person to do something dishonest.

- The soldiers who guarded Jesus’ empty tomb were bribed with money to lie about what happened.
- Sometimes a government official will be bribed to overlook a crime or to vote a certain way.
- The Bible forbids giving or taking bribes.
- The term, “bribe” could be translated as “dishonest payment” or “payment for lying” or “price for breaking the rules.”
- To “bribe” could be translated with a word or phrase that means, to “pay to influence (someone)” or to “pay to have a dishonest favor done” or to “pay for a favor.”

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 8:1-3
- Ecclesiastes 7:7
- Isaiah 1:23
- Micah 3:9-11
- Proverbs 15:27-28

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3724, H4979, H7809, H7810, H7936, H7966, H8021, H8641, G52600

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:7

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 8:10

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:4 Ecclesiastes 4:10

consume, devour

Definition:

The term “consume” literally means to use up something. It has several figurative meanings.

- In the Bible, the word “consume” often refers to destroying things or people.
- A fire is said to consume things, which means it destroys them by burning them up.
- God is described as a “consuming fire,” which is a description of his anger against sin. His anger results in terrible punishment for sinners who do not repent.
- To consume food means to eat or drink something.
- The phrase, “consume the land” could be translated as “destroy the land.”

Translation Suggestions

- In the context of consuming the land or people, this term could be translated as “destroy.”
- When fire is referred to, “consume” could be translated as “burn up.”
- The burning bush that Moses saw “was not consumed” which could be translated as “did not get burned up” or “did not burn up.”
- When referring to eating, “consume” could be translated as “eat” or “devour.”
- If someone’s strength is “consumed,” it means his strength is “used up” or “gone.”
- The expression, “God is a consuming fire” could be translated as “God is like a fire that burns things up” or “God is angry against sin and will destroy sinners like a fire.”

(See also: devour, wrath)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:38-40
- Deuteronomy 7:16
- Jeremiah 3:23-25
- Job 7:9
- Numbers 11:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0398, H0402, H1086, H1104, H1197, H2628, H3615, H3617, H3857, H4529, H5595, H8046, H8552, G03550, G26180, G26540, G27190, G53150

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:2

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:3

cow, bull, calf, cattle, heifer, ox

Definition:

The terms “cow,” “bull,” “heifer,” “ox,” and “cattle” all refer to a kind of large, four-legged bovine animal that eats grass.

- The female of this kind of animal is called a “cow,” the male is a “bull,” and their offspring is a “calf.”
- In the Bible, cattle were among the “clean” animals that the people could eat and use for sacrifice. They were primarily raised for their meat and milk.

A “heifer” is an adult female cow that has not yet given birth to a calf.

An “ox” is a type of cattle that is specifically trained to do agricultural work. The plural of this term is “oxen.” Usually oxen are male and have been castrated.

- Throughout the Bible, oxen were depicted as animals tied together by a yoke to pull a cart or a plow.
- Having oxen work together under a yoke was such a common occurrence in the Bible that the phrase to “be under a yoke” became a metaphor for hard work and labor.
- A bull is also a male type of cattle, but it has not been castrated and has not been trained as a work animal.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: yoke)

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:9-11
- Exodus 24:5-6
- Numbers 19:1-2
- Deuteronomy 21:3-4
- 1 Samuel 1:24-25
- 1 Samuel 15:3
- 1 Samuel 16:2-3
- 1 Kings 1:9
- 2 Chronicles 11:15
- 2 Chronicles 15:10-11
- Matthew 22:4
- Luke 13:15
- Luke 14:5
- Hebrews 9:13

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0047, H0441, H0504, H0929, H1165, H1241, H4399, H4735, H4806, H5695, H5697, H6499, H6510, H6629, H7214, H7716, H7794, H7921, H8377, H8450, G10160, G11510, G23530, G29340, G34470, G34480, G41650, G50220

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:7

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:1

cry, cry out, outcry

Definition:

The terms “cry” or “cry out” usually mean to say something loudly or urgently. Someone can “cry out” in pain, distress, anger, or fear, often with the intent of asking for help.

- The phrase “cry out” can mean to shout or to call out with the intent of asking for help.
- The terms “cry” or “cry out” can also mean to pray.
- This term could also be translated as “exclaim loudly” or “urgently ask for help,” depending on the context.
- An expression such as, “I cry out to you” could be translated as “I call to you for help” or “I urgently ask you for help.”

(See also: call speak loudly, plead, pray)

Bible References:

- Job 27:9
- Mark 5:5-6
- Mark 6:48-50
- Psalm 22:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1058, H2199, H2201, H6030, H6463, H6670, H6682, H6817, H6818, H6873, H6963, H7121, H7123, H7321, H7440, H7442, H7723, H7737, H7768, H7771, H7775, H8663, G03100, G03490, G08630, G09940, G09950, G19160, G20190, G27990, G28050, G28960, G29050, G29060, G29290, G43770, G54550

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:17

declare, proclaim, announce

Definition:

The terms “declare” and “declaration” refer to making a formal or public statement, often to emphasize something. Other terms with similar meaning include “proclaim,” “proclamation,” “announce,” and “announcement.”

- A “declaration” not only emphasizes the importance of what is being proclaimed, but it also calls attention to the one making the declaration.
- For example, in the Old Testament, a message from God is often preceded by “the declaration of Yahweh” or “this is what Yahweh declares.” This expression emphasizes that it is Yahweh himself who is saying this. The fact that the message comes from Yahweh shows how important that message is.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “declare” could also be translated as “proclaim” or “publicly state” or “strongly say” or “emphatically state.”
- The term “declaration” could also be translated as “statement” or “proclamation.”
- The phrase “this is Yahweh’s declaration” could be translated as “this is what Yahweh declares” or “this is what Yahweh says.”

(See also: preach, decree)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 16:24
- 1 Corinthians 15:31-32
- 1 Samuel 24:17-18
- Amos 2:16
- Ezekiel 5:11-12
- Matthew 7:21-23

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0262, H0559, H0816, H0874, H1696, H3045, H4853, H5002, H5042, H5046, H5608, H6567, H7121, H7561, H7878, H8085, G03120, G05180, G06690, G12290, G13440, G15550, G17180, G18340, G20970, G25110, G26050, G26070, G31400, G36700, G37240, G38220, G38700, G39550, G42960

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:12 Ecclesiastes 8:7
Ecclesiastes 10:14 Ecclesiastes 10:20

decree, decreed

Definition:

The term “decree” means to give an order that must be obeyed. The order itself can also be called a “decree.”

- A “decree” is similar to a “law,” but is generally used more often to refer to something spoken rather than written.
- The term “decree” could be translated as to “order” or to “command” or to “formally require” or to “publicly make a law.”
- God’s laws are also called decrees, statutes, or commandments.
- An example of a decree by a human ruler was the proclamation by Caesar Augustus that everyone living in the Roman Empire must go back to their hometown in order to be counted in a census.

(See also: command, declare, law)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 15:13-15
- 1 Kings 8:57-58
- Acts 17:5-7
- Daniel 2:13
- Esther 1:22
- Luke 2:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H0633, H1697, H5715, H1504, H1510, H1881, H1882, H1696, H2706, H2708, H2710, H2711, H2782, H2852, H2940, H2941, H2942, H3791, H3982, H4055, H4406, H4687, H4941, H5407, H5713, H6599, H6680, H7010, H8421, G13780

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 8:11

delight

Definition:

The term “delight” means great pleasure or great joy.

- To “delight in” something means to “to take pleasure in” or “take joy in” or “be happy about” it. If a person “delights in” something, it means that he enjoys it very much.
- When something is very agreeable or pleasing it is called “delightful.”
- The expression “my delight is in the law of Yahweh” could be translated as “the law of Yahweh gives me great joy” or “I love to obey the laws of Yahweh” or “I am happy when I obey Yahweh’s commands.”
- The phrases “take no delight in” and “have no delight in” could be translated as “not at all pleased by” or “not happy about.”
- The phrase “delight himself in” means “he enjoys doing” something or “he is very happy about” something or someone.
- The term “delights” refers to things that a person enjoys. This could be translated as “pleasures” or “things that give joy.”
- An expression such as “I delight to do your will” could also be translated as “I enjoy doing your will” or “I am very happy when I obey you.”

Bible References:

- Proverbs 8:30
- Psalm 1:2
- Psalms 119:69-70
- Song of Songs 1:3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1523, H2530, H2531, H2532, H2654, H2655, H2656, H2836, H4574, H5276, H5727, H5730, H6026, H6027, H7306, H7381, H7521, H7522, H8057, H8173, H8191, H8588, H8597

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:4 Ecclesiastes 8:3

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:15

destroy, destruction, annihilate

Definition:

The term “destroy” means to completely make an end to something, so that it no longer exists.

- The term “destroyer” means “a person who destroys.”
- This term is often used in the Old Testament as a general reference to anyone who destroys other people, such as an invading army.
- When God sent the angel to kill all the firstborn males in Egypt, that angel was referred to as “the destroyer of the firstborn.” This could be translated as “the one (or angel) who killed the firstborn males.”
- In the book of Revelation about the end times, Satan or some other evil spirit is called “the Destroyer.” He is the “one who destroys” because his purpose is to destroy and ruin everything God created.

(See also: angel, Egypt, firstborn, Passover)

Bible References:

- Exodus 12:23
- Hebrews 11:28
- Jeremiah 6:26
- Judges 16:24

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0006, H0007, H0622, H0398, H1104, H1197, H1820, H1826, H1942, H2000, H2015, H2026, H2040, H2254, H2255, H2717, H2718, H2763, H2764, H3238, H3341, H3381, H3423, H3582, H3615, H3617, H3772, H3807, H4191, H4229, H4591, H4658, H4889, H5218, H5221, H5307, H5362, H5420, H5422, H5428, H5595, H5642, H6365, H6789, H6979, H7665, H7667, H7703, H7722, H7760, H7843, H7921, H8045, H8074, H8077, H8316, H8552, G03550, G03960, G06220, G08530, G13110, G18420, G20490, G25060, G25070, G26470, G26730, G27040, G30890, G36450, G41990, G53510, G53560

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:6 Ecclesiastes 5:14
Ecclesiastes 7:7

devour

Definition:

The term “devour” means to eat or consume in an aggressive manner.

- Using this word in a figurative sense, Paul warned believers to not devour one another, meaning to not attack or destroy each other with words or actions (Galatians 5:15).
- Also in a figurative sense, the term “devour” is often used with a meaning of “completely destroy” as when talking about nations devouring each other or a fire devouring buildings and people.
- This term could also be translated as “completely consume” or “totally destroy.”

(See also: consume)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 5:8
- Amos 1:10
- Exodus 24:17
- Ezekiel 16:20
- Luke 15:30
- Matthew 23:13-15
- Psalms 21:9

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0398, H0399, H0400, H0402, H1104, H1105, H3216, H3615, H3857, H3898, H7462, H7602, G20680, G26660, G27190, G53150

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:5 Ecclesiastes 5:11
Ecclesiastes 5:12 Ecclesiastes 5:17
Ecclesiastes 6:2 Ecclesiastes 10:16

discern, discernment, distinguish

Definition:

The term “discern” means to be able to understand something, especially being able to know whether something is right or wrong.

