

Dr. Gary Meadors, Knowing God's Will, Session 2, Learning to Read Bible Versions

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Welcome back to our lectures on Knowing God's Will. This is lecture number three. We call it GM2.

You'll notice in your table of contents, so always keep an eye on that. Actually, it's lecture number two, not three. Lecture number two, reading or learning to read Bible versions.

Knowing God's Will, how the Bible teaches us. And I'm going to talk to you about Bible versions. Now, this particular lecture is tied to English Bibles.

And it's tied particularly to the United States in relation to the proliferation of Bible translations that we have. I do not know what country you're listening from and what you have in terms of Bible versions. That's something you should be able to find out.

You ought to be able to fit whatever versions you have into the paradigm that we're going to talk about in terms of formal translations and functional translations. Reading introductions to Bibles, which nobody ever does, is a very important piece because, typically, the introductions will tell you exactly what their translation theory is. And that's important in terms of reading the Bible.

Now, why are we doing this lecture on Bible versions and a little bit about how we got our Bible? Well, the answer to that is that our worldview and value system are based on Scripture. Therefore, you've got to learn to read the Bible. Now, in a culture like the United States, where we have lots of translations, publishers run this stuff.

They push it. They came out with 30 translations. You go into a big bookstore. And there are all kinds.

And people don't have a clue exactly what that means in terms of how it is translated and what it's translated from. Some Bibles are really popularized by people in the media who use their English Bible and come up with another translation, which is not a translation at all but is their rendition. So it's very, very, very confusing.

And if you're going to use the Bible as your guide for your worldview and values, you've got to have a Bible in translation because you're not working. Most of you would not be working in Greek and Hebrew. You're working on your translated Bibles.

You've got to know, and you must know what kind of translation you have. And I'm going to try to describe to you what translations should be and what they are. And you will have to work that out in your own context as to the Bibles that you use.

If you're working in an English context, the versions that I mentioned will help you make the comparisons. All right, knowing God's will, how the Bible teaches. Now, this is GM2, as I mentioned, and it's very important that you have retrieved your handouts.

Today, we have a minimal number of slides, and we have a maximum printed handout that I'll be walking you through, not reading it to you, but walking you through it so that you can get the point that I'm trying to make in knowing what Bible you're using when you're pursuing your transformed mind. So, a brief history of the Bible in the Western world. Please notice the handout if you would.

That's page one, and my lecture is called So Many Bibles, So Little Time. And how true that is in our culture with so many options available to people who don't really know how to make a judgment about what they're reading. First of all, a brief historical overview.

I'm going to be quite brief here in terms of the overview of the Western world. This is not a lecture on the history of the Bible, even though I'm giving you some of that. As you may well know, the Old Testament came to us in Hebrew with some portions of Aramaic and Daniel and some other books in the Old Testament, but it's a rather small piece in terms of the Aramaic language.

Aramaic and Hebrew are very close. For example, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me in the Gospels? Eli, Eli means my God in Hebrew. Eloi, Eloi is my God in Aramaic.

And so, there's very little difference between the languages, and yet it's something that one needs to be aware of. But you don't have to worry about that because you're going to be reading by and large translations. The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, Hebrew and Aramaic for that matter, and the Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew.

The Septuagint was produced in the 3rd to 2nd century before Christ. Notice that your notes say BC or BCE. BC is the standard Western Christian way before Christ.

BCE is the politically correct way to refer to the time before the Common Era. CE would be the Common Era, or AD would be after Christ. So, you've got a couple of things you'll find in books.

BCE, AD, or BCE, and CE will be the things that you'll see. So you need to know that. All right, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the 2nd to 1st century BCE, were developed in Hebrew.

And they're actually older than this Hebrew Bible that most of us use, which is the next thing, the Masoretic Text. The Masoretic Text is the Hebrew Bible that wasn't standardized until the 9th century CE. Now, you should realize or know that in terms of the transmission of the Hebrew Bible, while there are different strains, it's nothing like the New Testament.

The New Testament has a very complicated transmission of manuscripts and families of manuscripts, whereas the Old Testament is more monolithic, as we please. And so you've got the Hebrew, which is represented in the Masoretic Text. You've got the Dead Sea Scrolls that should be compared to that later Hebrew, at least later when it was codified for us.

And then you've got various witnesses to that. You even have a Second Temple Jewish body of literature that's mostly in Greek, which may give you some textual criticism for verses in the Old Testament. So, you've got a very interesting thing.

If you've never read a book on the history of the Bible, that would be a very good thing to read. If you want to get really serious, there's a three-volume set by Cambridge University called The Cambridge History of the Bible. And it's just a fascinating journey from the Old Testament up to Christ and then the New Testament's development.

