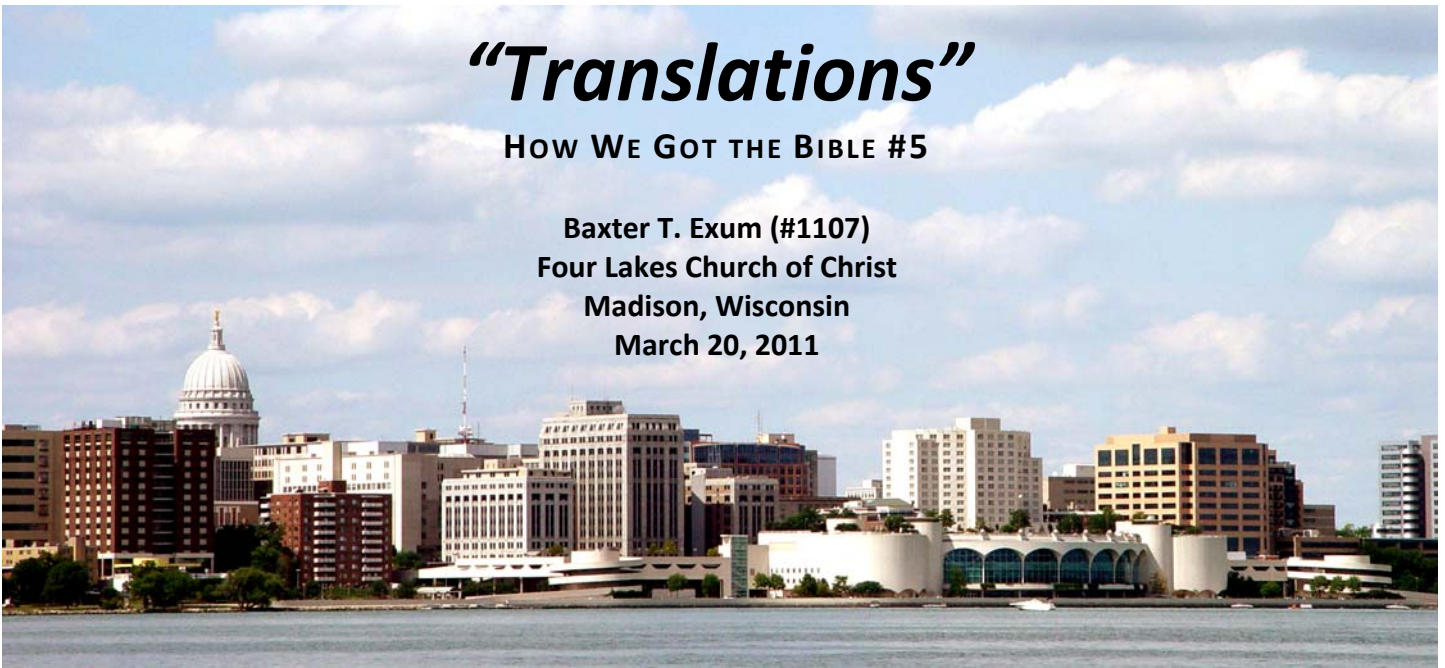


“Translations”

HOW WE GOT THE BIBLE #5

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Madison, Wisconsin
March 20, 2011



As most of you know, over the past few weeks we have been looking together at various questions that have been turned in by our members concerning how we got the Bible in its current form.

- About a month ago, we looked at the importance of the written word of God. We discovered that God wanted His word written down so that it could be accurately passed along to large numbers of people.
- Three weeks ago, we studied the making of ancient books. We focused on ancient writing materials, and we discovered that most of the New Testament was written on papyrus.
- Two weeks ago, we did just a brief summary of the manuscript evidence that we have for the Bible in its current form. Many people will make the accusation that since the Bible was copied by hand, it must, therefore, be filled with mistakes. However, we looked at the reliability of the ancient manuscripts.
- And then last week, we studied what is commonly referred to as the “canon” of Scripture. We learned that the Greek word “kanon” refers to a “measuring stick,” and we learned that the “canon of Scripture” refers to those documents that “measure up” as the word of God.

