

# **Dr. George Payton, Bible Translation, Session 13, Challenges in Translation and Communication, Linguistic Issues, Part 2, Figures of Speech**

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This is Dr. George Payton and his teaching on Bible translation. This is session 13, Challenges in Translation and Communication, Linguistic Issues, Part 2, Figures of Speech.

We're continuing our discussion about translation challenges and translation transfer challenges, and we're continuing in this vein of linguistic challenges or language challenges, things that are difficult to translate because of linguistic reasons.

This time, we're going to be talking about figures of speech. We talked about idioms, which are figurative language, and now we're talking about other figures of speech and other types of figurative language that cause challenges to translators because of the nature of their non-literal sense. So, how do you figure out what these things are? So, we're going to be doing that.

So, we start with metaphors and similes. Metaphors and similes are types of figurative language. Most, maybe even all, I don't know, cultures have metaphors that they use, or metaphors and similes.

The picture there, the stormy ocean, was a raging bull, which is a metaphor. Both of these figures are types of comparisons. And so the stormy sea is being compared to a raging bull.

Metaphors are an implied comparison of two things. It's not coming out and saying that these two things are; it doesn't say explicitly that this thing is being compared to that thing. So, it's an implied comparison, whereas similes are a direct comparison.

And similes use like or as. So, they'll say this is like this, or this is as that—some definitions of metaphors.

Metaphor is an expression often found in literature that describes a person or object by referring to something else that is considered to have similar characteristics to that person or object. Another definition is a word or phrase used to describe something or somebody in a way that is different from its normal use, in order to show that the two things have the same qualities and to make the description more powerful. When you make the comparison between A and B, particularly with metaphors, it's not that everything is similar, but there are some parts that are similar.

And in talking about semantic frames, these frames of reference in our cognition and in our understanding of the world and our language, you would have the thing that's being described, in that case, the sea, and then you had the raging bull. Those are in two completely different frames. And so, you're comparing things across these semantic categories, and in some ways, it's a strange thing to do, but it works because there are points of similarity.

So, remember that, that these are two things that are being compared that are not in the same category or frame of reference. Examples of metaphors in English. John's room is a pigsty.

My sons, when they were in high school, this typified them. So, how is it like a pigsty? Maybe messy, certainly with teenage boys, smelly. Yeah.

The children were angels today. My wife watched our two grandsons. She came home yesterday and said those boys were angels today. Which means what? Nice, kind, easy to get along, well-behaved, and so they were just very, she had a good interaction with them.

All right. Jane is a walking encyclopedia, which means she knows a lot of stuff, and she'd probably do really well on Jeopardy because she has all this random knowledge. All right.

The guy is a brick, which is the exact opposite of Jane. The guy is a brick. It means he's what? Thick-headed.

He doesn't get stuff. He's clueless. All of those things, the guy's a brick.

Susan is a night owl, which means she stays up late, and maybe a lot of people may do that today. Stay up and play games, video games, whatever, rather than being a morning person.

There seem to be two kinds of people in the world: morning people and night people. I think I used to be one, and now I'm the other. Okay, so these are word pictures, and they evoke real-life things, like bricks, encyclopedias, and pigsties.

These are things that we all know, and this is what makes it more vivid and impactful: it brings this thing to mind. So, when I say the boy's room is a pigsty, you kind of chuckle. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

And so, it's a way to even shorten language and make it short and sweet. It adds to the richness of the language. Some examples of similes in English.

Blind as a bat. Now, we all know that bats aren't really blind, but there it is. It means that person has really poor eyesight, busy as a bee, very active, clear as mud.

If something like God said, God was trying to explain something to me, and he was just as clear as mud. I could not get what he was trying to say. He runs like the wind.

This was a phrase that came out of the movie Chariots of Fire, which speaks of Eric Liddell, who runs like the wind. He runs very fast. Eats like a horse.

Again, teenage sons. You feed them, and an hour later, they're having a snack in the kitchen, and then... So, eating like a horse means they eat a lot. Sleeps like a baby.

Babies are like, they'll fall asleep anywhere, and they'll just sleep, except when you're trying to get sleep at night, and they wake up, and they're fussy. Then, that sleeps like a baby metaphor or simile breaks down. All right, last one.

Slow as molasses, or slow as molasses in January. Incredibly slow. Molasses is thick, and when it gets cold, it's even worse.