But we also have the New Testament, which we have in Greek. There are arguments that Matthew may have had notes in Hebrew. Some people even argue that some of the Gospels might have been written in Hebrew and then translated into Greek.

That's not something we can deal with right now. The point is that we have the New Testament in Greek and the Old Testament in Hebrew. While we have a rather small comparison base for the Old Testament, we have a huge comparison base for the New Testament.

We have about 5,200 manuscripts in existence, and they're not all total manuscripts. There's a lot of pieces, so to speak. And that runs from the 2nd to the 16th century when printing started to be dominant.

About 3,000 of these are Greek manuscripts on the Bible, and the other 2,200 or so are what we call Greek lectionaries. It'd be like the back of a hymn, though, if you still have one of those, that you have Bible readings. The lectionary had readings out of the Bible, but not necessarily the whole Bible.

But they are still in the strain of witnesses to the Scriptures themselves. There are only 318 items that came before the 9th century, and there are a number of reasons for that. One is the Roman Catholic Church had the privilege of having a lot of scriptoriums where manuscripts were copied, and the other is just time, and things were not discovered until the 1920s that had been produced in the 1st and 2nd centuries that came to our attention.

So that's another fascinating read, which is how we got the Bible in terms of the New Testament. But our interest is the English Bible. Our interest is in the English Bibles that we use.

All right, well, the Bishop of Rome commissioned Jerome in about 382 to produce a Latin Bible. We call it the Latin Vulgate, and that became a major Bible in the Roman Church, which dominated Europe. Gutenberg printed Jerome's version in the mid-1400s.

The Greek New Testament itself, as a total, wasn't printed until about 1516, and it was a product of Erasmus. There's a whole story behind that particular one. The Spaniards in 1520 printed a columned Bible called the Complutensian Polyglot, in which you could compare the Bible to other aspects of even the Bible itself and versions.

All right, now I'm rushing on. Erasmus' Greek New Testament became the base Greek text for the King James Version in 1611. Why? Well, they had not really been finding manuscripts.

They weren't searching for them. Archeology didn't exist until the early 1900s. They weren't unearthing manuscripts in various places, and they were isolated.

Libraries had these things in their basements, and there was no coordinated effort to find things and bring them to bear. So, Erasmus himself is reputed to have only maybe a dozen or so manuscripts that he used to produce the Greek New Testament that he had. Some of that was fragmentary, and he's claimed to have used the Vulgate in a few places and translated it into Greek.

That's a big story. That's something you'll have to read on your own. John Wycliffe, Wycliffe or Wycliffe, was at Oxford.

He resisted the Roman Church's ban on translating the Bible into English. The Roman Church tried to keep the Bible in Vulgate. They thought that was more holy.

But Wycliffe and later Tyndale had the burden of putting the Bible in the language of the people, the language that people read, so that everyone has access to scripture,

not just the privileged few. These were virtually underground. In fact, in 1414, they ordered Wycliffe's body to be disinterred from the grave and burned.

That's how much they hated translations back in those days. That's odd as we think about it, but that's the way it was. Tyndale, in 1526, printed the New Testament in 25.

He was executed in 36 before finishing the Old Testament that he'd started in 1525. So Bible translators were in danger in this era of Western history, and a number of things survived, but it wasn't until the mid to late 1500s and the 1600s that we started getting Bibles. They started actually proliferating Bibles briefly, not too many of them, but a few.

Of those, you've got Coverdale, the Great Bible, Geneva, the Bishop's Bible. The Geneva Bible is important because that's the Bible that became the standard. The King James Version came on the scene when Bruce Metzger tells the story that when the pilgrims came to America, they could only bring the Geneva Bible because when they came, the King James Version was too new.

They didn't want to corrupt America with the King James Bible, so they could only bring the Geneva Bible with them. Well, that's a historical oddity and an interesting item, which is not our concern at this point, but it is interesting how that took place. Now, the King James Version came in 1611, and this Bible, for centuries, held sway in the English-speaking world.

It was a massive production. It's written at least a 12th-grade level in our own terms, maybe college level now, given the state of education sometimes in the U.S., and I'm not going to go into this. You can read it under the King James Version, but that's the next contribution, and it became the contribution that controlled for a long, long time, and it's very important.

I'm going to show you a chart that you can look at for a moment, and I'll show you the influence of the King James Version. I've given you some information here about the bibliography on the King James Translators. It's quite interesting, not very well known, and may be hard to find, but there are about three books that are highly recommended if you want to study the translation of the King James Version.

There are also books that critique a certain group of people who think the King James is the finished product, that it is the Bible and the only Bible that should be used. They call it King James only. It's kind of, I'll just say it as it is, it's a little bit of a cultic movement in America, and if you want to read a critique of that, you can read D.A. Carson and James White and their bibliography I've given you there.