This morning I would like for us to conclude our series by looking together at the issue of TRANSLATION. When the Bible was first written, it was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The basic problem, then, is that most of us no longer speak Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek! As we begin, I should pass along an interesting statement from Guy N. Woods, a true scholar in the Lord’s church, a man who spent his entire life studying the word of God. Brother Woods once said, “There is no translation so bad that one cannot learn the truth from it and be saved, and there is no translation so good that it is perfect.” Very interesting! I believe that is a true statement, and it is something that we do need to keep in mind as we study the issue of translations this morning. As we study, I would like for us to divide our lesson into several parts. First of all, whenever we study this subject, we need to remember to be thankful. Secondly, we will look at two very basic principles to keep in mind when choosing a translation. And then as we close we will consider several of the leading translations (along with the strengths and weaknesses of each one).

- I. **But first of all, before we get too deep, we need to back up and remind ourselves to BE EXTREMELY THANKFUL THAT WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO READ THE BIBLE IN OUR OWN LANGUAGE!**

Sometimes we may tend to forget this. I don't know whether we really appreciate what we have. In fact, we should be thanking God that our biggest problem is not in finding an English translation, but our biggest problem comes in deciding which one (of the many) is best! Current estimates suggest that there are around 6,500 languages spoken in the world today. However, when we consider the God's word, we find that the entire Bible has been translated into only 459 of those languages. The New Testament has been translated into 1,213 of those languages. At least one book of the Bible has been translated into an additional 836 of those languages. When we add all of this together, the statistics tell us that more than half of the languages in the world today do not have their own translation of God's word—not even a single book! Can we even imagine not having a translation of the Bible in our own language? That is hard to imagine, and yet there are more than 6,000 languages in our world that have not yet even seen a complete translation of the Bible!

However, as we look back through history, we find that translations of God's word are mentioned even as far back as the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. In Nehemiah 8, as the Jewish people returned to Jerusalem after a period of exile, Ezra the scribe read the books of the Law of Moses at a special wooden podium that had been constructed for that reason. And the statement on translation comes in Nehemiah 8:8 (p. 777). The Bible says that Ezra read from early in the morning until midday, and all of the people stood out of their respect for God's word as he read. Please notice Nehemiah 8:8, where the Bible says that ***"They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading."*** In other words, during the time of exile, the people had forgotten their Hebrew (the children had grown up learning the language of Babylon), and the Scriptures for the first time had to be translated into the common language of the people.

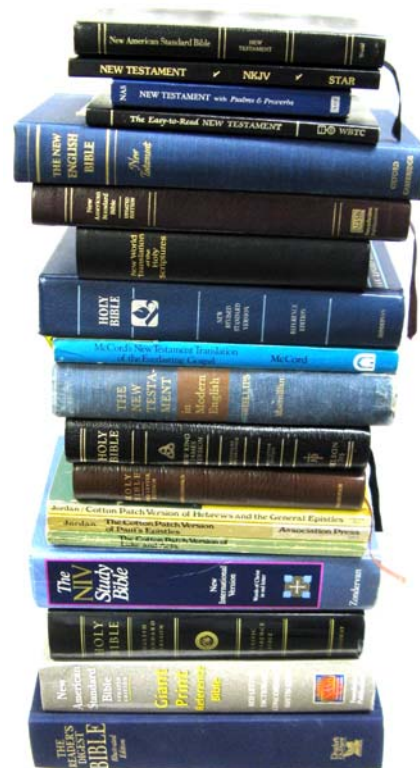
As far as English is concerned, we know that in 1382, a man by the name of John Wycliffe started translating the Bible from Latin into English, and his translation was completed in 1384. At that time, copies were made by hand, and the Roman Catholic Church did everything they could to destroy those copies and discourage Wycliffe's work. People were punished for reading or listening to Wycliffe's translation—some were even burned at the stake. Wycliffe died of a stroke before the Catholic Church could kill him, but in 1428 (44 years after his death), Catholic officials dug up Wycliffe's remains, burned his bones, and scattered the ashes in a river. You can read about this, by the way, in the official encyclopedia of the Catholic Church (complete with the seal of the Pope on it) as it is available on the Internet. Wycliffe was actually excommunicated 28 years after his death—primarily for translating the Scriptures from Latin into English. Can you imagine the anger it would take to remove someone from the church 28 years after that person has died? We need to ask ourselves why they would do that. They did that because they were threatened by the common people having the word of God in their own language. Due to the work of John Wycliffe, people no longer had to trust the religious to teach them the word of God, the priests were no longer the "filters," but the people were able to study the word of God on their own.