And, from the movie Forrest Gump, life is like a box of chocolates. So, if we look at these metaphors and similes, every one of them has three parts, and one of the parts is that you have the thing that's being talked about, and it's usually mentioned first. So, in the case of this, the picture that I showed you, the sea, would be the topic, the raging sea.

Then, you have the thing that it's being compared to, the illustration, and that would be raging bull. Sea and raging bull. And then, you think, how are these things similar? What do they have in common? And that's the point of similarity.

So, each one of them has these three parts, and when we do our exegesis, we try to break down these three parts of simile in the Bible, or metaphor in the Bible. And then, we try to say, okay, does this communicate straight up like it is in this other language? Sometimes, they won't have that expression, but it makes sense to them. So, they get it.

And so, it might be strange initially, but you go, yeah, we understand that, and it doesn't sound too bad. And so, sometimes you can just take it straight over and say it word for word, and we'll have some examples of that. Sometimes, the point of similarity is not obvious.

Sometimes, it is not discernible, and if we really don't know what it means, if we really can't break it down, then we probably just have to say it literally and try to put in some kind of footnote. That's sometimes the best that we can do. So, when we're doing translation, sometimes, close is as good as it gets.

Sometimes, we can get pretty close or exact. Other times, we can't, and sometimes, we just have to be unclear because the text is inherently unclear, and we just have to translate it literally and hope that the Lord can enlighten and help people to understand what the text means. And that doesn't only go for metaphors and similes.

That doesn't only go for figurative language like idioms. There are many places in the text where we just don't know what it means. And therefore, if we try to word it in certain ways, then we are getting into nature's territory.

So, that then brings us back to, let's just keep the form like it is, keep the words, and we translate the words, and hopefully, some kind of good explanation will help the reader to know what's happening. Okay, so Eric Little runs like the wind, like the wind is a simile. So, Eric is the topic, like the wind, or the wind is the comparison or the illustration, and then both are fast.

That's fairly obvious. Here are some metaphors and similes from the Bible. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, from Psalm 1. He is the one who does not stand in the council of the wicked, or sit in the seat of scoffers, or whatever, all that stuff.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on it he meditates day and night. Verses 1 and 2, then verse 3 is this verse. So, how is he like a stream? Or how is he like a tree planted by a stream? Okay, so the topic is the man.

The illustration is a tree growing next to a stream, and the point of similarity flourishes. There's a constant water source. The roots of the tree go down to the underground water source of that stream or river, and because of that, it's always green.

Now, we worked in East Africa, in the country of Kenya, and Kenya is 70% desert. 30% farmable land and we lived out in this village southeast of Nairobi, and it was hot and dry all the time. So, we had three seasons: hot, hotter, and hottest.

And it's just dry as a bone out there, and I remember flying over from Nairobi to our village, and you look down, and you see this green ribbon going through the desert, and that green ribbon is a line of trees, and they're on both sides of this dry stream bed. It's a dry stream bed, but those trees have tapped down into the underground water, and that is always green. That's what this picture is.

And when I think of this, I always think of that. Now, are they fruit trees or whatever? It doesn't need to be a fruit tree, but the fact is, they're tapped into a constant source, and that causes it to flourish, grow healthy, and grow well. So, that is the simile that's being used here.

He's like a tree. Isaiah 53:6, all we like sheep have gone astray. What is the topic, what is the illustration, and what is the point of similarity? Think about that for a minute.

Obviously, we are the topic. We, as human beings, and we're being compared to sheep. So, the sheep is the illustration and has gone astray.

In what sense have we gone astray? The place that we lived in Kenya, out in the hot, dry desert, was occupied by the Orma people that we worked with. They keep cattle, and then goats, and sheep. And so, every day, we would see cattle, goats, and sheep.

And sheep are stupid. They are ignorant, and they'll run off. And then you got to go chase them, and bring them back, and this one will run off.

And so, you got to go and chase them down again. They have a propensity to run away from the herd or to just wander off. And these boys who are herding them usually have two or three boys who take a herd of sheep out for grazing and then bring the sheep back at the end of the day.

Because one guy can't do it all because they're always running off somewhere. And that parable of the lost sheep that's perfect for a group of people that are shepherders. They get this.

Now, we who are not sheep herders, or you go to Papua New Guinea, and they don't even know what a sheep is, then this presents a challenge to explain this metaphor and to give them an idea of this unknown idea of sheep. But the whole thing is prone to wander. Just like that old hymn, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

Prone to leave the one I love. That's what this verse is talking about. So, as we look at that, we think, oh yeah, I get it.