Okay, so the King James Bible Road. In the 1800s, we began to get some new translations. We got the English Revised Version, a major version in 1881 to 85.

It was very important, but in 1901, a Bible was published called the American Standard Version. We call it the ASV, and this is a very, very major version; even though it didn't widely catch on in the U.S., it was a very important version for this reason. The ASV was the first of the English Bibles to really put the Bible, the total Bible, into paragraphs, not verse by verse.

The old King James put every verse in the left-hand column, and the ASV gave us paragraphs. In fact, the translators of the ASV were really well educated in English and other languages, so when they gave us a paragraph, they gave us a big paragraph, and that's very, very important. They gave us the big paragraph because the big paragraph is the biggest unit of thought.

New versions will come along and break up that paragraph. Say the ASV gave you 15 verses for the paragraph. The NIV might come along and give you four or five breakouts, but it should be one paragraph.

Now, there's a very interesting thing you can do. You can compare the ASV to the NIV. The NIV gives you the subpoints of the big paragraph.

Very nice little benefit from realizing that, but I think the ASV is a great control Bible in terms of paragraphs. The Revised Standard Version became the next and very major version. 46 to 52, it was translated.

It wasn't well received by some conservatives because it was translated by scholars who weren't viewed that way, but they were doing the translation. They weren't selling theology. So, the Revised Standard Version has been a major Bible in America and in the English-speaking world.

The Revised Standard Version came out in the 40, excuse me, in 1990, the new Revised Standard Version, and there are some questions, but it's still a translation of the RSV. Now, here's what's quite interesting. If you pull out of your notes that you've printed off, the big chart that I gave you on the chart of the Bible, the history of the Bible, this chart is produced by the American and United Bible Societies, and the American Bible Society particularly.

And you'll notice if you could; you have to learn to read the chart as you go from top to bottom. If you go down to the right in the middle of the page, you see the Geneva Bible, and it goes down if you notice that little arrow, to the King James Bible. Now, notice what happens with the King James Bible.

In the King James Bible, these arrows mean that their connection is dependent. So, the English Revised Version was dependent on the King James Bible. It didn't give a new translation, but it revised the King James Bible to new knowledge that we might have had.

That one goes down to the Revised Standard Version, and it also goes down to the New American Standard Bible, the NASB that was so popular, recently redone and called the Legacy Bible. So the English Revised Version, the American Standard, all of that's coming off the King James. The RSV and even the NRSV are not new, fresh-from-scratch translations.

It is a continuation of the tradition of the King James Version, but it has been amended for several reasons. You can learn when you read the introduction. It's a couple of major reasons that have to do with the euphony of language.

Words change meaning sometimes over time, and so they update the vocabulary from dictionary usage. It also has new manuscripts that sometimes come to light and are taken into consideration. The ESV, which is popular among some people today in America, is actually based on the NRSV.

So, it is even connected back to the King James Version. So, the King James is a huge contribution to Western culture. We celebrated the 150th anniversary not too long ago of the King James Version, and not the 100th; I see 60, no the 350 years, I think it was, something like that.

It was celebrated in all kinds of circles in America in terms of Bibles. All right, so anyway, that chart is very important for you to get a picture of the Bible in the Western world. Okay, now let's go on.

So we have all the versions after 1611 that are built on the King James. That's the bottom of page two in your notes, and you can compare the chart and learn a lot of things from doing that. Okay, page three in your notes.

Defining English Bible translation procedures. Now, this is what is so crucial. When you read the Bible, you're sitting there saying, I'm reading God's Word, and you are.

But then you read another Bible, and maybe it says something just a little bit different. What happened? If we're naive about this, we can really get uptight. You're reading translations.

You're not reading Greek and Hebrew. That's fixed, but translations render things, and sometimes they're rendered a little more interpretively. Even the King James version did that.

I'll illustrate that to you later. So, learning the procedures of translation and knowing the procedure of translation of a particular version that you've chosen to use is extremely important. Read the introduction.

Read what nobody ever gets around to, but that is the foundation of being able to use a particular Bible. So, it's important that Christians understand the nature of the translation they're using because that is moving you into interpretation, whatever the translation is. From the King James to the NIV, it's moving you.

King James and the NIV are just not as much. And so you have to be aware of that if you're going to use the Bible for transformation of your mind and for Christian decision-making. All right, now there are two major translation procedures.

If you'll notice here, the purpose of translations was to put the Bible into the language of the people. All the way from Wycliffe and Tyndale, that was the purpose. They died for it.

We only get criticized when we come out with a new version. Many translations have been produced, especially in the Western world, in an effort to give people a Bible they can understand. If you want an easy illustration of that, take the King James Bible on Romans 7 and take an NIV on Romans 7. Read the King James first, then read the NIV.