William Tyndale was another well-known translator shortly after that time, who was the first to translate the entire Bible directly from Greek into English. Remember: Wycliffe translated it from Latin, so Tyndale took it back a step—from Greek into English. His English New Testament was completed in 1525, and unlike Wycliffe's translation, Tyndale's was printed on the printing press, so it was much more available (being much less expensive than a hand-written copy). Remember: Guttenberg invented the printing press in 1439. Well, in May of 1535, William Tyndale was arrested, and after 17 months in prison, he was sentenced to death as a heretic. He was strangled and burned at the stake on October 6, 1536—again, primarily for translating the Bible from Greek into English.

Speaking of making a hand-written copy of the Bible, we need to understand how expensive that would have been. Imagine how expensive Bibles would be today if we had to pay someone to make a hand-written copy. Imagine the work involved in making a copy by hand. We have a little bit of insight into this work in some of the marginal notes as some of those handwritten copies were completed. For example, in the margin of one handwritten copy, one scribe wrote these words, “He who does not know how to write supposes it to be no labor; but though only three fingers write, the whole body labors.” I would imagine that most of those who sit at a desk all day can empathize just a little bit with that man! Another scribe wrote in the margin of his work, “Writing bows one’s back, thrusts the ribs into one’s stomach, and fosters a general debility of the body.” In another manuscript of the gospel accounts, there is a note that complains that there is a heavy snowstorm raging outside and that the scribe’s ink froze, his hand became numb, and the pen fell from his fingers! I say these things only to emphasize how thankful we need to be that we have so many options when it comes to having a copy of the Bible in our own language.

To appreciate the cost involved, try to imagine me offering you a ream of paper, a pen, and a Bible, and imagine me asking you to make me a copy. How much would you charge for that copy? Assuming it would take about a year, and then taking an average salary from here in Dane County, I would suggest that a fair price for that handwritten copy would be somewhere around \$50,000. I assume you might want some health care, and a few sick days, some kind of retirement benefit, and so the price of that handwritten Bible could easily top \$70-75,000. Now let me ask: If a copy of the Bible were to cost \$75,000, how many Bibles would you have in your house? We would be taking out mortgages and loans, not for homes and cars, but for Bibles—just to read one on our own. I would suggest, therefore, that we should be extremely thankful that we can go to Wal-Mart and purchase a Bible for less than 20 bucks! The Bibles we have are neatly printed, bound in leather, marked with page numbers, complete with cross references, and maps, and charts. Not only that, but we even have the words of Christ in red! This past Friday, I grabbed just the Bibles within arm’s reach, stacked them on the floor, and took the picture that is up here on the wall, and this isn’t even half of the Bibles in my home. I say this to emphasize that we have no idea the kind of agony that people in the past have gone through to get us to this point. People like William Tyndale have been murdered to give us this privilege. So, first of all: Let us be thankful!



II. **When it comes to finding an accurate English translation, I would like to suggest TWO VERY BASIC PRINCIPLES TO KEEP IN MIND.**

1. **And one of the first things to consider is that ANY TRANSLATION WE USE OUGHT TO HAVE A GOOD TEXTUAL BASE.**

Do you remember those 5,500 Greek manuscripts, the thousands of ancient translations, and the thousands of quotes in ancient sermons and commentaries? As you can imagine, some are more accurate than others, some are closer to the originals than the others, and so we need to start, then, by looking for an English translation that is based on the best, the oldest, and the most accurate manuscript evidence. The science of comparing these documents is known as “textual criticism.” In other words, we need to critique all of those

ancient documents to determine the correct reading. Again, this is before we even think about translating anything in English. Before we translate, we need to agree on a solid textual base.

In the late 1800's, there was a two-man team with the names Wescott and Hort. As they looked at the manuscript evidence they had at that time—the piles of manuscripts and fragments—they started to develop some basic principles to help determine the correct reading. If there was some discrepancy between the manuscripts, they started to realize the importance of taking the older reading. In other words, if there were two manuscripts from 200 AD that said one thing, and 50 manuscripts from 900 AD that said something slightly different, we would obviously want to put more weight behind the older manuscripts (the ones that were closer to the original). The older manuscripts had probably been copied fewer times and would therefore be more likely to be what the original author actually wrote. There are other basic principles that Wescott and Hort used, but this is one of the basics. The main point here is that before we can even translate something, we need to start with a good textual base.

2. There is a second basic principle to consider here, and that is: WE WANT AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION THAT IS BOTH ACCURATE AND UNDERSTANDABLE AT THE SAME TIME.