When you come from that kind of farming culture, then it means even more to you. But even if we are not from a farming culture, we can still get it. The Lord is my rock.

It's not explicit. The point of similarity is not there. But as you read through the Psalms, it says the Lord is our rock.

The Lord is our fortress. The Lord is our strong tower. All of those word pictures are a place of security.

So, when you're in the desert, and it's sandy, there's a lot of easy walking as you go along. Rock means it's stable. It's solid. And when you go there, then you are stable, and solid, and safe, with those other things about the fortress and the strong tower.

So, there's a safety and security there. Famous verse, Psalm 119, 105, your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path. Again, we get the point of similarity because we know the topic, and we know the illustration, and we know what light does for us.

Guides us, shows us the way to go, shows us where to walk, and shows us where not to walk. So, like sheep going astray, we don't do that. Because why? We have God's word to keep us on the path.

So, your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path. I can walk more confidently because I know where to go because God's word is guiding me through that. So, it's a guide, it's illumination, all of those things.

It doesn't have to be just one point of similarity; there could be several. As human beings, our brains can fill in those gaps. Our brains know what light does for us.

And so, even somebody that doesn't have this in their language, this particular idiom, or this particular expression, they can still get it. And so, when it comes to translating, we'll talk about how to translate it, but we don't want to make things overly explicit because that then spoils the picture. That then spoils the figure of speech.

So, how do we go about translating these things? Well, sometimes the points of comparison are not explicitly stated, just like we had; Lord's my rock is not explicit; a lamp unto my feet is not explicit. In Genesis 15, God says to Abraham, I am your shield. The people that we work with, the Ormah people, cattle herders, sheep and goats, guess what? They know exactly what a shield is because there are wild animals out there.

We were in the village once, and we didn't hear anything in the night. The next morning, a lion had walked into the village, next to some huts, and it attacked a donkey in the night. And they looked at the ground, and they said, yeah, this is where the lion was.

It was right there, and the house is just right over there. So, there's danger, and there's danger from the wild animals, hyenas, lions, stuff like that. There's also danger from enemies and people who come to steal your animals.

And so, one tribal group that's pastoral will attack another tribal group that's pastoral. And so, you have to be able to defend your sheep, and you also have to go. If your sheep, your goats, and your cattle have been stolen, then you have to go and get them back. And in going and getting them back, guess what? There's a fight, and there's going to be a battle that is involving shields.

And so, they perfectly get this, we didn't have to touch this at all. I am your shield. We have another one.

So, is it discernible in the context? Oftentimes, yes. Does it make sense in the other language? Sometimes it does, and sometimes it doesn't. So, we have some ways to get around it.

So, if the point of comparison, or excuse me, the point of similarity, isn't obvious, we have at least a couple of choices. One thing is, if it's a metaphor, then you can turn it into a simile. I am like a shield to you, rather than I am your shield.

I'm like a shield. The Lord is my shepherd. That's another metaphor.

I am like a shepherd to you, would be maybe a way to say that. And if it's still not obvious, you can state the similarity explicitly: I protect you like a shield. Because again, we want the communication to happen, we want them to understand, and we want to leave it intact as much as possible, but sometimes these things are added, and are we adding information into the text? No.

We're adding clarity by building a bridge so that from the biblical culture to this other language, we're building that bridge by filling in a little bit of the information that's hidden and implied but is still there. So, those are two options of what to do if it doesn't make sense in the other language. The other choice is to break down the word picture, and just simply say, I will continually protect you.

We prefer keeping a word picture there, but sometimes you just can't. We don't have that option. If it's completely unclear in this other language, and it's possible to make it clear, then let's at least try.

Okay, sometimes the point of similarity is not obvious, or sometimes it's completely left out. Proverbs 11:22, like a gold ring in a swine's snout, is a beautiful woman without discretion. I've looked at several commentators, and they all think something different.

This is one of those things where I would probably, if I have to translate Proverbs, I would be really reluctant to try to add anything to that. Again, if we can't be sure what it means. We know God shield protection.

That makes sense. This one has some ambiguity to it, that I'm not really sure that I can say with confidence how I would translate it. So, we need to be careful.

I will make you fishers of men. This is an incredibly hard verse to translate. How will the disciples be like fishermen? First of all, they are fishermen, but how will they go

and fish for men, and what does that look like? So, people have tried to say, I will make you gather people, gather men, like a fisherman gathers fish, or something like that.