And your eyes will get wide because the King James version is the doobie-doobie-doo chapter. What I want to do, can't do. What I do, I don't do, want to do.

I mean, it's very literal in that sense, and very difficult to read. When you read the NIV, they smooth it out. It still renders the meaning of the original, but the fact is that it's translated in a way that the reader can understand.

And I'll tell you a little more about that in just a moment. So, it's better not to criticize versions. It's better to understand them and use them.

And I'm going to give you a method by which you can do that. This is crucial in knowing God's will because you have to use the Bible to know God's will. You need to know the Bible that you're using and how it might influence you.

And one version may differ from another. If you happen to be a pastor, and people come into your office with a Bible, and they say, Pastor, this verse says such and such. But when you were preaching last week, you said such and such.

What Bible do you use? And, of course, the implication is that you've got a problem. Well, if you understand translations, there's no problem. There is understanding.

And that's what I'm trying to give you a heads up on and trying to encourage you about. Two prominent translation procedures are well documented, and I'll mention them to you: formal equivalence and dynamic or functional equivalence.

The word functional is the word that's used most now. Dynamic was a word that was used early on when it came out. And I'm going to tell you what some of those versions are and explain a little more about formal equivalence and functional equivalence.

On page three, in the middle of the page, there are two prominent translation procedures—formal equivalence. Okay, the King James Version is formal.

The ASV is formal. The NASV is formal. The RSV is formal.

The ESV is formal. If you compare them closely, you will see that sometimes they deviate from woodenness, which we call formality, to be able to help you understand. The ESV will do that more than the others because it's mashed on in time.

But those are formal equivalent versions. If you're an English-speaking person, you have to have a control Bible. You need a formal equivalent translation for a control Bible.

You could add the legacy Bible, which is the redoing of the NASB. You should make a note there on page three under NASB in point A. The legacy Bible is another one in the train, and it's a redoing of the NASB. And they've done some interesting things.

Read the introduction to the Bible to learn what it's about. Now, all but the ESV had used the King James Version. The ESV used the 71 RSV version as its base.

It wasn't a new translation, the ESV. It was a redoing of the base of the RSV in 1971. And it's gone on from there.

But remember, the RSV base was the King James Version. So, you see, you're not getting away from the King James if you use a formal equivalent translation, by and large. All right.

Now, let's move along a little bit. So, what is formal equivalency? I'm going to read my notes to you, but I'm just going to tell you about it. Bruce Metzger, who was a professor of Greek and New Testament at Princeton Seminary for decades, a godly man in my opinion.

I've met him and had conversations with him. He was criticized highly by the liberal religion students in his class. In fact, he told me one time, someone even stood up and cussed him out in class for his conservative views of the Bible.

So he suffered, but he was a major player in the study of the Greek New Testament, its transmission, and its meaning. Very fine man. He was the chairman of the RSV committee for many years, and he had a dictum that you'll read in the introduction to the RSV or the NRSV.

Read the introduction. It was produced by Metzger. He has this phrase, which is in the middle of the page in bold print, that these formal equivalent translations are as literal as possible, as free as necessary.

Now, that's the education to understand what the dictum means. It basically means this, my friends. There is no such thing as an absolutely literal rendering of the Bible.

If they did it, you couldn't read it. For example, in Greek, we don't have the same word order as in English. So, if you get an interlinear, which I think is a bad idea, you'll see that it doesn't flow in sentences.

The verb may be four verses away. 1 John chapter 1 is about verse 4, when you finally get the main verb because you've got a litany of relative pronoun clauses to get there. That which we've seen with our eyes, that which our hands have handled.

And you put that into an interlinear, and it just doesn't make sense. Translation means you've got to have the ability to take the whole and render it into a sentence in your own language, like in English, in which word order has a major role to play. And so it gets complicated.

Don't ever criticize translators unless you know what they're doing in the world. So be as literal as necessary, be as literal as possible, as free as necessary. So, a translator always takes some liberties.

I'll show you where the King James even does that. As a result, it pushes towards certain kinds of interpretation. So, if you're going to use the Bible for decision-making, you better know what version you're using.

You had better compare it to other versions and find out which version may be the most formal in its rendition. So, if you don't know the languages, you at least have a good base for your work. So that's formal equivalence.

As literal as possible, as free as necessary. Get that dictum down. Do better than me.

All right, the next one is, they used to call it dynamic, now we call it functional equivalence. I would call functional equivalence interpretive translation, rather than as literal as possible, as free as necessary. This one is more interpretive.

To understand dynamic equivalence, you need to read the introduction to the New Living Translation. I think Tremper Longman wrote that. I'm not really sure because it doesn't say that I could find it.

