

The History of the Bible

TRANSLATING GENDER

Do Modern Translations Remove Gender Distinctions?

Gender Inclusive Language (sometimes called Gender Neutral Language) is an attempt to avoid using masculine words when a generic term is intended. For example, the Greek word ἄνθρωπος (ANTHROPOS) means “man” but is often used in the sense of “mankind/humanity.”

Gender Specific

Colossians 1:28 KJV

Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Psalms 1:1 NKJV

Blessed *is* the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

1 John 3:16 KJV

Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

Gender Inclusive

Colossians 1:28 ESV

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Psalms 1:1 NIV

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,

1 John 3:16 NIV

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.



Mainstream Evangelical translations maintain gender-role distinctions

1 Timothy 2:11–12 NKJV

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

1 Timothy 2:11–12 ESV

Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.

1 Timothy 2:11–12 NIV

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet.

Which Translations Use Gender Inclusive Language

KJV ... Rarely	HCSB ... Frequently
NKJV ... Rarely	NIV ... Frequently
NASB 1995 ... Rarely	NLT ... As much as possible
NASB 2020 ... Sometimes	CEB ... As much as possible
ESV ... Sometimes	

The KJV's Use Gender-Inclusive Language

About 600 times in the Old Testament, the KJV uses “Children of Israel” when the Hebrew says “Sons of Israel.” (See Exodus 1:1-4)

Occasionally the translators also opted for “children” in the New Testament where the Greek word for “son” was used. (See Galatians 3:26; 4:6)