And if you have ever taken a foreign language, then you know that this is a constant struggle. It is difficult to make a word-for-word translation that can actually be understood. There are many words in Greek and Hebrew that do not have a direct English equivalent. There are figures of speech. There are differences in word order.

The closest thing we have to a word-for-word translation as far as our Bibles are concerned would have to be an “interlinear.” An interlinear is a book with the Greek text on one line and the English translation directly under each word. As I was preparing this lesson, I looked up John 3:16, a very familiar verse. Consider the direct and word-for-word translation: ***“For thus loved God the world, so as***

16	οὕτως	γὰρ	ἠγάπησεν	ὁ	θεὸς	τὸν
	For thus		² loved	-	¹ God	the
	κόσμον,	ὥστε	τὸν	υἱὸν	τὸν	μονογενῆ
	world,	so as	the	Son	the	only begotten
	ἔδωκεν,	ἵνα	πᾶς	ὁ	πιστεύων	εἰς αὐτὸν
	he gave,	that	everyone	believing	in	him
	μὴ	ἀπόληται	ἀλλ'	ἔχη	ζωὴν	αἰώνιον.
	may not perish		but	may have	life	eternal.

the Son the only begotten He gave, that everyone believing in Him may not perish but may have life eternal.” That is an extremely accurate translation of John 3:16, and yet it is nothing close to the way we talk to each other on a daily basis—even to the point where it is just barely understandable. And so there has to be some give and take and some balance—making a translation both accurate and clear at the same time. If we will be judged by the words of the Bible, then we need to know exactly what those words are.

But then on the other hand, a translation must also be understood; after all, that is the point of having a translation! Some of this I might compare to the different resources that are available for working on your car. Do some of you know what a Haynes Manual is? Or maybe a Chiltons? If you do, then consider the difference between a Haynes Manual and the service manual that is published by the manufacturer. The Haynes Manual is easy to read with nice pictures and sells for about \$20, but the service manual from the manufacturer (usually more than \$100) is more accurate and may contain several volumes with small print. In fact, the service manual from the manufacturer is so accurate that I can hardly understand it! Both manuals have their place...depending on what you're doing. In a slightly similar way, we might compare the NASB and the NIV. One is much easier to read, but the other is more accurate, and it might be good to compare the two in our own personal study. But these are two basic ideas when choosing a translation: Find one that starts with an accurate textual base, and then find one that is translated accurately in a way that we can actually understand.

III. Before we end, WE NEED TO SUMMARIZE AT LEAST SEVERAL OF THE MOST COMMON ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS.

1. And to begin the summary, I should at least mention some of the various PARAPHRASES that are out there on the market.

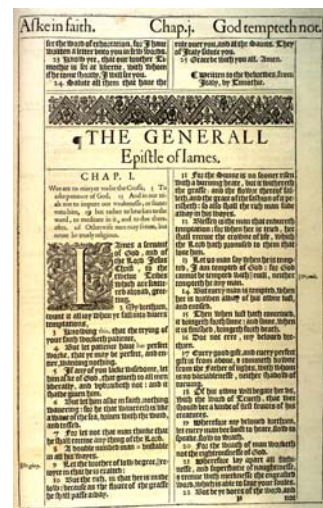
And I should say here at the beginning that a paraphrase has tipped the scale—it has tipped the scale to being so understandable that it is no longer accurate. A paraphrase is when someone reads a verse and then writes down whatever he or she thinks it means. And as you can imagine, this is a category we need to avoid. One of the most popular paraphrases is “The Message.” Consider the “Lord’s Prayer” from Matthew 6:9-13 in “The Message,” “With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this: Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are. Set the world right; do what’s best—as above, so below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You’re in charge! You can do anything you want! You’re ablaze in beauty! Yes. Yes. Yes.” How’s that for a paraphrase? Well, it might help us understand the idea of what Jesus was saying (and there is a value to that), but it is nothing close to a word-for-word translation. We might look at it as more of a commentary, and not as the literal word of God. The basic thought might match up, but not the actual words.

We could also consider the Reader’s Digest Bible. Brother Schmudlach knew that this morning’s lesson was coming up, so last week he let me borrow Ruby’s copy of the Reader’s Digest Bible (by the way, this is not their endorsement of this particular version, but I believe they were given this book as a gift). My understanding is that the Old Testament has been reduced by half, and the New Testament has been reduced to ¾ of its proper length. When brother Don handed this book to me last week, the first thing I did was turn to Revelation 22 and those verses about not adding to or taking away from the word of God...those verses are gone! They have taken out the verses that warn about taking out verses!