- The term “discernment” refers to understanding and deciding wisely about a certain matter.
- It means to have wisdom and good judgment.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “discern” could also be translated as “understand” or “know the difference between” or “distinguish good and evil” or “judge rightly about” or “perceive right from wrong.”
- “Discernment” could be translated as “understanding” or “ability to distinguish good and evil.”

(See also: judge, wise)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 3:7-9
- Genesis 41:33-34
- Proverbs 1:5
- Psalms 19:12

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0995, H2940, H4209, H5234, H8085, G03500, G12520, G12530, G29240

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:12 Ecclesiastes 5:1
Ecclesiastes 7:25 Ecclesiastes 9:11

doctrine, teaching, belief, beliefs, instruction, knowledge

Definition:

The word “doctrine” literally means “teaching.” It usually refers to religious teaching.

- In the context of Christian teachings, “doctrine” refers to all teachings about God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—including all his character qualities and everything he has done.
- It also refers to everything God teaches Christians about how to live holy lives that bring glory to him.
- The word “doctrine” is sometimes also used to refer to false or worldly religious teachings that come from human beings. The context makes the meaning clear.
- This term could also be translated as “teaching.”

(See also: teach)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 1:3
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Mark 7:6-7
- Matthew 15:7-9

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3948, G13190, G13220, G20850

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:21 Ecclesiastes 2:26
Ecclesiastes 3:14 Ecclesiastes 7:12
Ecclesiastes 9:10 Ecclesiastes 12:9

dream

Definition:

A dream is something that people see or experience in their minds while they are sleeping.

- Dreams often seem like they are really happening, but they are not.
- Sometimes God causes people to dream about something so they can learn from it. He may also speak directly to people in their dreams.
- In the Bible, God gave special dreams to certain people to give them a message, often about something that would happen in the future.
- A dream is different from a vision. Dreams happen while a person is asleep, but visions usually happen when a person is awake.

(See also: vision)

Bible References:

- Acts 2:16-17
- Daniel 1:17-18
- Daniel 2:1
- Genesis 37:6
- Genesis 40:4-5
- Matthew 2:13
- Matthew 2:19-21

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:2** Joseph’s brothers hated him because their father loved him most and because Joseph had **dreamed** that he would be their ruler.
- **8:6** One night, the Pharaoh, which is what the Egyptians called their kings, had two **dreams** that disturbed him greatly. None of his advisors could tell him the meaning of the **dreams**.
- **8:7** God had given Joseph the ability to interpret **dreams**, so Pharaoh had Joseph brought to him from the prison. Joseph interpreted the **dreams** for him and said, “God is going to send seven years of plentiful harvests followed by seven years of famine.”

- **16:11** So that night, Gideon went down to the camp and heard a Midianite soldier telling his friend about something he had **dreamed**. The man's friend said, "This **dream** means that Gideon's army will defeat the Midianite army!"
- **23:1** He (Joseph) did not want to shame her (Mary), so he planned to quietly divorce her. Before he could do that, an angel came and spoke to him in a **dream**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1957, H2472, H2492, H2493, G17970, G17980, G36770

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:3 Ecclesiastes 5:7

drunk, drunkard

Definition:

The term "drunk" means to be intoxicated from drinking too much of an alcoholic beverage.

- A "drunkard" is a person who is often drunk. This kind of person could also be referred to as an "alcoholic."
- The Bible tells believers not to be drunk with alcoholic drinks, but to be controlled by God's Holy Spirit.
- The Bible teaches that drunkenness is unwise and influences a person to sin in other ways.
- Other ways to translate "drunk" could include "inebriated" or "intoxicated" or "having too much alcohol" or "filled with fermented drink."

(See also: wine)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:11-13
- 1 Samuel 25:36
- Jeremiah 13:13
- Luke 7:34
- Luke 21:34
- Proverbs 23:19-21

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5433, H7301, H7910, H7937, H7941, H7943, H8354, H8358, G31780, G31820, G31830, G31840, G36300, G36320

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:17

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:4 Ecclesiastes 5:2 Ecclesiastes 5:9 Ecclesiastes 7:20 Ecclesiastes 8:14 Ecclesiastes 8:16 Ecclesiastes 10:7 Ecclesiastes 10:16 Ecclesiastes 10:17 Ecclesiastes 11:2 Ecclesiastes 11:3 Ecclesiastes 12:7

endure, endurance

Definition:

The term “endure” means to last a long time or to bear something difficult with patience.

- It also means to stand firm when times of testing come, without giving up.
- The term “endurance” can mean “patience” or “bearing up under a trial” or “persevering when being persecuted.”
- The encouragement to Christians to “endure to the end” is telling them to obey Jesus, even if this causes them to suffer.
- To “endure suffering” can also mean to “experience suffering.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate the term “endure” could include “persevere” or “keep believing” or “continue to do what God wants you to do” or “stand firm.”
- In some contexts, to “endure” could be translated as to “experience” or to “go through.”
- With the meaning of lasting for a long time, the term “endure” could also be translated as “last” or “continue.” The phrase “will not endure” could be translated as “will not last” or “will not continue to survive.”
- Ways to translate “endurance” could include “perseverance” or “continuing to believe” or “remaining faithful.”

(See also: persevere)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 2:11-13
- James 1:3
- James 1:12
- Luke 21:19
- Matthew 13:21
- Revelation 1:9
- Romans 5:3-5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0386, H3201, H3557, H5331, H5375, H5975, G04300, G09070, G15260, G20050, G20760, G25940, G33060, G47220, G52780, G52810, G52970, G53420

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:22 Ecclesiastes 3:14

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:4

feast, feasting

Definition:

The term “feast” is a very general term that refers to an event where people gather to celebrate something by eating a large meal together. In biblical times, a feast sometimes lasted for several days or more.

- Often there are special kinds of food that are eaten at a certain feast.
- The religious festivals that God commanded the Jews to celebrate usually included having a feast together. For this reason the festivals are often called “feasts.”
- In biblical times, kings and other rich and powerful people often gave feasts to entertain their family or friends.
- In the story about the lost son, the father had a special feast prepared to celebrate the return of his son.
- The term to “feast” could also be translated as to “eat lavishly” or to “celebrate by eating lots of food” or to “eat a special, large meal.”
- Depending on the context, “feast” could be translated as “celebrating together with a large meal” or “a meal with a lot of food” or “a celebration meal.”

(See also: festival, banquet)

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 2:12-14
- Genesis 26:30
- Genesis 29:22
- Genesis 40:20
- Jude 1:12-13
- Luke 2:43
- Luke 14:7-9
- Matthew 22:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0398, H2077, H2282, H3899, H3900, H4150, H4797, H4960, H7646, H8057, H8354, G00260, G10620, G11730, G18590, G21650, G49100

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:2

flock, herd

Definition:

In the Bible, “flock” refers to a group of sheep or goats and “herd” refers to a group of cattle or pigs.

- Different languages may have different ways of naming groups of animals or birds.

Translation Suggestions

- Consider what terms are used in your language to refer to different groups of animals, and use the appropriate term for each kind of animal.
- If your language uses the same word to refer to both groups of sheep and cattle, then you may need to say “groups of sheep” where the Bible says only “flocks,” and “groups of cattle” where the Bible says only “herds.” Alternatively, if the Biblical context does not demand differentiation (if the text simply says “flocks and herds,” meaning all their domesticated animals) you may just use the one word once.

(See also: goat, cow, pig, sheep)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 10:28-29
- 2 Chronicles 17:11
- Deuteronomy 14:22-23
- Luke 2:8-9
- Matthew 8:30
- Matthew 26:31

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0951, H1241, H2835, H4029, H4735, H4830, H5349, H5739, H6251, H6629, H7399, H7462, G00340, G41670, G41680

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:7

alien, foreigner, sojourn

Definition:

The term “foreigner” refers to a person living in a country that is not his own. Another name for a foreigner is an “alien.” To sojourn is to live temporarily as a foreigner.

- In the Old Testament, this term especially refers to anyone who came from a different people group than the people he was living among.
- A foreigner is also a person whose language and culture is different from those of a particular region.
- For example, when Naomi and her family moved to Moab, they were foreigners there. When Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth later moved to Israel, Ruth was called a “foreigner” there because she was not originally from Israel.
- A sojourner is another word for a temporary foreign resident.
- The apostle Paul told the Ephesians that before they knew Christ, they were “foreigners” to God’s covenant.
- Sometimes “foreigner” is translated as “stranger,” but it should not refer only to someone who is unfamiliar or unknown.

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 2:17
- Acts 7:29-30
- Deuteronomy 1:15-16
- Genesis 15:12-13
- Genesis 17:27
- Luke 17:18
- Matthew 17:24-25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0312, H0628, H0776, H1471, H1481, H1616, H2114, H3937, H4033, H5236, H5237, H6154, H8453, G02410, G02450, G05260, G09150, G18540, G35810, G39270, G39410

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:2

forsake, forsaken, leave

Definition:

The term “forsake” means to abandon someone or to give up something. Someone who has been “forsaken” has been deserted or abandoned by someone else.

- When people “forsake” God, they are being unfaithful to him by disobeying him.
- When God “forsakes” people, he has stopped helping them and allowed them to experience suffering in order to cause them to turn back to him.
- This term can also mean to forsake things, such as forsaking, or not following, God’s teachings.
- The term “forsaken” can be used in the past tense, as in “he has forsaken you” or as in referring to someone who has “been forsaken.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate this term could include “abandon” or “neglect” or “give up” or “go away from” or “leave behind,” depending on the context.
- To “forsake” God’s law could be translated “disobey God’s law.” This could also be translated as “abandon” or “give up on” or “stop obeying” his teachings or his laws.
- The phrase “be forsaken” can be translated as “be abandoned” or “be deserted.”
- It more clearer to use different words to translate this term, depending on whether the text describes forsaking a thing or a person.

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 6:11-13
- Daniel 11:29-30
- Genesis 24:27
- Joshua 24:16-18
- Matthew 27:45-47
- Proverbs 27:9-10
- Psalms 71:18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0488, H2308, H5203, H5428, H5800, H5805, H7503, G06460, G06570, G08630, G14590, G26410

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:18 Ecclesiastes 10:2 Ecclesiastes 10:4

fountain, source, spring

Definition:

The terms “fountain” and “spring” usually refer to a large amount of water that flows out naturally from the ground.

- These words are also used figuratively in the Bible to refer to blessings flowing from God or to refer to something that cleanses and purifies.
- In modern times, a fountain is often a manmade object that has water flowing out of it, such as a drinking fountain. Make sure that the translation of this term refers to a natural source of flowing water.
- Compare the translation of this term with how the term “flood” is translated.