But he was one of the main managers of the New Living Translation, which was kind of a redoing of another Bible that was a little more paraphrastic. In that introduction, you're told what it means to have a functional translation as opposed to a formal translation. In a functional equivalence, you'll notice there on page three, moving toward the bottom underneath dynamic or functional. In the second sentence, a dynamic equivalent translation can also be called a thought-for-thought translation.

This is contrasted with a formal equivalence, which is more of a word-for-word, as literal as possible, and as free as necessary. The functional equivalent translator is interested in being as literal as possible, but he's mostly interested in being as explanatory in the translation to help the reader know what the passage is saying. Now, I'm going to show you what that means in a chart, an elaborate series of illustrations.

For the moment, just think of it this way. Functional, as literal as possible, as free as necessary. Dynamic is thought-for-thought.

It takes the original Greek and renders it in a written way that's contemporary and in line with a modern reader. Modern readers are about sixth-grade level at best. And I'm saying it is best in America, whereas King James was at the twelfth grade level.

That's why nobody could read the King James and understand it. So, you got the sixth grade level in the NIV. And they're trying to do what? We should put the Bible into the language of the people so that they can understand it.

So, don't get hot and bothered over somebody using a translation like the NIV or the NLT; know what it means and use it. I'm going to show you a way to use it that can be beneficial to you as an English-speaking Bible reader. All right.

Now, notice at the bottom of the page what I've already said, and I'll repeat it. The functional equivalence is like an interpretive translation. The interpretive translation is guided by the need to make the translation easier to read and understand.

It, therefore, requires less judgment of the reader. King James requires a lot of judgment from the reader. And more judgment, and excuse me, less judgment from the reader since the translators have rendered it in an understandable way.

But to do that does mean that you may have some interpretive issues involved. Now, those interpretive issues vary a great deal, from the nature of Greek grammar to one's perception of context. Okay.

And I'm going to illustrate some of that to you. So that's something you must be aware of. You've got to know your Bible if you're going to use the Bible for the development of your transformed mind.

All right. Now, on page four, let's move along here. Okay.

Page four. There are other procedures for translation. As I said, there's a proliferation of Bibles in America.

Study Bibles or even worse. And you just stay away from them, frankly, and get some basic, formal, and very two or three basic functional things and let the rest of them go to other people, frankly. Recommendations when you choose a Bible.

First of all, you must have a paragraph Bible. If you're using a Bible where every verse is in the left-hand column, find a Bible that's paragraphed. If you don't see a paragraph, you don't see the thought.

You're treating the whole Bible like you would read the book of Proverbs, verse by verse. Proverbs actually have context, but they do lay out a kind of verse-by-verse. So you've got to have a paragraph in the Bible.

That's a high priority, particularly in English. Two, choose a continuum of Bibles. And I'll give you my continuum, and I'll show you in the charts, and you can see it here.

I like to put the King James in because so much of our culture is conditioned by King James terminology. It's still in the church heavily. But I might put the ESV and the NRSV with it.

I might leave one of those out. I'll probably leave the ESV out and go with the NRSV. Then, the NIV and the NLT.

Because the King James and the NRSV are formal, the NIV and the NLT are functional. And so, they're always, for an English-speaking person, you move from left to right.

If you're in Israel listening, you're going to move from right to left. But you got the idea. We want to move from the most formal to the most functional.

And the NLT would be in that category. You'll see in the chart in a moment. Okay, so you choose a continuum for your Bible study and you can vary it, but you cannot vary from the issue of formal and functional.

You cannot vary from that. If you do, then you mess up your comparison. Number three, please study.

Be careful with Study Bibles. Study Bibles are nice. I have about four or five on my shelf.

I carry them in the church to read the notes. I have various ones, one on archaeology and one on historical backgrounds: this and that.

I have four or five of them. But the problem with studying Bibles is that somebody has decided on the structure of a book for you. So they outlined the book, and they put it in that format.

Now you're locked into what they think about the flow of the book. Maybe good. It may not be so good.

I don't like Bibles that tell me the outline. I like Bibles that give me the paragraphs. But I use Study Bibles.

You can use study Bibles. Use them like a commentary. Please don't use them as your form, as your base work, particularly for what we're doing here.

Okay. I would avoid the expanded translation of Bibles, such as The Message. And we just have hundreds of these in the U.S., so don't waste your money.

If you're going to take time to read the Bible, read something worth reading. And what you're getting is somebody's sermons. Usually, somebody who's not even skilled to read the Bible in the original languages.

So avoid the expanded translations. There may be a few good ones. You have to consider the source.

And I can't. I'm not going to go into that at the moment. I kind of like Phillips. I don't think Phillips was all that skilled.

