

# Bible Translation Categories

## **Formal Equivalence (Word-for-Word)**

These include Bible translations that attempt to discern the definitions of each word in the original languages. Often theologians and mature Christians, already familiar with the Bible, use these translations to look for deeper meanings in the text. They include:

- English Standard Bible (ESV)
- New American Standard Bible (NASB)
- King James Version (KJV or NKJV)

## **Dynamic Equivalence (Thought-for-Thought)**

These Bible translations use a contemporary writing style where the translator(s) attempt to express the “concepts” of the original text, rather than translate every unique word. They can be helpful because they are accurate to the “meaning” of the text, while making it understandable to a modern reader. Often times these translations are the starting point for a new believer or seeker. They include:

- New International Version (NIV)
- New Living Translation (NLT)
- Christian Standard Bible (CSB formerly HCSB)

## **Paraphrase**

These are NOT Bible translations. They are called paraphrases for a reason. They are geared toward storytelling where the translator(s) have broad editorial license to present the text with their own bias, and they also include many helper words and phrases. Unfortunately, this regularly leads to an incorrect understanding of the actual Bible text because the author’s bias comes through more clearly than the text they are using. They include:

- The Message (MSG)
- Contemporary English Version (CEV)
- The Living Bible (TLB)

## Heretical (stay away from these)

These are also NOT Bible translations. These so called “translations” push views that are either outright false, misleading, ungodly, or embracing of sin and sinful lifestyles. These will masquerade as translations, but they are far from it. They use SOME actual text and add large amounts of non-original words and phrases. When actual text is used, they will twist it, add to it, remove it, or change it when it doesn’t support the author’s worldview, bias, or ideology. They include:

- New World Translation (NWT) Jehovah’s Witnesses
- The Passion Translation (TPT) Bethel Church \*Redding CA
- The Kolbrin Bible \*Universalist, \*Mysticism, \*Soul Friends (spirit guides), \*Thin Places (geographic locations on Earth that are closer to God)

## Avoid the Following for any Personal Bible Study

**1) The Message (MSG)** - This translation is a paraphrase by Eugene Peterson. It is specifically targeted toward U.S. English speakers with its use of American contemporary slang. The Message’s technique in translating the original text is so casual in its approach that even the publisher of The Message realizes this paraphrase cannot replace a faithful Bible translation. This mistreatment of Scripture can be seen in his misuse of passages such as 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

### Translation Comparison - 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

*The Message (MSG): Don't you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don't care about God will not be joining in his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don't qualify as citizens in God's kingdom.*

*English Standard Version (ESV): Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.*

**2) The Passion Translation (TPT)** - This is another paraphrase translation like The Message. The Passion is the work of sole translator, Brian Simmons, whose work has been heavily critiqued by the scholarly world.

The author (Brian Simmons) abandons all interest in textual accuracy, being sloppy and quite often incorrect with the original languages, and inserting so much new material into the text that it is at least 50% longer than the original.

The Passion Translation is even promoted by churches that share Simmons' own theology . One of those churches is the enormously popular Bethel Church, who are infamous for unorthodox heretical practices.

(here is an example of removing “rebuking and correcting” from 2 Timothy 4:2).

Translation Comparison - 2 Timothy 4:2

The Passion Translation (TPT): *proclaim the Word of God and stand upon it no matter what! Rise to the occasion and preach when it is convenient and when it is not. Preach in the full expression of the Holy Spirit—with wisdom and patience as you instruct and teach the people.*

English Standard Version (ESV): *preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.*

**3) The Living Bible (TLB)** - First published in 1971, The Living Bible is another paraphrase translation by one sole translator, Kenneth Taylor. However, Taylor does not follow the typical biblical translation process of using the original language manuscripts to create his translation. He instead uses the 1901 American Standard Version as his foundation.

Taylor's lack of understanding of Hebrew and Greek and not using the original manuscripts has led to disingenuous passages and verses such as his translation of John 12:15. A word-for-word translation like the ESV translates this as “*Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!*”

The Living Bible translates this as, “*Don't be afraid of your King, people of Israel, for he will come to you meekly, sitting on a donkey's colt!*” Taylor's use of “don't be afraid” is evidence that he does not realize that the common Hebrew expression of “fear not” means to “have confidence.”

Taylor also inserts his own ideas into the passage, adding that Jesus will “come to you meekly” which is certainly not part of the original Greek manuscript. Taylor’s bias also leads to omitting text in key passages that do not fit his Arminian worldview, such as his deceptive repackaging of Acts 4:27-28, Acts 13:48, and Romans 8:28-29.

#### Translation Comparison - Acts 13:48

The Living Bible (TLB): *When the Gentiles heard this, they were very glad and rejoiced in Paul’s message; and as many as wanted eternal life, believed.*

English Standard Version (ESV): *And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.*

**4) Good News Translation (GNT)** - Also known as the Good News Bible (GNB), the GNT was created by the American Bible Society as a translation that would be simple enough for anyone to easily pick up and understand, including individuals learning the English language and children. Many dangerous theological errors are found throughout the GNT, including distortions of the divinity of Christ, removing references to Jesus’ blood, misrepresentations of Jesus’ virgin birth, removing references to hell, salvation being distorted, etc.

#### Translation Comparison - Matthew 16:16-18

Good News Translation (GNT): *Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” “Good for you, Simon son of John!” answered Jesus. “For this truth did not come to you from any human being, but it was given to you directly by my Father in heaven. And so I tell you, Peter: you are a rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church, and not even death will ever be able to overcome it.*

English Standard Version (ESV): *Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

**5) Contemporary English Version (CEV)** - This translation is another work by the American Bible Society, commonly referred to as the Bible for Today’s Family. The CEV uses an even more simplified version of English than the GNT. Again, the attempt to make a translation

that is simple for anyone comes at the cost of containing misleading text, such as claiming the Holy Spirit actually replaces Jesus (John 14:26) and gender-neutralizing Paul's instructions for a pastor (1 Timothy 3:1-5). The translators of the CEV prove their exegetical incompetence with confusing and illogical translations of verses, such as their handling of Acts 9:22.

## Translation Comparison - 1 Timothy 3:1-5

Contemporary English Version (CEV): *It is true that anyone who desires to be a church official wants to be something worthwhile. That's why officials must have a good reputation and be faithful in marriage. They must be self-controlled, sensible, well-behaved, friendly to strangers, and able to teach. They must not be heavy drinkers or troublemakers. Instead, they must be kind and gentle and not love money. Church officials must be in control of their own families, and they must see that their children are obedient and always respectful. If they don't know how to control their own families, how can they look after God's people?*

English Standard Version (ESV): *The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore, an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?*

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