(See also: flood)

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 2:17
- Genesis 7:11
- Genesis 8:2
- Genesis 24:13
- Genesis 24:42
- James 3:11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0953, H1530, H1543, H3222, H4002, H4161, H4456, H4599, H4726, H5033, H5869, H5927, H6524, H6779, H8444, H8666, G02420, G40770

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:6

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:5 Ecclesiastes 12:5

gate, gate bar, gatekeeper, gatepost, gateway

Definition:

The term "gate" refers to an access point in a fence, wall, or other kind of barrier that surrounds a house, property, city, etc.

- A city gate could be opened to allow people, animals, and cargo to travel in and out of the city.
- To protect the city, its walls and gates were thick and strong. Gates were closed and locked with a metal or wooden bar to prevent enemy soldiers from entering the city.
- A "bar" for a gate refers to a wood or metal bar that can be moved into place so that the doors of the gate cannot be opened from the outside.
- In Bible times, a city gate was often the social center for that town or city. It was a place where news of current events was exchanged between people, where business transactions occurred, and where civil judgments were made.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate "gate" could be "door" or "wall opening" or "barrier" or "entranceway."
- The phrase "bars of the gate" could be translated as "gate bolts" or "wooden beams to lock the gate" or "metal locking rods of the gate."

Bible References:

- Acts 9:24
- Acts 10:18
- Deuteronomy 21:18-19
- Genesis 19:1
- Genesis 24:60
- Matthew 7:13

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1817, H5592, H6607, H8179, G23740, G44390, G44400

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:4

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:4

gold, golden

Definition:

Gold is a yellow, high quality metal that was used for making jewelry and religious objects. It was the most valuable metal in ancient times.

- In Bible times, many different kinds of objects were made out of solid gold or were covered with a thin layer of gold.
- These objects included earrings and other jewelry, and idols, altars, and other objects used in the tabernacle or temple, such as the ark of the covenant.
- In Old Testament times, gold was used as a means of exchange in buying and selling. It was weighed on a scale to determine its value.
- Later on, gold and other metals such as silver were used to make coins to use in buying and selling
- When referring to something that is not solid gold, but only has a thin covering of gold, the term “golden” or “gold-covered” or “gold-overlaid” could also be used.
- Sometimes an object is described as “gold-colored,” which means it has the yellow color of gold, but may not actually be made of gold.

(See also: altar, ark of the covenant, false god, silver, tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:7
- 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- 2 Chronicles 1:15
- Acts 3:6
- Daniel 2:32

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1220, H1722, H2091, H2742, H3800, H5458, H6884, H6885, G55520, G55530, G55540, G55570

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:8 Ecclesiastes 12:6

harvest, reap

Definition:

The term “harvest” refers to the gather the ripe fruits, vegetables, seeds, or grains from the plants on which they were growing. The term “reap” means to harvest crops.

- The harvest time normally happens at the end of a growing season.
- The Israelites held a “Festival of Harvest” or “Festival of Ingathering” to celebrate the reaping of the food crops. God commanded them to offer the first fruits of these crops as a sacrifice to him.
- In biblical times, reapers usually harvested crops by hand, either pulling up the plants or cutting them with a sharp cutting tool.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate the concept with the word that is commonly used in the language to refer to the harvesting of crops.
- The event of harvesting could be translated as “time of gathering in” or “crop gathering time” or “fruit picking time.”
- The verb to “harvest” could be translated as to “gather in” or to “pick up” or to “collect.”

(See also: firstfruits, festival, good news)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 9:9-11
- 2 Samuel 21:7-9
- Galatians 6:9-10
- Isaiah 17:11
- James 5:7-8
- Leviticus 19:9
- Matthew 9:38
- Ruth 1:22
- Galatians 6:9-10
- Matthew 6:25-26
- Matthew 13:30
- Matthew 13:36-39
- Matthew 25:24

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2758, H4395, H4672 H7105, H7114, H7938, G02700, G23250, G23260, G23270

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 11:4

horse, warhorse, horseback, stallion, steed, mare

Definition:

A horse is a large, four-legged animal that in Bible times was mostly used for war and for transporting people. A stallion is a male horse and a mare is a female horse. "Steed" is a poetic word referring to a horse that is powerful or fast.

- Some horses were used to pull carts or chariots, while others were used to carry individual riders.
- In the Bible, horses were considered to be valuable possessions and a measure of wealth, mainly because of their use in war. For example, part of King Solomon's great wealth was the thousands of horses and chariots that he had.
- Animals that are similar to the horse are the donkey and the mule.
- Horses often wear a bit and bridle on their heads so they can be guided.

(See also: chariot, donkey, Solomon)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:4
- 2 Kings 2:11
- Exodus 14:23-25
- Ezekiel 23:5-7
- Zechariah 6:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0047, H5483, H5484, H6571, H7409, G24620

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:7

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:14 Ecclesiastes 10:18
Ecclesiastes 12:3 Ecclesiastes 12:5

household, house

Definition:

The term “household” refers to all the people who live together in a house, including family members and all their servants.

- Used in this sense, the term “house” means “household” and refers to all the people who live together in one house or in a multi-structure home compound (whether buildings or tents), including family members and all their servants.
- Managing a household would have involved directing the servants and also taking care of the property.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, “house” could be translated as “household” or “family.”
- Depending on the context, the phrase “your household” could be translated as “those who live in your house” or “your family.”

(See also: house dwelling structure, house descendants nation)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1004, H1397, G36090, G36095, G36140, G36150, G36240

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:7 Ecclesiastes 7:2

interpret, interpretation, interpreter

Definition:

The terms “interpret” and “interpretation” refer to understanding and explaining the meaning of something that is not clear.

- Often in the Bible these terms are used in connection with explaining the meaning of dreams or visions.
- When the king of Babylon had some confusing dreams, God helped Daniel to interpret them and to explain their meanings.
- The “interpretation” of the dream is the “explanation” of the meaning of the dream.
- In the Old Testament, God sometimes used dreams to reveal to people what would happen in the future. So the interpretations of those dreams were prophecies.
- The term “interpret” can also refer to figuring out the meaning of other things, such as figuring out what the weather will be like based on how cold or hot it is, how windy it is, and what the sky looks like.
- Ways to translate the term “interpret” could include, “figure out the meaning of” or “explain” or “give the meaning of.”
- The term “interpretation” could also be translated as “explanation” or “meaning.”

(See also: Babylon, Daniel, dream, prophet, vision)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 12:10
- Daniel 4:4-6
- Genesis 40:4-5
- Judges 7:15-16
- Luke 12:56

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0995, H3887, H6591, H6622, H6623, H7667, H7760, H7922, G12520, G13280, G13290, G13810, G19550, G20580, G31770, G47930

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 8:1

iron

Definition:

Iron is a hard, slightly shiny metal that is used to make many things.

- In Bible times, iron was used to make coins, chains, furniture, tools, weapons, chariots, gates, nails and other things.
- Iron is a very strong metal.
- If your culture does not have iron you could translate this term with a general expression which describes it such as “hard metal” or “strong metal.”
- If your culture does not have iron you could translate the phrase “an iron tool” as “a tool made of hard metal” or “a strong metal tool.”

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: armor)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1270

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:10

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:1 Ecclesiastes 2:2 Ecclesiastes 2:10 Ecclesiastes 2:26 Ecclesiastes 3:12 Ecclesiastes 3:22 Ecclesiastes 4:16 Ecclesiastes 5:20 Ecclesiastes 7:4 Ecclesiastes 8:15 Ecclesiastes 8:15 Ecclesiastes 9:7 Ecclesiastes 10:19 Ecclesiastes 11:8 Ecclesiastes 11:9 Ecclesiastes 11:9

king, kingship

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “king” refers to a man who is the supreme ruler of a particular group of people or a particular region of land (or both).

- In biblical times, a king was usually chosen to rule on the basis of family relation to the previous king(s). When a king died, usually his oldest son became the next king.
- The Bible often refers to God is as a king who rules over the entire universe (in a general sense) and over his people (in a specific sense).
- The New Testament refers to Jesus as a king in various ways, including: “king of the Jews;” “king of Israel;” and “king of kings.”
- Depending on the context, the term “king” might also be translated as “supreme chief” or “sovereign ruler.”
- The phrase “king of kings” might be translated as “king who rules over all other kings” or “supreme ruler who has authority over all other rulers.”

(See also: authority, Herod Antipas, kingdom, kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 6:15-16
- 2 Kings 5:18
- 2 Samuel 5:3
- Acts 7:9-10
- Acts 13:22
- John 1:49-51
- Luke 1:5
- Luke 22:24-25
- Matthew 5:35
- Matthew 14:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:6** One night, the Pharaoh, which is what the Egyptians called their kings, had two dreams that disturbed him greatly.
- **16:1** The Israelites had no **king**, so everyone did what they thought was right for them.
- **16:18** Finally, the people asked God for a **king** like all the other nations had.

- **17:5** Eventually, Saul died in battle, and David became **king** of Israel. He was a good **king**, and the people loved him.
- **21:6** God's prophets also said that the Messiah would be a prophet, a priest, and a **king**.
- **48:14** David was the **king** of Israel, but Jesus is the **king** of the entire universe!

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4427, H4428, H4430, G09350, G09360

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:1 Ecclesiastes 2:8 Ecclesiastes 2:12 Ecclesiastes 4:13 Ecclesiastes 5:9 Ecclesiastes 8:2 Ecclesiastes 8:4 Ecclesiastes 9:14 Ecclesiastes 10:16 Ecclesiastes 10:17 Ecclesiastes 10:20

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:16 Ecclesiastes 1:17
Ecclesiastes 1:18 Ecclesiastes 2:14
Ecclesiastes 2:19 Ecclesiastes 3:21
Ecclesiastes 4:13 Ecclesiastes 6:5
Ecclesiastes 6:8 Ecclesiastes 6:10
Ecclesiastes 6:12 Ecclesiastes 7:22
Ecclesiastes 8:1 Ecclesiastes 8:5 Ecclesiastes 8:7 Ecclesiastes 8:12 Ecclesiastes 8:16
Ecclesiastes 8:17 Ecclesiastes 9:1
Ecclesiastes 9:5 Ecclesiastes 9:12
Ecclesiastes 10:14 Ecclesiastes 10:15
Ecclesiastes 11:2 Ecclesiastes 11:5
Ecclesiastes 11:6 Ecclesiastes 11:9

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:3 Ecclesiastes 2:10
Ecclesiastes 2:11 Ecclesiastes 2:11
Ecclesiastes 2:17 Ecclesiastes 2:18
Ecclesiastes 2:19 Ecclesiastes 2:21
Ecclesiastes 2:22 Ecclesiastes 2:24
Ecclesiastes 3:11 Ecclesiastes 3:13
Ecclesiastes 3:22 Ecclesiastes 4:4
Ecclesiastes 4:8 Ecclesiastes 5:15
Ecclesiastes 5:16 Ecclesiastes 5:18
Ecclesiastes 6:7 Ecclesiastes 7:13
Ecclesiastes 9:1 Ecclesiastes 9:10
Ecclesiastes 11:5

lion, lioness

Definition:

A lion is a large, cat-like, that has animal, with powerful teeth and claws for killing and tearing apart its prey.