But he did give a paraphrase that was more controlled and restricted. All right. Five.

Be a student of the Bible. Be a student of the Bible where you got it.

What it is. What it is in a translation. Be alert.

Don't be passive in how you approach your Christianity. All right. Now, at the bottom of page four, we are engaging English Bible versions.

Notice what I say. Read the introductions, especially to the NRSV and NLT. That's an absolute must.

And you may have those translated into other languages besides English. Read the introductions. Avoid paraphrases.

Avoid Study Bibles. Go with straight-on, formal, and functional equivalent comparisons. You compare from the most formal to the most functional.

You have to have that continuum. And I'll show you that in the charts here in a moment. If you look at the bottom of page four, we'll start looking at the chart in a little bit.

The bottom of page four. Formal equivalent. I'm summarizing.

As literal as possible, as free as necessary. That's the NRSV introduction by Metzger—the functional equivalent.

A thought-for-thought translation as contrasted with formal equivalence or word-for-word translation. And in the NIV, but particularly in the NLT, read the introduction. It'll help you to understand that.

Then, the paraphrase. Well, read the introductions, but don't use them for your serious work. All right.

On page five, depending on how your thing's printed out, it may be a little bit at the top of the page disconnected from the chart I just said. Page five, if that starts at the top or KJVs on the left, you need to write formal, functional, and paraphrase so that you know which ones are there. The left-hand column, and I don't have these on a slide.

These are in your notes. It has the KJV, the ERV, the English Revised Version, the ASV, the NASV, the Legacy Standard Bible, often the NASV, the RSV, where you got the NRSV and the ESV. Those are all formal.

The King James is the oldest, and the Legacy would be the newest, actually, but until then, the ESV was pretty much the newest. I'll tell you personally, I think the ESV is a little more dynamic than it wants to admit on a number of occasions, but you have to look at the languages to get that. The functional Bibles, well, you got light function and heavy function.

The NIV tradition is what I would call the lighter functional Bibles, but they're still very functional. That means they still are very interpretive, and I'm going to show you some ways in which that takes place. The New Living Translation, which was revised in 1997, is more functional, and I'll show you some illustrations in my charts in a moment.

The Jerusalem Bible was put out in 1966. It's a little more functional. I like reading fresh Jewish translations of the Old Testament over some of the Gentile translations of the Old Testament.

There are paraphrases of various kinds. The Phillips is one I have found sometimes to be nice, but it's still more of a preaching Bible than it is a Bible on which to base your life. All right, now the first task you have, page five, is to choose a control Bible.

You've got to have a control Bible, and that would be in your four left-hand column. Then, choose functional versions. You're going to see the ones that I've chosen, and I hope that maybe you'll follow that if you're an English-speaking individual until you have reasons to do otherwise.

Now, let's go to page six, where my charts begin. Okay, I don't have these on the videos, so you have to look at your notes. Page six, now you'll see how I line things up.

King James, four to the left, formal equivalence. The New Revised Standard is formal. Then, the Dynamic Equivalence one is a New International Version, but there are two renditions of it, 1984 and 2011, and there were a lot of changes.

In fact, a lot of my good illustrations got corrected when they put the 2011 out, so I left both of them in here so I can show you what was and how the NIV even changed itself back toward a more formal rendition rather than functional and extremely interpretive. The Dynamic Equivalence is to the far right; the number two category is the New Living Translation. So, it's sort of soft with the NIV.

People will word that differently, and it's strong with the NLT. You'll see the NLT is usually longer in verses. Let's look at some verses, okay? This is the fun part, and I'm sorry that I'm this long in this lecture because I'm trying to keep my lectures shorter, but that's very difficult for me.

Let's look at this: the King James Version: For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. All of us have pretty much memorized that in English. The New Revised Standard Version says, For God so loved the world that he gave his only son.

Somebody took the word “begotten” out of the Bible. That's what some people would say. Well, hold your horses.

The Dynamic Equivalent is the NIV-84, For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son. The New NIV in 2011 uses the same phraseology, and it is very much in agreement with 84, except in certain places. One and only son.

The New Living Translation gave his only son. So, you can see that out of four of the versions, they use only the word. But the King James uses only begotten, and the others use one and only, which is the most specific.

Well, what's the difference here? Well, here, you've got to get into the languages. The word begotten is the word monogenes in Greek. It uses the word gnao, which means to beget.

Mono, which is only one. And so, it meant only begotten. Some people get confused on that and think Jesus was begotten, and we get into what we call eternal generation and a lot of other theological issues.

And so, the point of monogenes' term is it's one and only. That's the point of it. Here's one of the illustrations.

If you compare this term in the synoptic gospels, you'll find that John, by and large, uses it for Jesus only. That's in John. In the synoptic gospels, they don't use only begotten.