So, gathering, or gathering like a fisherman gathers fish. The question is, why are you gathering them? And so, in one language, they said, what does it mean when Jesus told them, I will gather, I will make you gather people. They tried to say it that way.

And these people thought, and they said, are they capturing them? Are they arresting them? Are they kidnapping them? What does it mean to catch people? Yeah, that's a hard one. It's not easy. Herod, that fox.

This comes from Luke 13. He's in Jerusalem. Pharisees come to Jesus, and they say, don't you know that Herod's after you? Don't you need to be careful? And he goes, tell that fox, I've got work to do, and I'm going to do it until that work is done.

Now, what do we think of when we think of fox? We have folktales about the clever fox. The fox takes advantage of others. He tricks them.

Usually, he takes something from them, like food, or money, or the fox with the animal on his back. And then, they swim across the stream. They get to the side, and the fox eats the animal.

And he says, sorry, I'm a fox. That's what I do. And so, he promised that he wouldn't eat the guy, and they ended up eating him.

So, this is what we get in our picture of what is a fox. Does that fit this context? I have a hard time figuring out how it fits that context. Because saying somebody's clever and tricky means they have some kind of intelligence there.

So, I looked up in commentaries, and I even talked to a noted Hebrew scholar, Dr. Randall Booth, and in the Hebrew culture, a fox is something small, something insignificant, something not very important. If you think back to the Old Testament, when Ezra and Nehemiah came back, they were rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. And the local people were trying to stop them.

And they would come and harangue them and abuse them verbally. And they said, if a fox ran on top of that thing, the thing would fall down. It's so poorly built.

Small and insignificant seems to fit this context a bit better. Jesus says I don't care what Herod wants to do. I'm doing what I'm doing.

I'm called by God to do this, and I'm going to do it until my work is done. So, that might fit that. And what we need to do is we need to be careful that we cannot put



our view of this comparison from our culture onto the biblical culture, onto the biblical context.

Because we might get it wrong. And certainly, if people think, well, he's being clever here, that may not be the meaning that we want. And so, we have to use commentaries.

We have to use other resources and Bible dictionaries, because we want to get what was their cultural concept, and then we transfer that cultural concept over. So, do I recommend changing the word fox? No, because Jesus said the word fox. However, a good footnote, Jesus meant that Herod was small and insignificant, or something to that effect, or most scholars believe, or many, or something like that.

You try to word the footnotes of the video, and you guess, sorry, what is it? Because I guarantee if you ask 10 Americans what it means, at least 50 percent, if not probably more, would say, oh, he's being, he's saying that he's sneaky and clever. All right. So, we just need to do our homework.

We need to be thorough in our research of the biblical passages, especially those passages that we are most familiar with. We have to double-check and ask if we interpreted it correctly. Once you interpret it correctly, that's when you say, okay, now we know what it means, let's transfer that meaning over to the target language, translated text. And as we said, at all costs, try to keep that illustration, try to keep that word picture intact, because it really does add not only vividness, but it adds more understanding, and that more understanding can then lead to a greater impact.

But as we said, sometimes we don't want to do that, because then that would spoil the word picture. So, if we say, God is my shield, we want to leave it. God is my shield. We don't want to say God is like a shield to me, in that he protects me.

The beauty of that word picture that's short and sweet gets lost, and so we have to keep our principles that we're applying to do the translation work, to strike a balance there, because we don't want a clunky sounding sentence. We don't want a clunky-sounding comparison. We want it to be sweet, flowing, and concise because the biblical author probably could have said it any way that they wanted to, and they chose to use this word picture.

So, we try to also. Okay, here are some other figures of speech or figurative language. Euphemisms.

So, what is a euphemism? We use euphemisms to soften the speech. We use euphemisms to avoid being offensive. We use euphemisms to avoid being

disrespectful, and this is something that is even more important with many face-to-face cultures, and cultures from the non-Western world.

They have even stricter senses of propriety than we do here in the U.S. In fact, here in the U.S., I would say propriety has been long gone, and people talk about the most vulgar things on television in front of other people. Okay, so we can't do that in the Bible, and the rule of thumb is that I like to ask translators when we talk about a particular thing in the Bible or something, like if it's a euphemism in the Bible, or it could be something else in the Bible that is said in a straightforward way, that the local people go, oh, we can't do that. We can't say it that way.