- Lions have powerful bodies and great speed to catch their prey. Their fur is short and golden-brown.
- Male lions have a mane of hair that encircles their heads.
- Lions kill other animals to eat them and can be dangerous to human beings.
- When King David was a boy, he killed lions that tried to attack the sheep he was caring for.
- Samson also killed a lion, with his bare hands.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: David, leopard, Samson, sheep)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:22-23
- 1 Kings 7:29
- Proverbs 19:12
- Psalms 17:12
- Revelation 5:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0738, H0739, H0744, H3715, H3833, H3918, H7826, H7830, G30230

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:4

livestock, animals

Definition:

The term "livestock" refers to animals which are raised to provide food and other useful products. Some types of livestock are also trained as work animals.

- Kinds of livestock include sheep, cattle, goats, horses, and donkeys.
- In Biblical times, wealth was partly measured by how much livestock a person had.
- Livestock are used to produce items such as wool, milk, cheese, housing materials, and clothing.
- This term could also be translated as "farm animals."

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: cow, ox, donkey, goat, horse, sheep)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 3:15-17
- Genesis 30:29
- Joshua 1:14-15
- Nehemiah 9:36-37
- Numbers 3:41

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0929, H4399, H4735

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:19 Ecclesiastes 3:21

locust

Definition:

The term “locust” refers to a type of large, flying grasshopper that sometimes flies with many other of its kind in a very destructive swarm that eats all vegetation.

- Locusts and other grasshoppers are large, straight-winged insects with long, jointed back legs that give them the ability to jump a long distance way.
- In the Old Testament, swarming locusts were referred to figuratively as a symbol or picture of the overwhelming devastation that would come as a result of Israel’s disobedience.
- God sent locusts as one of the ten plagues against the Egyptians.
- The New Testament says that locusts were a main source of food for John the Baptist while he was living in the desert.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: captive, Egypt, Israel, John (the Baptist), plague)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 6:28
- Deuteronomy 28:38-39
- Exodus 10:3-4
- Mark 1:6
- Proverbs 30:27-28

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0697, H1357, H1462, H1501, H2284, H3218, H5556, H6767, G02000

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:5

lover

Definition:

The term “lover” literally means “person who loves.” Usually this refers to people who are in a sexual relationship with each other.

- When the term “lover” is used in the Bible, it usually refers to a person who is involved in a sexual relationship with someone he or she is not married to.
- This wrong sexual relationship is often used in the Bible to refer to Israel’s disobedience to God in worshiping idols. So the term “lovers” is also used in a figurative way to refer to the idols that the people of Israel worshiped. In these contexts, this term could possibly be translated by “immoral partners” or “partners in adultery” or “idols.” [See Metaphor]
- A “lover” of money is someone who puts too much importance on getting money and being rich.
- In the Old Testament book Song of Songs, the term “lover” is used in a positive way.

(See also: adultery, false god, false god, love)

Bible References:

- Hosea 2:5
- Jeremiah 3:2
- Lamentations 1:2
- Luke 16:14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0157, H0158, H0868, H5689, H7453, H8566, G08650, G08660, G53660, G53670, G53690, G53770

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:10

lowly, lowliness

Definition:

The terms “lowly” and “lowliness” refer to being poor or having low status. Being lowly can also have the meaning of being humble.

- Jesus humbled himself to the lowly position of becoming a human being and serving others.
- His birth was lowly because he was born in a place where animals were kept, not in a palace.
- Having a lowly attitude is the opposite of being proud.
- Ways to translate “lowly” could include “humble” or “of low status” or “unimportant.”
- The word “lowliness” could also be translated as “humility” or “little importance.”

(See also: humble, proud)

Bible References:

- Acts 20:19
- Ezekiel 17:14
- Luke 1:48-49
- Romans 12:16

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6041, H6819, H8217, G50110, G50120, G50140

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:6

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:2

messenger

Definition:

The term “messenger” refers to someone who is given a message to tell others.

- In ancient times, a messenger would be sent from the battlefield to tell people back in the city what was happening.
- An angel is a special kind of messenger whom God sends to give people messages. Some translations translate “angel” as “messenger.”
- John the Baptist was called a messenger who came before Jesus to announce the Messiah’s coming and to prepare people to receive him.
- Jesus’ apostles were his messengers to go share with other people the good news about the kingdom of God.

(See also: angel, apostle, John (the Baptist))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 19:1-3
- 1 Samuel 6:21
- 2 Kings 1:1-2
- Luke 7:27
- Matthew 11:10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1319, H4397, H4398, H5046, H5894, H6735, H6737, H7323, H7971, G00320, G06520

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:6

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:11 Ecclesiastes 9:16 Ecclesiastes 10:17

mourn, mourner, weeping

Definition:

The terms "mourn" and "mourning" refer to expressing deep grief, usually in response to the death of someone.

- In many cultures, mourning includes specific outward behaviors that show this sadness and grief.
- The Israelites and other people groups in ancient times expressed mourning through loud wailing and lamenting. They also wore rough clothing made of sackcloth and put ashes on themselves.
- Hired mourners, usually women, would loudly weep and wail from the time of death until well after the body was put in the tomb.
- The typical period of mourning was seven days, but could last as long as thirty days (as for Moses and Aaron) or seventy days (as for Jacob).
- The Bible also uses the term figuratively to talk about "mourning" because of sin. This refers to feeling deeply grieved because sin hurts God and people.

(See also: sackcloth, sin)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 15:34-35
- 2 Samuel 1:11
- Genesis 23:2
- Luke 7:31-32
- Matthew 11:17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0056, H0057, H0060, H0205, H0578, H0584, H0585, H1058, H1065, H1068, H1671, H1897, H1899, H4553, H4798, H5092, H5098, H5110, H5594, H6937, H6941, H8386, G23540, G28750, G36020, G39960, G39970

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:2 Ecclesiastes 7:4 Ecclesiastes 12:5

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:14

noble, nobleman, royal official

Definition:

The term “noble” refers to something that is excellent and of high quality. A “nobleman” is a person who belongs to a high political or social class. A man “of noble birth” is one who was born a nobleman.

- A nobleman was often an officer of the state, a close servant to the king.
- The term “nobleman” could also be translated by, “king’s official” or “government officer.”

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 23:20-21
- Daniel 4:36
- Ecclesiastes 10:17
- Luke 19:12
- Psalm 16:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0117, H1419, H2715, H3358, H3513, H5057, H5081, H6440, H6579, H7261, H8282, H8269, G09370, G21040

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:17

oath, vow, swear, swearing, swear by, sworn

Definition:

The term “oath” in the Bible refers to a formal promise, usually made in a legal or religious context, in which the person making the oath accepts some kind of accountability or punishment if he does not fulfill his promise. In the Bible, the term “swear” means to make an oath. A “vow” is a solemn promise or oath that a person makes to God.

- In a court of law, a witness often gives an oath to promise that whatever he says will be true and factual.
- In modern times, one meaning of the word “swear” is to use foul or vulgar language. This is never its meaning in the Bible.
- The term “swear by” means to use the name of something or someone as the basis or power on which the oath is made.
- Abraham and Abimelech swore an oath when they made a covenant together concerning the use of a well.
- Abraham told his servant to swear (formally promise) that he would find Isaac a wife from among Abraham’s relatives.
- God also made oaths in which he made promises to his people.
- If a person in ancient Israel made a vow to God, that person was obligated to fulfill the vow. The ancient Israelites believed that God might punish a person who did not fulfill a vow that he made.
- In ancient Israel, sometimes a person would ask God to protect him or provide for him in exchange for making the vow. However, the ancient Israelites did not believe that God was obligated to fulfill these requests.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “an oath” could also be translated as “a pledge” or “a solemn promise.”
- To “swear” could be translated as to “formally promise” or to “pledge” or to “commit to do something.”
- Other ways to translate “swear by my name” could include “make a promise using my name to confirm it.”
- To “swear by heaven and earth” could be translated as to, “promise to do something, stating that heaven and earth will confirm it.”
- Make sure the translation of “swear” or “oath” does not refer to cursing. In the Bible it does not have that meaning.
- Depending on the context, the term “vow” can be translated as “solemn promise” or “solemn oath” or “promise made to God.”

(See also: Abimelech, covenant, promise)

Bible References:

- Genesis 21:23
- Genesis 24:3
- Genesis 31:51-53
- Genesis 47:31
- Luke 1:73
- Mark 6:26
- Matthew 5:36
- Matthew 14:6-7
- Matthew 26:72
- 1 Corinthians 7:27-28
- Acts 21:23
- Genesis 28:21
- Genesis 31:12-13
- Jonah 1:14-16
- Jonah 2:9-10
- Proverbs 7:14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0422, H0423, H3027, H5375, H7621, H7650, G03320, G36600, G37270, G37280, H5087, H5088, G21710

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:4 Ecclesiastes 5:5 Ecclesiastes 8:2 Ecclesiastes 9:2

oil

Definition:

Oil is a thick, clear liquid that can be taken from certain plants. In Bible times, oil usually came from olives.

- Olive oil was used for cooking, anointing, sacrifice, lamps, and medicine.
- In ancient times, olive oil was highly prized, and the possession of oil was considered a measurement of wealth.
- Make sure the translation of this term refers to the kind of oil that can be used in cooking, not motor oil. Some languages have different words for these different kinds of oil.

(See also: olive, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 1:21
- Exodus 29:2
- Leviticus 5:11
- Leviticus 8:1-3
- Mark 6:12-13
- Matthew 25:7-9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2091, H3323, H4887, H6671, H7246, H8081, G16370, G34640

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:1 Ecclesiastes 9:8 Ecclesiastes 10:1

palace, house

Definition:

The term "palace" refers to the building or house where a king lived, along with his family members and servants.

- The high priest also lived in a palace complex, as mentioned in the New Testament.
- Palaces were very ornate, with beautiful architecture and furnishings.
- The buildings and furnishings of a palace were constructed of stone or wood, and often were overlaid with expensive wood, gold, or ivory.
- Many other people also lived and worked in the palace complex, which usually included several buildings and courtyards.

(See also: courtyard, high priest, king)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 28:7-8
- 2 Samuel 11:2-3
- Daniel 5:5-6
- Matthew 26:3-5
- Psalms 45:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0759, H1002, H1004, H1055, H1406, H1964, H1965, G08330, G09330, G42320

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:4

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 3:8

possess, possessed, possession, dispossess

Definition:

The terms “possess” and “possession” usually refer to owning something. They can also mean to gain control over something or occupy an area of land.