They use that for people rather than for Jesus. Like the widow of Nain's son was an only begotten child. Zacharias' child, a little girl, that was an only begotten little girl.

She was unique, one and only. That's what one and only means. It means unique.

So, you see where the functional translations help you to get the point, as the original writer actually made the point but didn't come through in the English translation. Jesus wasn't begotten. He's one and only.

He's unique, and that's what that word means. Unique. Jesus was unique.

The resurrection of a child that was the only child of a family, that's unique. And it's interesting how the writers use the term and don't use the term in relation to Jesus in their writings. All right, so that's just an illustration.

Let's take the next one, Acts 26-28. I should spend an hour on nothing but these illustrations. I've heard this thing so many times.

Agrippa said to Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. I've heard a lot of sermons on that. They got Agrippa hanging on by his fingernails onto his throne, and he's about to weep and fall off of his throne at the preaching of Paul.

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. Well, look at the NRSV. Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian? Wow, wait a minute.

What happened to the literal Bible? Almost, that all pick up on the word almost. And the NIV of 84, do you think that in such a short time, you can persuade me to be a Christian? We hear something different than we're used to, such as if the King James is our only tradition. We're hearing Agrippa here, not falling down before Paul, but in a sense, being sarcastic toward Paul.

Paul, you're a learned man, and it's obvious you know what you're talking about for your domain, but you think that influences me? No, it doesn't. Hear the sarcasm? Then Agrippa said to Paul, do you think in the new NIV, uses again the original NIV, then a new NIV, do you think you can make me a Christian so quickly? Hear the sarcasm? Now, I can't go into this with you, but underneath these translations is the Greek text, and the Greek text has categories in the usage of language that have to do with something that is possible but not certain. Consequently, these translations have actually captured the Greek better than the formal equivalents of almost thou, which persuades me to be a Christian.

In fact, if you'll notice, the NRSV, which is a formal equivalent Bible, says, are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian? Because in reality, my friends, formal equivalence takes into account the Greek. If the Greek has implied to us in its context and the usage of language that it is more sarcastic than it is, oh, I'm about to fall off my throne, then it ought to be rendered that way. So, someone could say, hey, that's formal, not functional, but we tend to put them into these categories.

But you can see quickly that the Bible you're using is very important because understanding a gripping statement may completely change your whole history of understanding, Acts 26:28. Galatians 5:4, where I remember this one, I read it as a new Christian, I didn't understand. Christ has become of no effect to you, whoever of you who are justified by the law.

You've fallen from grace. I read that, say, wait a minute, you're not justified by law. You're justified by grace. And it really confused me in my early Christian life.

Now, fallen from grace, does that mean you can lose your salvation? You can see all the things people could make out of that verse. Well, look what the NRSV did. You who want to be justified by law have cut yourselves off from Christ.

You've fallen away from grace, we could say, as a principle. Look at the NIV—you who are trying to be justified by the law.

Notice it says you're trying, whereas in the King James it says, whoever of you are justified by law. It makes it more of an assertion rather than a tendential possibility. You're trying to be justified by the law.

The 2011 follows that. The New Living Translation, if you're trying to make yourself right with God by keeping the law. Notice the word trying.

That word trying actually captures the Greek grammar. And so these functional translations are actually formal if you understand Greek grammar. But most English readers will say, what did they do to my verse? Well, I'm sorry, but that kind of response is a response of ignorance.

It's a response to not knowing what's going on in the translation process. As an English reader, you're not going to learn Greek by and large, but many of you, most of you. And you're not going to be able to make those distinctions.

You can read commentaries that do, maybe that would help you. But the fact is, is that by comparing formal and functional equivalents, you are teasing out meaning. In other words, if you read your chart on that particular verse, you should walk away and say, I got to study this.

I got to find out why there's a difference between these translations. And as you develop your transformed mind, that can be affected by passages that you take for granted. So you must compare English Bibles.

Now, there's a bunch of them in here. I just can't, and I cannot go over 60 minutes in these lectures as much as I would love to go through all of them. But you do it.

You work through these and see how they flesh out. Let me just take another illustration. Is it on this page? I wanted to take John 3:16. I may not have it in this set of illustrations.

Let me see. No, I don't. But there's one on divorce in Matthew 19:9, which is fascinating.

That's a big issue. I've got a whole shelf, and there are several shelves on that question. Every one of these is an interesting illustration.

But I want to show you 1 Thessalonians 1:3. I'm going to quit the chart with this. 1 Thessalonians 1:3. That's on page seven. You can read it.

I'll probably do 1 Timothy too. But let's do this. 1 Thessalonians 1:3. This is something you probably memorized at some point out of the King James.