Some of you might be familiar with the Cotton Patch version of the Bible, written from a definite southern point of view in the 1960’s. The conflict between Jew and Gentile has been changed to a conflict between blacks and whites. Rome has been changed to Washington DC. Jerusalem has been changed to Atlanta. Lord has been changed to President. Crucifixion has been changed to lynching, and so on...a very interesting piece of literature, but certainly nothing even close to a translation of the word of God. So, a paraphrase is not really a translation.

2. But beyond some of these that are not really translations, we should probably start by considering the KING JAMES VERSION, which remains the most popular book ever sold.

As you have perhaps noticed in the news lately, 2011 is the 400th anniversary of the KJV. And for its time, the King James Version was amazing, monumental as a translation of the Scriptures. On the church’s Facebook page a few days ago, I encouraged everybody to take a few minutes to read the Preface, the Foreword, or the Principles of Translation at the beginning of your particular version of the Bible. If you do that with the KJV, you find that it is dedicated to the king of England. The first edition was completed in 1611. Many people do not realize that there have been many revisions of the KJV down through the years, ultimately resulting in the revision of 1769, which is pretty much the edition that most people use today when they use the KJV. On this morning’s handout, I have copied a page from the original 1611 edition, and as you can see, it is a beautiful piece of craftsmanship, but it is



very difficult to read (notice especially James 1:21...). By the way, one of the later editions (the one in 1631) was known as the “Wicked Bible,” since it accidentally left out the “NOT” from the 7th Commandment, resulting in, “Thou shalt commit adultery.” But again, in many ways, the KJV was a significant translation—it is still a beautiful piece of literature—but we need to understand that it was translated many years before our oldest (and most accurate) manuscripts were even discovered.

The translators, then, used what was known as the “Majority Text,” with no serious regard for the age of the manuscripts. In other words, they made many of their textual decisions based on the number of copies instead of the age of the manuscripts. Again, if I see a slight difference between two manuscripts from 200 AD and 50 manuscripts from 900 AD, with all other things being equal, I would go with the two from 200, since they are closer to the original. But the translators of the KJV did not do that—they went with the majority. We add to this the “problem” the fact that we have discovered thousands of very, very old manuscripts in the 400 years since the KJV was first published. One example: The last six verses of Revelation were missing from the few Greek manuscripts that were available at the time the KJV was translated. They didn’t even have them in Greek, but they had them in Latin. So, they translated them from Latin, back into Greek, and then into English. Does that make sense? To me, that is just one more chance for something to go wrong. And again, in the big picture, it may be rather minor. But as a result of their decision, Revelation 22:19 in the original KJV refers to the “book of life” when it should refer to the “tree of life.” Now, that is not going to cause me to be lost, but it is not quite as accurate as it should be. Since 1611, we have found a lot of older (and better) manuscripts.

We also need to realize that the English language has changed a lot over the past 400 years. Not only are some words unheard of today (not even found in the dictionary), but other words have changed even to the point of being obscene (or at the least, being offensive) to many people. I have included some of those offensive references on a handout, but for just one rather mild example, we could consider Philemon 20, where Paul says (in the KJV), **“Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.”** Now, that’s just gross! To me, that sounds like some kind of medical procedure. Four-hundred years ago, if you talked about your bowels being refreshed, it might have been a compliment, but today the picture is quite different. The New King James Version is an update that was made in the early 80’s. It has updated some of this archaic and offensive language, and yet it is still based on the later (and inferior) manuscripts.

Several KJV references
which are now in bad taste,
crude, or even obscene:

Exodus 20:17
Numbers 22:28-33
1 Kings 16:11
2 Kings 18:27
Song of Solomon 5:4
Isaiah 36:12
Zechariah 9:6
Philippians 1:8
Philemon 20
Hebrews 12:8

Another concern with the KJV is that King James himself gave some very specific and unfortunate instructions to his translators, in order to maintain the traditions of the Church of England. In my office, I have a list of the 14 instructions that he gave. Number 3 tells the translators to keep the “old ecclesiastical words... [such] as the word church, not to be translated congregation, etc.” “Ecclesiastical,” refers to the church; so, King James basically said, “Make it sound churchy.” Well, the word “baptism” is certainly included in this category. And so instead of correctly translating the Greek word “baptizo” as “immerse,” the translators were told to transliterate the word—they were basically told to make a new word by turning a Greek word into an English word. This new word “baptize” could then be explained in keeping with the Anglican tradition of sprinkling. For just a moment, think about all of the harm that has been done over the past 400 years, and all of the confusion that has come from that decision. What if they had just translated it as “immerse”? Think of how things could have been different.