- In the Old Testament, this term is often used in the context of “possessing” or “taking possession of” an area of land.
- When Yahweh commanded the Israelites to “possess” the land of Canaan, it meant that they should go into the land and live there. This involved first conquering the Canaanite peoples who were living on that land.
- Yahweh told the Israelites that he had given them the land of Canaan as “their possession.” This could also be translated as “their rightful place to live.”
- The people of Israel were also called Yahweh’s “special possession.” This means that they belonged to him as his people whom he had specifically called to worship and serve him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “possess” could also be translated as “own” or “have” or “have charge over.”
- The phrase “take possession of” could be translated as “take control of” or “occupy” or “live on,” depending on the context.
- When referring to things that people own, “possessions” could be translated as “belongings” or “property” or “owned things” or “things they owned.”
- When Yahweh calls the Israelites, “my special possession” this could also be translated as “my special people” or “people who belong to me” or “my people whom I love and rule.”
- The sentence, “they will become their possession” when referring to land, means “they will occupy the land” or “the land will belong to them.”
- The expression, “found in his possession” could be translated as “that he was holding” or “that he had with him.”
- The phrase “as your possession” could also be translated as “as something that belongs to you” or “as a place where your people will live.”
- The phrase, “in his possession” could be translated as “that he owned” or “which belonged to him.”

(See also: Canaan, worship, inherit)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 6:70
- 1 Kings 9:17-19
- Acts 2:45
- Deuteronomy 4:5-6
- Genesis 31:36-37
- Matthew 13:44

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0270, H0272, H0834, H2505, H2631, H3027, H3423, H3424, H3425, H3426, H4180, H4181, H4672, H4735, H4736, H5157, H5159, H5459, H7069, G11390, G21920, G26970, G27220, G29320, G29330, G29350, G40470, G52240, G55640

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:2

praise, praised, praiseworthy

Definition:

To praise someone is to express admiration and honor for that person.

- People praise God because of how great he is and because of all the amazing things he has done as the Creator and Savior of the world.
- Praise for God often includes being thankful for what he has done.
- Music and singing is often used as a way to praise God.
- Praising God is part of what it means to worship him.
- The term to "praise" could also be translated as to "speak well of" or to "highly honor with words" or to "say good things about."
- The noun "praise" could be translated as "spoken honor" or "speech that honors" or "speaking good things about."

(See also: worship)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 1:3
- Acts 2:47
- Acts 13:48
- Daniel 3:28
- Ephesians 1:3
- Genesis 49:8
- James 3:9-10
- John 5:41-42
- Luke 1:46
- Luke 1:64-66
- Luke 19:37-38
- Matthew 11:25-27
- Matthew 15:29-31

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:13** The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to **praise** God because he saved them from the Egyptian army.
- **17:8** When David heard these words, he immediately thanked and **praised** God because he had promised David this great honor and many blessings.
- **22:7** Zechariah said, "**Praise** God, because he has remembered his people!"
- **43:13** They (disciples) enjoyed **praising** God together and they shared everything they had with each other.
- **47:8** They put Paul and Silas in the most secure part of the prison and even locked up their feet. Yet in the middle of the night, they were singing songs of **praise** to God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1319, H7121, H8416, G29800, G38530

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 8:10 Ecclesiastes 8:15

prince, princess, governor, provincial governor, official, nobleman, noblemen, nobility

Definition:

A “prince” is the son of a king. A “princess” is a daughter of a king.

- The term “prince” is often used figuratively to refer to a leader, ruler, or other powerful person.
- Because of Abraham’s wealth and importance, he was referred to as a “prince” by the Hittites he was living among.
- In the book of Daniel, the term “prince” is used in the expressions “prince of Persia” and “prince of Greece,” which in those contexts probably refer to powerful evil spirits who had authority over those regions.
- The archangel Michael is also referred to as a “prince” in the book of Daniel.
- Sometimes in the Bible Satan is referred to as “the prince of this world.”
- Jesus is called the “Prince of Peace” and the “Prince of Life.”
- In Acts 2:36, Jesus is referred to as “Lord and Christ” and in Acts 5:31 he is referred to as “Prince and Savior,” showing the parallel meaning of “Lord” and “Prince.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “prince” could include, “king’s son” or “ruler” or “leader” or “chieftain” or “captain.”
- When referring to angels, this could also be translated as “spirit ruler” or “leading angel.”
- When referring to Satan or other evil spirits, this term could also be translated as “evil spirit ruler” or “powerful spirit leader” or “ruling spirit,” depending on the context.

(See also: angel, authority, Christ, demon, lord, power, ruler, Satan, Savior, spirit)

Bible References:

- Acts 5:29-32
- Genesis 12:15
- Genesis 49:26
- Luke 1:52

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0001, H0117, H0324, H2831, H3548, H4502, H5057, H5081, H5139, H5257, H5387, H5633, H5993, H6579, H7261, H7333, H7786, H8269, H8282, H8323, G07470, G07580, G14130, G31750

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:7 Ecclesiastes 10:16 Ecclesiastes 10:17

profit, profits, profited, profitable

Definition:

Used in this sense, the terms “profit” and “profitable” refer to gaining some material thing through doing certain actions or behaviors. Something is “profitable” to someone if it enables them to earn or attain good material things.

- More specifically, the term “profit” often refers to money that is gained from doing business. A business is “profitable” if it gains more money than it spends.
- Actions are profitable if they cause material things to be gained for people.

(See also: worthy,profit-spiritual)

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “profit” could also be translated as “benefit” or “help” or “gain.”
- Depending on context, the term “profits” could be translated as “earnings” when referring to wages earned by working.
- The term “profitable” could be translated as “useful” or “beneficial” or “helpful.”
- The term “profited” could be translated as “gained.”
- To “profit from” something could be translated as “benefit from” or “gain money from.”
- In the context of a business, “profit” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “money gained” or “surplus of money” or “extra money.”

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1215, H3276, H4195, G12810, G20390, G27700, G27710, G36850, G37860, G48510, G48525, G55390, G56220, G56230, G56240

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:3 Ecclesiastes 2:11
Ecclesiastes 2:13 Ecclesiastes 3:9
Ecclesiastes 5:9 Ecclesiastes 5:16
Ecclesiastes 10:10 Ecclesiastes 10:11

prosper, prosperity, prosperous

Definition:

The term “prosper” generally refers to living well, whether it be physically, morally, emotionally, etc. This term often expresses the idea of being wealthy or successful in life.

- The term “prosperous” often refers to success in owning money and property or in producing everything needed for people to live well.
- In the Bible, the term “prosperous” also includes good health and being blessed with children.
- A “prosperous” city or country is one that has many people, good production of food, and businesses that bring in plenty of money.
- The Bible teaches that a person will prosper spiritually when he obeys God’s teachings. He will also experience the blessings of joy and peace. God does not always give people a lot of material wealth, but he will always prosper them spiritually as they follow his ways.
- Depending on the context, the term “prosper” could also be translated as “succeed spiritually” or “be blessed by God” or “experience good things” or “live well.”
- The term “prosperous” could also be translated as “successful” or “wealthy” or “spiritually fruitful.”
- “Prosperity” could also be translated as “well-being” or “wealth” or “success” or “abundant blessings.”

(See also: bless, good, fruit, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 29:22-23
- Deuteronomy 23:6
- Job 36:11
- Leviticus 25:26-28
- Psalms 1:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1129, H1767, H1878, H1879, H2428, H2896, H2898, H3027, H3190, H3444, H3498, H3787, H4195, H5381, H6500, H6509, H6555, H6743, H6744, H7230, H7487, H7919, H7951, H7961, H7963, H7965

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:6 Ecclesiastes 11:6

proverb

Definition:

A proverb is a short statement that expresses some wisdom or truth.

- Proverbs are powerful because they are easy to remember and repeat.
- Often a proverb will include practical examples from everyday life.
- Some proverbs are very clear and direct, while others are more difficult to understand.
- King Solomon was known for his wisdom and wrote over 1,000 proverbs.
- Jesus often used proverbs or parables when he taught people.
- Ways to translate "proverb" could include "wise saying" or "true word."

(See also: Solomon, true, wise)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 4:32-34
- 1 Samuel 24:12-13
- 2 Peter 2:22
- Luke 4:24
- Proverbs 1:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2420, H4911, H4912, G38500, G39420

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:9

province, provincial

Definition:

The term “province” refers to a large area into which a nation or empire might be divided for the purposes of government. The term “provincial” describes something that is related to a province, such as a provincial governor.

- For example, the ancient Persian Empire was divided up into provinces such as Media, Persia, Syria, and Egypt.
- During the time of the New Testament, the Roman Empire was divided up into provinces such as Macedonia, Asia, Syria, Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and Galatia.
- Each province had its own ruling authority, who was subject to the king or ruler of the empire. This ruler was sometimes called a “provincial official” or “provincial governor.”
- The terms “province” and “provincial” could also be translated as “region” and “regional.”

(See also: Asia, Egypt, Esther, Galatia, Galilee, Judea, Macedonia, Medes, Rome, Samaria, Syria)

Bible References:

- Acts 19:30
- Daniel 3:2
- Daniel 6:2
- Ecclesiastes 2:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4082, H4083, H5675, H5676, G18850

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:8 Ecclesiastes 5:8

rebuke, reprove

Definition:

The term “rebuke” refers to correcting someone verbally, usually with sternness or force.

- The New Testament commands Christians to rebuke other believers when they are clearly disobeying God.
- The book of Proverbs instructs parents to rebuke their children when they are disobedient.
- A rebuke is typically given to prevent those who committed a wrong from further involving themselves in sin.
- This could be translated by “sternly correct” or “admonish.”
- The phrase “a rebuke” could be translated by “a stern correction” or “a strong criticism.”
- “Without rebuke” could be translated as “without admonishing” or “without criticism.”

(See also admonish, disobey)

Bible References:

- Genesis 21:25
- Mark 1:23-26
- Mark 16:14
- Matthew 8:26-27
- Matthew 17:17-18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1605, H1606, H2778, H2781, H3198, H4045, H4148, H8156, H8433, G16490, G16510, G19690, G20080, G36790

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:5

reign, rule

Definition:

The term to "reign" means to rule over the people of a particular country or kingdom. The reign of a king is the time period during which he is ruling.

- The term "reign" is also used to refer to God reigning as king over the entire world.
- God allowed human kings to reign over Israel after the people rejected him as their king.
- When Jesus Christ returns, he will openly reign as king over the whole world, and Christians will reign with Him.
- This term could also be translated as "absolute rule" or "rule as king."

(See also: kingdom)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 2:11-13
- Genesis 36:34-36
- Luke 1:30-33
- Luke 19:26-27
- Matthew 2:22-23

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3427, H4427, H4437, H4438, H4467, H4468, H4475, H4791, H4910, H6113, H7287, H7786, G07570, G09360, G22310, G48210

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 4:14 Ecclesiastes 4:14

reward, prize, deserve

Definition:

The term "reward" refers to what a person receives because of something he has done, either good or bad. To "reward" someone is to give someone something he deserves. However, this is different than the concept of "wages," which refers to payment (often money) given in exchange for work performed.

- A reward can be a good or positive thing that a person receives because he has done something well or because he has obeyed God.
- Sometimes a reward can refer to negative things that may result from bad behavior, such as the statement "the reward of the wicked." In this context "reward" refers to the punishment or negative consequences they receive because of their sinful actions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term "reward" could be translated as "payment" or "something that is deserved" or "punishment."
- To "reward" someone could be translated by to "repay" or to "punish" or to "give what is deserved."
- Make sure the translation of this term does not refer to wages. A reward is not specifically about earning money as part of a job.