Why? Because it's offensive. So, the rule of thumb is this. Can you read this translation that you just produced for your grandmother? Would you be embarrassed to read it to your grandmother? Would you be embarrassed to stand up in church and read it when there are women, and there are children, and your grandma, and would you be embarrassed reading it to them? If the answer is yes, something has to change.

Basic rule of thumb. All right, so, in Ghana, this one man was a Ghanaian man, and he was telling me that in his tribe, in his language, let's say that the king died in the night, and then the next day, everybody's passing this news around, and they say the king has traveled. Why? And just say the king has traveled.

You don't say where but say the king has traveled, and that's a euphemism for the king has died. If you say openly the king has died, those people around you will kill you on the spot. You are so disrespectful to that king.

By saying it vulgarly, he died. Do we have the same thing in English? Sure, we do. He passed on, he went to be with the Lord, he passed away, he's no longer with us.

We do the same thing, because we want to be respectful to this dead person, and we want to use appropriate, respectful language. So, my students ask me, what if the king really did travel? Well, then you say the king went over to the next town over there. That's different than the exact phrase, the king has traveled.

In Swahili, euphemisms, I need to help myself, or I have a need you can shorten to I have a need, it means I need to go to the bathroom. Again, what I just said is an idiom, it's a euphemism in English. I need to go to the bathroom.

And today, it's become more common for people to say straight up what they want to do in the bathroom, and it just drives me crazy. I don't want to know that, don't tell me that. So, you say, excuse me, I need to excuse myself.

Fine, I know what you're going to go do, you don't need to tell me. TMI, too much information; don't tell me that. Just say, where's your restroom, or whatever?

Okay, so, I have a need, and they have two needs, by the way, they have small needs and big needs. Okay, there you go. So, things are often avoided.

Bodily functions are one of the main things. Dying is the main thing how to refer to a dead person after they've died.

Intimate relations between couples. Women's functions, and women's giving birth, and all of that related to that. All of those things are potentially offensive to other cultures, and you need to be very careful in how you translate that.

So, in the Orma culture, not only do they have euphemisms, but men are not allowed to use the language concerning giving birth in the presence of women. So, they can't say, yeah, we took my wife to the hospital, and then she delivered the baby, and they cut the umbilical cord, and after that was it, and you don't talk about that between genders. In fact, if the women catch a man saying things like that in their presence, they will take him to the elders, and he will be fined.

Why? Because he broke cultural norms of speaking about these things that are not his area. Can you talk about it with the guys? Yes. Can you talk about a cow giving birth, or a goat giving birth? Yes.

I can't talk about women. So, that's a really, really strict injunction against such language. Okay, so, we can't say, well, it's okay in my culture, it should be okay in that one.

It's not always that way. So, we can't say it in a direct way. We can't say it as it's sometimes written in the text.

So, we need to be careful to check with the target language community, and to see if what is in the Bible is offensive. Now, there was this one translation project that was going on, and they had a woman who was working as a translation advisor to them, helping them work through their translation, and they had one of these passages that were a bit sensitive, and it dealt with women's things. So, they got some of the local men, and they wanted to read the translation to them, and then the local men would say, okay, this is clear, that's not clear, whatever.

We talked about the process of getting feedback on your translation before. So, the men who came into the room asked the consultant, excuse me, can she please leave? We can't talk about this with her in the room. So, she had to step out, and they talked about it, and they came up with the most benign way of saying what it

was that they needed to say that's okay to say in mixed company and wherever, and in church.

They arrived at the right phrasing, but they couldn't even talk about the topic with her in the room. It was too embarrassing to them. There you go.

So, we can't just say, well, it's not a problem in my culture. I don't see why it's a problem in anybody else's culture. Well, because we're not from those cultures, and we don't really understand, and these are deep-seated things. These are not small things to them.

And what would happen if we did have things like that in there? It would affect the acceptability. They'll say, this is a vulgar book, and we don't want to read it. So, we have to be very careful, and that's why we have to keep in balance accuracy, understandability, clarity, and natural language.

We have to keep all those things together with acceptability. So, if the local people say no, then it's no. It's their translation.

At the end of the day, if we are outsiders working with them, we're going to leave, and they're going to be left with their Bible. And so, we need to include them in the process, and we follow their lead in such cases of figurative language or euphemisms. Okay, now, euphemisms in the Bible.