I did. Remember it without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus. Work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope.

That has a great ring to it. Look at this. The RSV pretty much kept that. Your work of faith, labor of love, and it says steadfastness instead of patience.

Because steadfastness may be communicated more as patient endurance, which is what the word patience means. So the change there is not a change. It is an upgrading of the vocabulary for communication.

But notice what happens when you get to the NIV in the third column. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope. Where in the world did the words produced, prompted, and inspired come from? They're not in the Greek.

So, you know, somebody knows the Greek can say, well, you really messed that one up. But wait a minute. These are in the Greek because the Greek has a case called the genitive.

It's the O-F, the of, the love of God. Is that the love God produces? Or is that the love that you receive? And right here, that same thing is coming up. And the words produced, prompted, and inspired are all productive terms.

They're almost like verbal nouns. And so, therefore, they're explaining to you work of faith. I mean, you'd have to go figure out what that means out of the King James, where here your work is produced by faith.

Faith is productive. It produces your work. And love prompts your labor.

Hope is inspired by your endurance. I wish they wouldn't have used the word inspired, but they didn't. Okay.

So, you can see the expansion. That's called that's called functional equivalence. But it is not loosed from the Bible to the imaginations of the interpreter.

It's actually rendering what the Greek language itself is capable of. And that's an interesting thing because if we go over to the NLT, we see something a little different. In that, in First Thessalonians 3, the last column, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and your continual anticipation of the return of the Lord Jesus.

That's a different translation. It's actually a different category in the Greek nouns, which I'm not going to go into with you. But it has a basis in translation.

But I think that the NIV has the best translation here. It's called the subjective genitive, where it produces the action. You can see the vocabulary chosen, which are those kinds of vocabulary.

So, man, would you be forced to do some kind of research? If you came across this without explaining it, and wonder how in the world they came up with it, There's an answer. And frankly, I don't care how much education you have. I don't care about the fact that you've never even seen Greek.

You can read something here to help you. A church library ought to be housed with books and commentaries that you can use to try to find out why this is that way. If not, go to your pastor.

You should be trained in the languages. That's what pastors are supposed to be. All right.

By the way, let's look at something that's kind of interesting in 1 Timothy 3:11 in our last couple of minutes here. Because here, the King James is interpreted. 1 Timothy 3:11 are the qualifications for a pastor, and for deacons, and for deacon women.

I'll just leave it at that and tease you with that. I'm not teasing you, actually. I could diagram this and show you that all three categories are represented.

But I'm not going to bother with that right now. Even so, must their wives be grave, not slanderous. Talking about deacon's wives.

The NRSV. Women, likewise, must be serious. Now, wait a minute.

Women and wives. Women and wives. Look at the NIV in the third column, which is the 1984 version.

It uses the word wives. Look at the next column, which is the 2011 version. It uses the word women.

And then, the NLT uses the word wives. Listen, there's a big difference here. There is a big difference between wives, which is a more specific category, and women, which is a more general category.

The King James version was actually interpreted at this point. It chose to say these were the wives of deacons, not that they were women deacons. The Greek doesn't nail that down.

There's one word for woman and wife, and it's the word *gunē*. Not a very flattering sounding word, but it's the word *gunē*. You have to determine by context whether it's a wife or whether it's a woman.

That's not a wife. So you got interpretation involved. If you're paying attention to versions, that will tease out your curiosity to find out why it is translated differently.

Man, this is so much fun. I could spend a week going over illustrations with you. You find your own.

You lay it out like I have, and you will find yourself in a whole new world of Bible study in terms of versions. I don't want to forget something here. Yeah.

On page 8 near the bottom, please use both NIV 84 and 2011 in your chart, and you can see where they've changed some things significantly, just like they changed it to women instead of wives. They're not being gender biased. They're merely rendering the most common use of the word.

It's common for women. It's specific for wives. So less specific is less interpretive in that particular case.

Isn't that interesting? Man, the Bible is a book that can capture your imagination. If you look at it closely, particularly in comparison, it will stimulate you in all kinds of ways to become a better Christian. That will help you to be a better, transformed-minded person.

I love Bible versions. I particularly love what we can do with these English versions. And you can do that.

You don't have to know Greek. All you have to do is be able to read English. Now, I'm sorry, but that may be a little bit of a challenge to read carefully.

But when you do, you're going to say, why is there a difference? If you ask the question why, you have entered the arena of learning because curiosity is the key to learning. That's the lecture that I have for you on Bible versions. Lecture GM2.

The next edition will be GM3, in which I'm going to talk to you about a very important issue in the interpretation of the Bible and the use of the Bible as we prepare ourselves to engage the transformed mind seriously. Thank you for your attention, and God bless you today.