(See also: punish)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 32:6
- Isaiah 40:10
- Luke 6:35
- Mark 9:40-41
- Matthew 5:11-12
- Matthew 6:3-4
- Psalms 127:3-5
- Revelation 11:18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0319, H0866, H0868, H1576, H1578, H1580, H4909, H4991, H5023, H6118, H6468, H6529, H7938, H7939, H7999, G04690, G05140, G05910, G26030, G34050, G34060, G34080

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:5

royal, royalty, king's, queen's

Definition:

The term "royal" describes people and things associated with a king or queen.

- Examples of things that could be called "royal" include a king's (or queen's) position, clothing, palace, throne, and crown.
- A king or queen usually lived in a royal palace.
- A king wore special clothing, sometimes called "royal robes." Often a king's robes were purple, this color could only be produced by a rare and expensive type of dye.
- In the New Testament, believers in Jesus were called a "royal priesthood." Other ways to translate this could include "priests who serve God the King" or "called to be priests for God the King."
- The term "royal" could also be translated as "kingly" or "belonging to a king."

(See also: king. palace, priest, purple, queen, robe)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 10:13
- 2 Chronicles 18:28-30
- Amos 7:13
- Genesis 49:19-21

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0643, H1921, H1935, H4410, H4428, H4430, H4437, H4438, H4467, H4468, H7985, G09330, G09340, G09370

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:5

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:19 Ecclesiastes 10:4

sacrifice, offering

Definition:

In the Bible, the terms “sacrifice” and “offering” refer to special gifts given to God as an act of worshiping him. People also offered sacrifices to false gods.

sacrifice

- Sacrifices to God often involved the killing of an animal.
- Only the sacrifice of Jesus, God’s perfect sinless Son, can completely cleanse people from sin; animal sacrifices could never do that.

offering

- The word “offering” generally refers to anything that is offered or given. The term “sacrifice” refers to something that is given or done at great cost to the giver.
- Offerings to God were specific things that he commanded the Israelites to give in order to express devotion and obedience to him.
- The names of the different offerings, such as “burnt offering” and “peace offering,” indicated what kind of offering was being given.

Translation Suggestions

- The term “offering” could also be translated as “a gift to God” or “something given to God” or “something valuable that is presented to God.”
- Depending on the context, the term “sacrifice” could also be translated as “something valuable given in worship” or “a special animal killed and presented to God.”
- The action to “sacrifice” could be translated as to “give up something valuable” or to “kill an animal and give it to God.”
- Another way to translate “present yourself as a living sacrifice” could be “as you live your life, offer yourself to God as completely as an animal is offered on an altar.”

(See also: altar, burnt offering, drink offering, false god, fellowship offering, freewill offering peace offering, priest, sin offering, worship)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:6
- Acts 7:42
- Acts 21:25
- Genesis 4:3-5
- James 2:21-24
- Mark 1:43-44
- Mark 14:12
- Matthew 5:23

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:14** After Noah got off the boat, he built an altar and **sacrificed** some of each kind of animal which could be used for a **sacrifice**. God was happy with the **sacrifice** and blessed Noah and his family.
- **5:6** “Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a **sacrifice** to me.” Again Abraham obeyed God and prepared to **sacrifice** his son.
- **5:9** God had provided the ram to be the **sacrifice** instead of Isaac.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed God’s law could bring an animal to the Tent of Meeting as a **sacrifice** to God. A priest would kill the animal and burn it on the altar. The blood of the animal that was **sacrificed** covered the person’s sin and made that person clean in God’s sight.
- **17:6** David wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him **sacrifices**.
- **48:6** Jesus is the Great High Priest. Unlike other priests, he offered himself as the only **sacrifice** that could to take away the sin of all the people in the world.
- **48:8** But God provided Jesus, the Lamb of God, as a **sacrifice** to die in our place.
- **49:11** Because Jesus **sacrificed** himself, God can forgive any sin, even terrible sins.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0801, H0817, H0819, H1685, H1890, H1974, H2076, H2077, H2281, H2282, H2398, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2409, H3632, H4394, H4503, H4504, H5066, H5068, H5071, H5257, H5258, H5261, H5262, H5927, H5928, H5930, H6453, H6944, H6999, H7133, H7311, H8002, H8426, H8548, H8573, H8641, G02660, G03340, G10490, G14350, G14940, G23780, G23800, G36460, G43760, G54850

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:1 Ecclesiastes 9:2 Ecclesiastes 9:2

scroll

Definition:

In ancient times, a scroll was a type of book made of one long, rolled-up sheet of papyrus or leather.

- After writing on a scroll or reading from it, people rolled it up by using the rods attached to its ends.
- Scrolls were used for legal documents and scripture.
- Sometimes scrolls that were delivered by a messenger were sealed with wax. If the wax was still present when the scroll was received, then the receiver knew that no one had opened the scroll to read it or write on it since it had been sealed.
- Scrolls containing the Hebrew Scriptures were read aloud in the synagogues.

(See also: seal, synagogue, word of God)

Bible References:

- Jeremiah 29:3
- Luke 4:17
- Numbers 21:14-15
- Revelation 5:2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4039, H4040, H5612, G09740, G09750

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:12

seed

Definition:

A “seed” is the part of a plant that gets planted in the ground to reproduce more of the same kind of plant.

- The term “seed” can also refer to what a man plants into a woman that allows them to reproduce.
- Related to this, “seed” is also used to refer to a man‘s or woman‘s offspring or descendants.
- This word often has a plural meaning, referring to more than one seed grain or more than one descendant.
- In the parable of the farmer planting seeds, Jesus compared his seeds to the Word of God, which is planted in people’s hearts in order to produce good spiritual fruit.
- The apostle Paul also uses the term “seed” to refer to the Word of God.

Translation Suggestions:

- For the seed of a plant, use a general term that can apply to all plants, if possible.
- When “seed” refers to people who are of the same family line, it may be more clear to use the word “descendant” or “descendants” instead of “seed.” Some languages may have a word that means “children and grandchildren.”
- For a man or woman’s “seed,” consider how the target expresses this in a way that will not offend or embarrass people.

(See also: children, descendant)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:32
- Genesis 1:11
- Jeremiah 2:21
- Matthew 13:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2232, H2233, H3610, H6507, G46150, G46870, G46900, G47010, G47030

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 11:6

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:13 Ecclesiastes 3:15
Ecclesiastes 7:25 Ecclesiastes 7:28
Ecclesiastes 7:29 Ecclesiastes 8:17
Ecclesiastes 12:9 Ecclesiastes 12:10

seize, seizure, capture

Definition:

The term “seize” means to take or capture someone or something by force. It can also mean to overpower and control someone.

- When a city was taken by means of military force, the soldiers would seize the valuable property of the people they had conquered.
- When used figuratively, a person can be described as being “seized with fear.” This means that the person was suddenly “overcome by fear.” If a person was “seized with fear” it could also be stated that the person “suddenly became very afraid.”
- In the context of labor pains that “seize” a woman, the meaning is that the pains are sudden and overpowering. This could be translated by saying that the pains “overcome” or “suddenly come upon” the woman.
- This term could also be translated as “take control of” or “suddenly take” or “grab.”
- The expression “seized and slept with her” could be translated as “forced himself on her” or “violated her” or “raped her.” Make sure the translation of this concept is acceptable.

(See: euphemism)

Bible References:

- Acts 16:19-21
- Exodus 15:14
- John 10:37-39
- Luke 8:29
- Matthew 26:48

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0270, H1497, H2388, H3027, H3920, H3947, H4672, H5377, H5860, H6031, H7760, H8610, G07240, G19490, G26380, G29020, G29830, G48150, G48840

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 7:26

serpent, snake, viper

Definition:

These terms all refer to a kind of reptile that has a long, thin body and large, fanged jaws, and that moves by slithering back and forth across the ground. The term “serpent” usually refers to a large snake and “viper” refers to a type of snake that has venom which it uses to poison its prey.

- This animal is also used figuratively to refer to a person who is evil, especially someone who is deceitful.
- Jesus called the religious leaders “offspring of vipers” because they pretended to be righteous but deceived people and treated them unfairly.
- In the garden of Eden, Satan took the form of a serpent when he talked to Eve and tempted her to disobey God.
- After the serpent tempted Eve to sin, and both Eve and her husband Adam did sin, God cursed the snake, saying that from then on, all snakes would slither along the ground, implying that before then they had had legs.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: curse, deceive, disobey, Eden, evil, prey, Satan, sin, tempt)

Bible References:

- Genesis 3:3
- Genesis 3:4-6
- Genesis 3:12-13
- Mark 16:17-18
- Matthew 3:7
- Matthew 23:33

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0660, H2119, H5175, H6620, H6848, H8314, H8577, G21910, G20620, G37890

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:11

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:7 Ecclesiastes 7:21 Ecclesiastes 10:7 Ecclesiastes 10:16

shepherd, herder, pastor

Definition:

A "shepherd" is a person who takes care of sheep. In the Old Testament, this word can also refer to a "herder" who takes care of other kinds of domestic livestock such as goats or cattle.

- As a verb, the term "shepherd" means to lead sheep (or other livestock) to places with good food and water, protect them from wild animals, keep them from getting lost and other duties necessary to keep livestock alive and healthy.
- In the Bible, this term is often used figuratively to refer to taking care of the needs of people (not only animals), both physical and spiritual.
- In the Old Testament, God was called the "shepherd" of his people because he took care of them. In the New Testament, Jesus called himself the "good shepherd," and in other places Jesus is called the "great shepherd" of the Church.
- The term "shepherd" is also used in the New Testament to refer to a person who is a spiritual leader over other believers. The word translated as "pastor" is the same word that is translated as "shepherd." Elders and overseers are also called shepherds.

Translation Suggestions

- The noun "shepherd" can be translated as "person who takes care of sheep" or "sheep tender" or "sheep caregiver."
- When referring to someone who cares for livestock other than sheep, the term can be translated as "herder," "tender of livestock" or "person who takes care of livestock."
- When used as a verb, the term "shepherd" could be translated as "take care of sheep" or "watch over sheep."
- In some contexts, the term "shepherd" could be translated as "leader" or "guide" or "caregiver."

- When used figuratively, the noun “shepherd” could be translated in different ways, including “spiritual shepherd” or “spiritual leader” or “one who is like a shepherd” or “one who cares for his people like a shepherd cares for his sheep” or “one who leads his people like a shepherd guides his sheep” or “one who takes care of God’s sheep.”
- When used figuratively, the verb “shepherd” could be translated as to “take care of” or to “spiritually nourish” or to “guide and teach” or to “lead and take care of (like a shepherd cares for sheep).”

