

Why I'm Against the TNIV

I agree with removing male-oriented words from the Bible when there is no male-oriented meaning in the original Greek or Hebrew text. But when there is a male meaning, we dare not under-translate and conceal that meaning just because that emphasis is unpopular today.

The heart of the controversy is this: In hundreds of verses, the Today's New International Version (TNIV) translates only the general idea of a passage and omits male-oriented details. Such changes may sound more acceptable to modern culture, but details of meaning in the underlying Greek text are lost. Here are some examples (*italics indicate emphasis added*):

"If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God" (1 Cor. 14:28, NIV, 1984).

"If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to God when alone" (TNIV).

The TNIV translators mistakenly thought that modern readers might read the word "himself" and decide that this verse does not apply to women, so they changed it to "when alone." But there is nothing in the Greek text that means "when alone" (the pronoun *heaut-o* means "to himself").

Before the TNIV, people could disagree over whether or not Paul allowed uninterpreted prayer in tongues in small private groups outside the church meeting, but here the TNIV invents a new rule that Paul (and God) never specified: Someone praying in tongues must be "alone."

"Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?" (Heb. 12:7, NIV).

“What children are not disciplined by their parents?” (TNIV).

The TNIV mistranslates the Greek terms *huios* (“son”) and *pat-er* (“father”), which in their singular forms do not mean “child” or “parent.” It also obscures the parallel with God as Father in this passage.

Is it true that children are disciplined by their parents?
Yes.

Is that what this verse says? No.

The author is using a specific male example; yet the TNIV has changed it to a generalization.

In defending this rendering for Hebrews 12:7, the TNIV Web site ([http://www.tniv.com](#)) incorrectly claims that *pat-er* in the singular means “parent.”

Though the TNIV does not yet call God our “Parent,” this claim opens a wide door for calling God “Parent” in Hebrews 12:9 and elsewhere in future editions. If we accept the TNIV in 2002, we should get ready for “Our Parent in heaven” in 2010.

“If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him” (Luke 17:3, NIV).

“If any brother or sister sins against you, rebuke the offender; and if they repent, forgive them” (TNIV).

The TNIV inserts “or sister,” which Jesus did not say. Jesus is using a single male individual (“your brother”) as an example of a general truth, but the TNIV will not let Him do this. I agree that the verse applies to sisters who sin, but that is application, not translation.

The Bible often points to a single individual to teach a general truth, as in the parable of the prodigal son—which applies to prodigal daughters but should not be translated prodigal “son or daughter” (as even the TNIV recognizes).

Similarly, in the Ten Commandments, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife" also applies to not coveting your neighbor's husband, but we should not change the words of God to translate Exodus 20:17 as "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or husband." God's words are not ours to tamper with as we please.

"If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues" (Rev. 22:18, NIV).

"If anyone of you adds anything to them, God will add to you the plagues" (TNIV).

The TNIV implies that if any one person in your group adds to Scripture, "you" all, the whole group, will receive the plagues. The TNIV changes the meaning of the very verse that tells us never to change the words of Scripture!

"For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest" (Heb. 2:17, NIV).

"For this reason he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest" (TNIV).

Did Jesus have to become like His sisters "in every way" in order to become a high priest in service to God?

All the Old Testament priests were men, and surely the high priest was a man.

This text does not quite proclaim an androgynous Jesus (one who is both male and female), but it surely opens a wide door for misunderstanding and in fact almost invites it. Meditate on that phrase "in every way" and see if you can trust the TNIV.

The TNIV distorts the meaning of Scripture in hundreds of such changes, not because the original Greek words have changed,

and not because the meanings of ancient Greek words have changed (they haven't!), but merely to avoid five offensive words: "man," "father," "son," "brother" and "he/him/his."

Additional problems include changing "Jews" to "Jewish leaders" in Acts 13:50 and 21:11 (and several times in John), where the Greek does not specify "leaders."

More than 100 respected evangelical leaders have now signed a public Statement of Concern opposing the TNIV (see more details and verses at).

But the International Bible Society, which owns the copyright and makes the final decision, continues to promote the TNIV.

If the TNIV should gain wide acceptance, a precedent will be established for other Bible translations to mute unpopular nuances and details of meaning for the sake of "political correctness." The loss of many other doctrines unpopular in the culture will soon follow.

And in every case Bible readers will not know if what they are reading is really the Word of God or the translators' ideas of something that would be a little less offensive than what God actually said. "You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it" (Deut. 4:2, ESV).

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