The KJV also uses the word “hell” to translate three different Greek words—Gehenna, Tartarus, and Hades—so, we have Jesus going to “hell” between His death and resurrection. But no, Jesus never went to Hell! We have references to mythical creatures; for example, we read about the “unicorn” in Numbers 23:22. In the past, sister Katherine has asked me to point out the use of the word “Easter” in Acts 12:4. The word “Easter,” though, is not in the Bible. The Bible refers to “Passover” in that verse, but the KJV says “Easter.” Again, the King instructed the translators to use terms that were more in line with what the church was teaching at that time.

3. One of the most popular translations today (in terms of market share) is probably the NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION.

You might have noticed the chart on one side of the handout where you can find just a brief summary of some of the major translations on the market today. And when you look down at the NIV, you will notice that it is written on roughly a 7th or 8th grade reading level. And a major strong point of the NIV is that it is, in fact, very easy to read. In contrast, notice that the King James is written on a 12th grade level...and that’s a huge difference. Just to understand the KJV, you pretty much need to have finished high school, but the NIV is much easier to read. But remember the need to balance accuracy with readability. A good translation must be as close as possible to being word-for-word, but it must also be understandable. In my opinion, the NIV is tipped a little too far toward being understandable, and it is easier to understand because it has drifted away from the side of accuracy. Again, if you haven’t done so already, I would encourage you to go home this afternoon and read the Foreword in your own copy of the Bible. In the NIV, the translators very clearly say that they were striving for “more than a word-for-word translation.” They also tried to be faithful “to the thought of the Biblical writers.” Again, they looked at the Biblical text, they said to themselves, “This is what we think they were trying to say,” and then they put that in the Biblical text. But the danger, of course, is that maybe the Bible writers weren’t really thinking that at all.

One example of this can be found in Psalm 51:5. One of the major false doctrines in the denominational world today is that babies are born in sin and are therefore lost. With that in mind, the NIV translates Psalm 51:5 as, **“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”** As I see it, the translators looked at the words of the text through their bias, and then they put what they thought were David’s thoughts into the actual text of the Bible. The NASB says, **“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me.”** And with that, we can at least see some other possibilities. A similar example is the use of **“sinful nature”** to translate the word **“flesh”** in Romans 8. The word is literally **“flesh,”** but **“sinful nature”** fits in a lot better with the popular doctrine of Calvinism.

Another good example of the thought-for-thought method can be found in the NIV in 1 Corinthians 7:9 (at the bottom of the handout). In this passage, Paul is making the argument that during a time of persecution it is sometimes better to remain single and to not be tied down by a family, and yet in verse 9 he says that not all people can handle the temptations involved in being single. And that’s where the NIV says, **“But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”** And yet if we were to look at the Greek text, we would find that the words **“with passion”** are not there.

NIV

as I am.^t ⁹But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry,^u for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

NASB

9 But if they do not have self-control,^a let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.^a 1Ti 5:14

INTERLINEAR

καλὸν αὐτοῖς εἰ μὴ μείνωσιν ὡς ἐγώ· 9 εἰ δὲ
[it is] good for them if they remain as I also; but if
οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται, γαμήσατωσαν· κρείττον·
they do not exercise self-control, let them marry; better
γὰρ ἔστιν γαμεῖν ἢ πυροῦσθαι. 10 τοῖς
for it is to marry than to burn. to the (ones)

This may seem rather minor to some people; after all, that is probably what Paul meant, but aren't there some other ways to burn as the result of sexual immorality? Burning in hell is certainly one option. But notice how the NASB handles this verse. If you look it up, you will notice that the translators have added the words "*with passion*," but those two words are in italics, indicating that they are not in the original text, but that they have been added by the translators to help the verse make sense. But again, even though there is no such thing as a perfect translation, we can still learn the truth from just about any of the major translations out there on the market, and the NIV is certainly no exception.