Don't we just love this? Okay, 1 Samuel 24:3, Saul went into a cave and covered his feet. So, was this a small need, or was this a big need? If you're there for any length of time, chances are it's a big need. And if you think of wearing robes, and the robes go down to maybe your knees, what happens when you squat down? Your clothing covers your feet, and then you carry on.

So, this is a euphemism for big need. We have the same euphemism, and then another one is added to it. So, Ehud, the left-handed man, goes in to see King Eglon, or the king of Eglon, and he kills the guy, right? And then he locks the door and escapes, and the people who are his servants are trying to get to the king, but the door's locked.

And they say, oh, maybe he's in the cool room, euphemism. Maybe he's covering his feet, euphemism. So, two euphemisms in the same sentence, in the same phrase, actually.

Maybe he's covering his feet in the cool room. As it turned out, he was dead, so, okay. But that's a euphemism in the Bible.

Now, NASB, what do they do? They said he was only relieving himself, which is a euphemism. So, you translate a euphemism with a euphemism in that culture and in that language. That way, we all know we don't need to know what he was doing.

Relieving himself is enough, and you can fill in the blanks for yourself. Adam knew his wife. How do you say that in a nice way? How do you say that in an acceptable euphemistic way? I saw one contemporary version that said he had sexual relations with his wife, and I just died.

How could they possibly want to include that in their scriptures? Okay, so, we're translating the book of Genesis into Orma, and we came to this, and my translator said, oh, we have this expression, knowing a woman. And so, okay, we put it in there, and then I went and asked some other guys, well, what does this mean? And they said, oh, we use that, we usually use that when it's adultery, that he went out and he knew that other woman over there. And I said, oh my gosh, we have a problem.

We can't use that because that sounds like he's not married to Eve, or at least it sounds awkward to say he had an affair with his wife. That makes no sense whatsoever. So, we had to say something else, and I think we ended up saying they slept together.

He slept together with his wife, and she conceived. And we can fill in the blanks, so the euphemistic language doesn't prevent the right understanding to be perceived by the readers. So, we had to be very careful.

We thought, oh, there's a word no, it's used in Hebrew, the word no, it's used in Orma, one-to-one correlation, sorry, doesn't work. All right, this is the Net Bible. Now, the man was intimate with his wife.

What do you think? It's a whole lot better than some of the others. Okay, so we use target language euphemisms to communicate the biblical ones. We also use target language idioms and euphemisms, even if the biblical text says it in a straightforward way.

We adjust that, and we want to do what we can so that it's acceptable to the local people. So, do you remember we talked about Ruth the other day, and we talked about Ruth going to Boaz, and Ruth said to Boaz, spread your wings over me because you are my goel, you are my redeemer. One of the translations is not vulgar, but it says this: Marry me, I want you to marry me.

Okay, so, do you remember we talked about high-context cultures and low-context cultures? In the Eastern cultures that we live with, and often Bible translations are done in the Eastern world, they don't say anything directly. They're so careful to say it in a roundabout way, everything. And as I gave an example in one of the other talks

about my wife, she didn't want to ask me straight up, please make me tea, so she used this hinted request, I want tea, or I'm ready for tea, right? So, it seems like, at least my experience with my wife and other women, that they tend to talk around things to be more soft.

And you've got a high-context culture where they talk around things. Ruth would have never said, Marry me, straight up. I seriously doubt that.

So, is that a good translation? I don't think that it accurately paints the picture of the scenario in that cultural context. And this is why culture is so important, and this is why language and culture come together, particularly in these figurative uses. So, we need to be careful.

Here's one of the issues that we need to think about in the global operation of Bible translation. When people from another language who don't speak English want to refer to an English text in order to say, well, what does the English say? They use these contemporary translations as guides, and these contemporary translations were not written for them. They were written for, for example, the Good News translation, which was written for North Americans.

His audience, the author of that, was North Americans, and so he's trying to fit something that fits them. It doesn't fit these other cultures. So, we need to be really careful when we're checking these contemporary translations that we don't take this English saying, you are the apple of my eye, for people that don't even have apples, and then try to translate that in another language.

Well, that's what the English says. Therefore, that's what's right. Therefore, let's do that.

So, all of these issues are interrelated, and we have to be really careful when we're translating. We're going to get to some other figures of speech in our next talk. Thank you.

This is Dr. George Payton and his teaching on Bible translation. This is session 13, Challenges in Translation and Communication, Linguistic Issues, Part 2, Figures of Speech.