(See also: sheep, livestock, pastor)

Bible References:

- Genesis 13:7
- Genesis 49:24
- Luke 2:9
- Mark 6:34
- Mark 14:26-27
- Matthew 2:6
- Matthew 9:36
- Matthew 25:32
- Matthew 26:31

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:11** Moses became a **shepherd** in the wilderness far away from Egypt.to
- **17:2** David was a **shepherd** from the town of Bethlehem. At different times while he was watching his father’s sheep, David had killed both a lion and a bear that had attacked the sheep.
- **23:6** That night, there were some **shepherds** in a nearby field guarding their flocks.
- **23:8** The **shepherds** soon arrived at the place where Jesus was and they found him lying in a feeding trough, just as the angel had told them.
- **30:3** To Jesus, these people were like sheep without a **shepherd**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6629, H7462, H7469, H7473, G07500, G41650, G41660

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:11

siege, besiege, besieged, siegework, siegeworks

Definition:

A “siege” occurs when an attacking army surrounds a city and keeps it from receiving any supplies of food and water. To “besiege” a city or to put it “under siege” means to attack it by means of a siege.

- When the Babylonians came to attack Israel, they used the tactic of a siege against Jerusalem to weaken the people inside the city.
- Often during a siege, ramps of dirt are gradually constructed to enable the attacking army to cross over the city walls and invade the city.
- To “besiege” a city can also be expressed as to “lay siege” to it or to “perform a siege” on it.
- The term “besieged” has the same meaning as the expression “under siege.” Both these expressions describe a city that an enemy army is surrounding and besieging.

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 20:1
- 1 Kings 20:1-3
- 1 Samuel 11:1-2
- Jeremiah 33:4

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4692, H4693, H5341, H5437, H5564, H6693, H6696, H6887

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:14

silver

Definition:

Silver is a shiny, gray precious metal used to make coins, jewelry, containers, and ornaments.

- The various containers that are made from silver include silver cups and bowls, and other things used for cooking, eating, or serving.
- Silver and gold were used in the building of the tabernacle and the temple. The temple in Jerusalem had containers made of silver.
- In Bible times, a shekel was a unit of weight, and a purchase was often priced at a certain number of shekels of silver. By New Testament times there were silver coins of various weights that were measured in shekels.
- Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave for twenty shekels of silver.
- Judas was paid thirty silver coins for betraying Jesus.
- If your culture does not have silver you could translate this term as "precious metal"

(See also: tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:9-11
- 1 Samuel 2:36
- 2 Kings 25:13-15
- Acts 3:6
- Matthew 26:15

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3701, H3702, H7192, G06930, G06940, G06950, G06960, G14060

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:8 Ecclesiastes 5:10
Ecclesiastes 7:12 Ecclesiastes 10:19
Ecclesiastes 12:6

snare, ensnare, entrap, trap, trapped, pitfall

Definition:

The terms "snare" and "trap" refer to devices that are used to catch animals and keep them from escaping. To "snare" or "ensnare" is to catch with a snare, and to "trap" or "entrap" is to catch with a trap. In the Bible, these terms were also used figuratively to talk about how sin and temptation are like hidden traps that catch people and harm them.

- A "snare" is a loop of rope or wire that suddenly pulls tight when an animal steps into it, ensnaring its leg.
- A "trap" is usually made of metal or wood and has two parts that suddenly and powerfully close together, catching an animal so it can not get away. Sometimes a trap can be a deep hole that has been made in order to get something to fall into it.
- Usually the snare or trap is hidden so that its prey is taken by surprise.
- The phrase "set a trap" means to get a trap ready to capture something.
- To "fall into a trap" refers to falling into a deep hole or pit that was dug and hidden in order to catch an animal.
- A person who is starts sinning and cannot stop can be described as "ensnared by sin" in a figurative reference to the way an animal can be ensnared and cannot escape.
- Just as an animal is endangered and hurt by being in a trap, so a person caught in the trap of sin is being harmed by that sin and needs to be set free.

(See also: free, prey, Satan, tempt)

Bible References:

- Ecclesiastes 7:26
- Luke 21:34
- Mark 12:13
- Psalms 18:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2256, H3353, H3369, H3920, H3921, H4170, H4204, H4434, H4685, H4686, H4889, H5367, H5914, H6341, H6351, H6354, H6679, H6983, H7639, H7845, H8610, G00640, G23390, G23400, G38020, G38030, G39850, G46250

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:26 Ecclesiastes 9:12

sow, sower, plant, planted, replanted, transplanted

Definition:

To "sow" means to put seeds on top of or in the ground in order to grow plants. A "sower" is a person who sows or plants seeds. A "plant" is generally something that grows and is attached to the ground.

- One method of sowing or planting seeds during biblical times was to take handfuls of seeds and scatter them on the ground.
- Farmers would often plow the ground on which they had sown seeds after they had sown the seeds. The reason farmers would plow the ground after they had sown the seed is so that the seed would be covered with soil.
- Sometimes farmers may have plowed the field that they sowed seeds in both before and after sowing seeds.

Translations Suggestions

- The term to "sow" could also be translated as to "plant." Make sure the word or phrase you use to translate this term refers to, or can include, planting seeds by scattering them because this is the method of sowing that Jesus was referring to in his parable in Matthew 13:3-23, Mark 4:2-20, and Luke 8:4-8 where he describes a sower who sowed seeds.
- Other ways to translate "sower" could include "planter" or "farmer" or "person who plants seeds."
- In English, "sow" is only used for planting seeds, but the English word "plant" can be used for planting seeds as well as larger things, such as trees. Other languages may also use different words, depending on what is being planted.

(See also: harvest)

Bible References:

- Luke 8:5
- Matthew 6:25-26
- Matthew 13:4
- Matthew 13:19
- Matthew 25:24

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2221, H2232, H2233, H2236, H4218, H4302, H5193, H7971, H8362, G46870, G47030, G54520

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:4 Ecclesiastes 2:5 Ecclesiastes 3:2 Ecclesiastes 11:4 Ecclesiastes 11:6

teacher, Teacher

Definition:

A teacher is a person who gives other people new information. Teachers help others to obtain and use both knowledge and skills.

- In the Bible, the word "teacher" is used in a special sense to refer to someone who teaches about God.
- People who learn from a teacher are called "students" or "disciples."
- In some Bible translations, this term is capitalized ("Teacher") when it is used as a title for Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- The usual word for a teacher can be used to translate this term, unless that word is only used for a school teacher.
- Some cultures may have a special title that is used for religious teachers, such as "Sir" or "Rabbi" or "Preacher."

(See also: disciple, preach)

Bible References:

- Ecclesiastes 1:12-15
- Ephesians 4:11-13
- Galatians 6:6-8
- Habakkuk 2:18
- James 3:2
- John 1:37-39
- Luke 6:40
- Matthew 12:38-40

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, "**Teacher**, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
- **28:1** One day a rich young ruler came up to Jesus and asked him, "Good **Teacher**, what must I do to have eternal life?"
- **37:2** After the two days had passed, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea." "But **Teacher**," the disciples answered, "Just a short time ago the people there wanted to kill you!"

- **38:14** Judas came to Jesus and said, “Greetings, **Teacher**,” and kissed him.
- **49:3** Jesus was also a great **teacher**, and he spoke with authority because he is the Son of God.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3384, H3925, G13200, G25670, G35470, G55720

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 1:1

terror, terrorize, terrify, dread, panic

Definition:

The term “terror” refers to a feeling of extreme or intense fear. To “terrify” someone means to cause that person to feel very afraid.

- A “terror” is something or someone that causes great fear or dread. An example of a terror could be an attacking enemy army or a plague or disease that is widespread, killing many people.
- These terrors can be described as “terrifying.” This term could be translated as “fear-causing” or “terror-producing.”
- The judgment of God will someday cause terror in unrepentant people who reject his grace.
- The “terror of Yahweh” could be translated as “the terrifying presence of Yahweh” or “the dreaded judgment of Yahweh” or “when Yahweh causes great fear.”
- Ways to translate “terror” could also include “extreme fear” or “deep dread.”

(See also: adversary, fear, judge, plague, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 2:25
- Exodus 14:10
- Luke 21:9
- Mark 6:48-50

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0367, H0926, H0928, H1091, H1161, H1204, H1205, H1763, H2111, H2113, H2189, H2731, H2847, H2851, H2865, H3372, H3707, H4032, H4172, H4288, H4637, H6184, H6206, H6343, H6973, G16290, G16300, G22580, G44220, G44260, G54010

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 8:3 Ecclesiastes 12:5

thief, thieves, rob, robber, robbery, bandit

Definition:

The term “thief” refers to a person who steals money or property from other people. The plural of “thief” is “thieves.” The term “robber” often refers to a thief who also physically harms or threatens the people he is stealing from.

- Jesus told a parable about a Samaritan man who took care of a Jewish man who had been attacked by robbers. The robbers had beaten the Jewish man and wounded him before stealing his money and clothing.
- Both thieves and robbers come suddenly to steal, when people are not expecting it. Often they use the cover of darkness to hide what they are doing.
- In a figurative sense, the New Testament describes Satan as a thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy. This means that Satan’s plan is to try to get God’s people to stop obeying him. If he succeeded in doing this Satan would be stealing from them the good things that God has planned for them.
- Jesus compared the suddenness of his return to the suddenness of a thief coming to steal from people. Just as a thief comes at a time when people are not expecting it, so Jesus will return at a time when people do not expect it.

(See also: bless, crime, crucify, darkness, destroyer, power, Samaria, Satan)

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 3:10
- Luke 12:33
- Mark 14:48
- Proverbs 6:30
- Revelation 3:3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1214, H1215, H1416, H1589, H1590, H1980, H6530, H7703, G07270, G24170, G28120, G30270

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:8

thorn, thorn bush, thistle

Definition:

Thorn bushes and thistles are plants that have prickly branches or flowers. These plants do not produce fruit or anything else that is useful.

- A “thorn” is a hard, sharp growth on the branch or stem of a plant. A “thornbush” is a type of small tree or shrub that has many thorns on its branches.
- A “thistle” is a plant with prickly stems and leaves. Often the flowers are purple.
- Thorn and thistle plants multiply quickly and can cause nearby plants or crops to not be able to grow. This is a picture of how sin keeps a person from producing good spiritual fruit.
- A crown made of twisted thorn branches was placed on Jesus’ head before he was crucified.
- If possible, these terms should be translated by the names of two different plants or bushes that are known in the language area.

(See also: crown, fruit, spirit)

Bible References:

- Hebrews 6:7-8
- Matthew 13:7
- Matthew 13:22
- Numbers 33:55

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0329, H1863, H2312, H2336, H4534, H5285, H5518, H5544, H6791, H6796, H6975, H7063, H7898, G01730, G01740, G46470, G51460

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 7:6

grave, gravedigger, tomb, burial place

Definition:

The terms “tomb” and “grave” refer to a place where people put the body of a person who has died. A “burial place” is a more general term that also refers to this.

- The Jews sometimes used natural caves as tombs, and sometimes they dug caves into rock in the side of a hill.
- In New Testament times, it was common to roll a large, heavy stone in front of the opening of a tomb in order to close it.
- If the target language the word for a tomb can only refer to a hole in which the body is placed below the ground, other ways to translate this could include “cave” or “hole in the side of a hill.”
- The phrase “the grave” is often used generally and figuratively to refer to the condition of being dead or a place where the souls of dead people are.