4. As most of you know, the option I have used for several years is the UPDATED NEW AMERICAN STANDARD.

What really did it for me was seeing the Greek teacher from Freed-Hardeman University at church on Sunday morning and seeing that his own personal Bible was the NASB. The same was also true for the professor who taught Hebrew. Like many of the more modern translations, the NASB is based on the latest (which is really the oldest) manuscript evidence, and its goal is to be a word-for-word translation as much as possible. And again, one thing I appreciate is that when words are added in order to make the verse make sense, those words are almost always in italics. For example, in Philippians 2:4, Paul says, "*...do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*" The word "*merely*" is not in the Greek text, but it helps the verse make sense, and so they put it there, but they put it in italics.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the NASB is their very unfortunate translation of the word "fornication." Literally, the word refers to sexual sin, but in the NASB the word is usually just translated as "immorality," a term that is way too generic. The word is sometimes explained in the footnotes, but it can certainly open up the door for some serious misunderstandings. In Matthew 19:9, for example, the NASB has Jesus giving "*immorality*" as the only reason for divorce. But as we know, the Lord was actually talking about "*sexual immorality*," a word that is much more specific. The NASB is also well-known for being one of the most accurate translations when it comes to translating the tense of verbs. But again, like all others, the NASB is not perfect.

5. Beyond these, there are, of course, MANY, MANY OTHERS.

I have really enjoyed the English Standard Version. It is the Bible I normally keep open on my desk as I prepare my lessons. You can find a free ESV app for your smart phone. And the ESV seems to be very literal but very easy to read at the same time. You will notice on the chart that it is written on an 8th grade level.

And there are new translations being made all the time, because language changes over time...sometimes rather quickly, so we need to constantly keep our eyes open for translations that are as accurate and understandable as possible. If you are wondering about a specific translation, I hope you will ask about it, and I would be glad to look into it.

Conclusion:

I am so thankful to all of you for asking the questions that have led to this series of lessons. At least for me, these studies have made me even more thankful to God for what we have. Here in this building right now, I guess we could probably find at least 2-300 copies of God's word in our own language. What an amazing blessing! Choosing a translation is a matter of judgment. We need to start with a good textual basis, and then try to get as close to word-for-word as we possibly can, while still being able to understand it.

Thankfully, our only real issue today is simply what we need to do with God's word. All of us have it, all of us can read it, and all of us can understand it. Will we go back to work tomorrow morning having ignored it, or will we turn to God in trust and loving obedience? The Bible teaches that Jesus died for our sins. We respond to that sacrifice with belief, calling out to God for a clean conscience, by allowing ourselves to be immersed in water for the forgiveness of our past sins. At that point, we are added to God's family, and we challenge each other to live like Jesus. If you have any questions, please ask. If you have any concerns, write those down, and we would be glad to share those with the congregation. But if you are ready to obey the gospel right now, you can let us know as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...

BIBLE TRANSLATION CHART

	Grade Reading Level	Year Published	Readability	Number of Translators	Translation Philosophy	Passage Comparison 2 Corinthians 10:13
NASB New American Standard Bible	11.0	1971; Updated 1995	Formal style in modern English, but more readable than the KJV	54	Word-for-word	But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you.
ESV English Standard Version	8.0	2001	Literal style, but more readable than the King James Version	100+	Word-for-word	But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even you.
KJV King James Version	12.0	1611	Difficult to read due to 17th-century English vocabulary and word order	54	Word-for-word	But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.
NKJV New King James Version	9.0	1982	Easier word usage, but somewhat choppy because it maintains 17th century sentence structure	119	Authors used the original KJV as a benchmark, while working to produce an accurate and modern word-for-word translation	We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us--a sphere which especially includes you.
NRSV New Revised Standard Version	10.4	1990	Contemporary, dignified with generic language in reference to humans	30	Attempts a balance between word-for-word and thought-for-thought	We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you.
NIV New International Version	7.8	1978	An accurate and smooth-reading version in modern English	115	Attempts to balance between word-for-word and thought-for-thought	We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you.
The Message	4.8	1993	An easy-to-read, modern-language paraphrase	Eugene H. Peterson	Thought-for-thought. Converts the original languages into the tone and the rhythms of modern-day American speech while retaining the idioms and meaning of the original languages.	We're not, understand, putting ourselves in a league with those who boast that they're our superiors. We wouldn't dare do that. But in all this comparing and grading and competing, the quite miss the point. We aren't making outrageous claims here. We're sticking to the limits of what God has set for us. But there can be no question that those limits reach to and include you.

*much of the information in this chart comes from Zondervan, a Bible publisher

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