(See also: bury, death)

Bible References:

- Acts 2:29-31
- Genesis 23:6
- Genesis 50:5
- John 19:41
- Luke 23:53
- Mark 5:1-2
- Matthew 27:53
- Romans 3:13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **32:4** The man lived among the **tombs** in the area.
- **37:6** Jesus asked them, “Where have you put Lazarus?” They told him, “In the **tomb**. Come and see.”
- **37:7** The **tomb** was a cave with a stone rolled in front of its opening.
- **40:9** Then Joseph and Nicodemus, two Jewish leaders who believed Jesus was the Messiah, asked Pilate for Jesus’ body. They wrapped his body in cloth and placed it in a **tomb** cut out of rock. Then they rolled a large stone in front the **tomb** to block the opening.
- **41:4** He (the angel) rolled away the stone that was covering the entrance to the **tomb** and sat on it. The soldiers guarding the **tomb** were terrified and fell to the ground like dead men.
- **41:5** When the women arrived at the **tomb**, the angel told them, “Do not be afraid. Jesus is not here. He has risen from the dead, just like he said he would! Look in the **tomb** and see.” The women looked into the **tomb** and saw where Jesus’ body had been laid. His body was not there!

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1430, H6900, H6913, H7585, H7845, G34180, G34190, G50280

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 6:3

tongue, language

Definition:

The term “tongue” refers to the organ inside a person’s mouth that is used to speak. The term is often used figuratively to mean “language” or “speaking.” There also several other figurative meanings as well.

- In the Bible, the most common figurative meaning for this term is “language” or “speech.”
- Sometimes “tongue” may refer to a human language spoken by a certain people group.
- Other times it refers to a supernatural language that the Holy Spirit gives believers in Christ as one of the “gifts of the Spirit.”
- In the book of Acts, the expression “tongues” of fire refers to “flames” of fire, presumably shaped like tongues.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, the term “tongue” can be translated as “language” or “supernatural language.” If it is not clear which one it is referring to, it is better to translate it as “language.”
- When referring to fire, this term could be translated as “flames.”
- The expression “my tongue rejoices” could be translated as “I rejoice and praise God” or “I am joyfully praising God.”
- The phrase, “tongue that lies” could be translated as “person who tell lies” or “people who lie.”
- Phrases such as “with their tongues” could be translated as “with what they say” or “by their words.”

(See also: gift, Holy Spirit, joy, praise, rejoice, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 12:10
- 1 John 3:18
- 2 Samuel 23:2
- Acts 2:26
- Ezekiel 36:3
- Philippians 2:11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3956, G11000, G12580, G20840

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:11

tremble, shake, shaken, quake

Definition:

The term “tremble” means to quiver or to shake slightly and repeatedly, usually from fear or distress. The term can also be used figuratively, meaning “to be very afraid.”

- Sometimes when the ground shakes it is said to “tremble.” It can do this during an earthquake or in response to a very loud noise.
- The Bible says that in the presence of the Lord the earth will tremble. This could mean that the people of the earth will shake out of fear of God or that the earth itself will shake.
- This term could be translated as “be afraid” or “fear God” or “shake,” depending on the context.

(See also: earth, fear, Lord)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 7:15
- 2 Samuel 22:44-46
- Acts 16:29-31
- Jeremiah 5:22
- Luke 8:47

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1674, H2111, H2112, H2151, H2342, H2648, H2729, H2730, H2731, H5128, H5568, H6342, H6426, H6427, H7264, H7268, H7269, H7322, H7460, H7461, H7481, H7493, H7578, H8078, H8653, G17900, G51410, G51560, G54250

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:3

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 9:11

vineyard

Definition:

A vineyard is a large garden area where grapevines are grown and grapes are cultivated.

- A vineyard often has a wall around it to protect the fruit from thieves and animals.
- God compared the people of Israel to a vineyard that did not bear good fruit. (See: Metaphor)
- Vineyard could be also translated as "grapevine garden" or "grape plantation."

(See also: grape, Israel, vine)

Bible References:

- Genesis 9:20-21
- Luke 13:6
- Luke 20:15
- Matthew 20:2
- Matthew 21:40-41

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1612, H3754, H3755, H8284, G02900

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:4

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

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:1 Ecclesiastes 5:8 Ecclesiastes 8:2 Ecclesiastes 11:4 Ecclesiastes 11:4 Ecclesiastes 12:3

cistern, well

Definition:

The terms “well” and “cistern” refer to two different kinds of sources for water in Bible times.

- A well is a deep hole dug into the ground so that underground water can flow into it.
- A cistern is a deep hole dug into rock that was used as a holding tank for collecting rain water.
- Cisterns were usually dug into rock and sealed with plaster to keep the water in. A “broken cistern” happened when the plaster became cracked so that the water leaked out.
- Cisterns were often located in the courtyard area of people’s homes to catch the rainwater that would run off the roof.
- Wells were often located where they could be accessed by several families or a whole community.
- Because water was very important for both people and livestock, the right to use a well was often a cause of strife and conflict.
- Both wells and cisterns were usually covered with a large stone to prevent anything falling in it. Often there was a rope with a bucket or pot attached to it to bring the water up to the surface.
- Sometimes a dry cistern was used as a place to imprison someone, such as happened to Joseph and Jeremiah.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “well” could include “deep water hole” or “deep hole for spring water” or “deep hole for drawing water.”
- The term “cistern” could be translated as “stone water pit” or “deep and narrow pit for water” or “underground tank for holding water.”
- These terms are similar in meaning. The main difference is that a well continually receives water from underground springs, whereas a cistern is a holding tank for water that usually comes from rain.

(See also: Jeremiah, prison, strife)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:17
- 2 Samuel 17:17-18
- Genesis 16:14
- Luke 14:4-6
- Numbers 20:17

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0875, H0883, H0953, H1360, H4599, H4726, H4841, G40770, G54210

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 12:6

wine, wineskin, new wine

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “wine” refers to a kind of fermented drink made from the juice of a fruit called grapes. Wine was stored in “wineskins,” which were containers made out of animal skin.

- The term “new wine” referred to grape juice that had just been taken from the grape and was not fermented yet. Sometimes the term “wine” also referred to unfermented grape juice.
- To make wine, grapes are crushed in a winepress so that the juice comes out. The juice eventually ferments and alcohol forms in it.
- In Bible times, wine was the normal drink with meals. It did not have as much alcohol as present-day wine has.
- Before wine was served for a meal, it was often mixed with water.
- A wineskin that was old and brittle would get cracks in it, which allowed the wine to leak out. New wineskins were soft and flexible, which meant they did not tear easily and could store the wine safely.
- If wine is unknown in your culture, it could be translated as “fermented grape juice” or “fermented drink made from a fruit called grapes” or “fermented fruit juice.” (See: How to Translate Unknowns)
- Ways to translate “wineskin” could include “bag for wine” or “animal skin wine bag” or “animal skin container for wine.”

(See also: grape, vine, vineyard, winepress)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 5:23
- Genesis 9:21
- Genesis 49:12
- John 2:3-5
- John 2:10
- Matthew 9:17
- Matthew 11:18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2561, H2562, H3196, H4469, H4997, H5435, H6025, H6071, H8492, G10980, G36310, G38200, G39430

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:3 Ecclesiastes 9:7 Ecclesiastes 10:19

wise men, advisor

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “wise men” is often a technical term referring to men with unusual knowledge and abilities who served in a king’s royal court as advisors to the king or other high officials.

Old Testament

- The “wise men” who served pharaohs or other kings were often scholars who studied the stars, especially looking for special meanings for the patterns that the stars made in their positions in the sky. Sometimes “wise men” also practiced divination of performed acts of magic, probably by the power of evil spirits.
- Often wise men were expected to explain the meanings of dreams. For example, King Nebuchadnezzar demanded that his wise men describe his dreams and tell him what they meant, but none of them was able to do this, except Daniel who had received this knowledge from God.

New Testament

- The group of men who came from eastern regions to worship Jesus were called “magi,” which is often translated as “wise men,” since this probably refers to scholars who served a ruler of an eastern country.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “wise men” could be translated using the term “wise” or with a phrase such as “gifted men” or “educated men” or some other term that refers to men who have an important job working for a ruler.

(See also: Babylon, Daniel, divination, magic, Nebuchadnezzar, ruler, wise)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 27:32-34
- Daniel 2:1-2
- Daniel 2:10-11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2445, H2450, H3778, H3779, G46800

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 2:16 Ecclesiastes 6:8 Ecclesiastes 7:4 Ecclesiastes 7:5 Ecclesiastes 7:7 Ecclesiastes 7:19 Ecclesiastes 8:5 Ecclesiastes 9:11 Ecclesiastes 9:15 Ecclesiastes 9:17 Ecclesiastes 10:2 Ecclesiastes 10:12 Ecclesiastes 12:9 Ecclesiastes 12:11

womb

Definition:

The term “womb” refers to where a baby grows inside its mother.

- This is an older term that is sometimes used in order to be polite and less direct. (See: euphemism)
- A more modern term for womb is “uterus.”
- Some languages use a word like “belly” to refer to a woman’s womb or uterus.
- Use a word for this in the project language that is well-known, natural, and acceptable.

Bible References:

- Genesis 25:23
- Genesis 25:24-26
- Genesis 38:27-28
- Genesis 49:25
- Luke 2:21
- Luke 11:27
- Luke 23:29
- Matthew 19:12

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0990, H4578, H7356, H7358, G10640, G28360, G33880

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 5:15 Ecclesiastes 11:5

wrong, wronged, wrongdoer, mistreat, hurt, hurtful

Definition:

To “wrong” someone means to treat that person unjustly and dishonestly.

- The term “mistreat” means to act badly or roughly toward someone, causing physical or emotional harm to that person.
- The term “hurt” is more general and means to “cause someone harm in some way.” It often has the meaning of “physically injure.”
- Depending on the context, these terms could also be translated as “do wrong to” or “treat unjustly” or “cause harm to” or “treat in a harmful way” or “injure.”

Bible References:

- Acts 7:26
- Exodus 22:21
- Genesis 16:5
- Luke 6:28
- Matthew 20:13-14
- Psalms 71:13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0205, H0816, H2248, H2250, H2255, H2257, H2398, H2554, H2555, H3238, H3637, H4834, H5062, H5142, H5230, H5627, H5753, H5766, H5791, H5792, H5916, H6031, H6087, H6127, H6231, H6485, H6565, H6586, H7451, H7489, H7563, H7665, H7667, H7686, H8133, H8267, H8295, G00910, G00920, G00930, G00950, G02640, G08240, G09830, G09840, G15360, G16260, G16510, G17270, G19080, G25560, G25580, G25590, G26070, G30760, G30770, G37620, G41220, G51950, G51960

Ecclesiastes References:

Ecclesiastes 10:9