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Translation Notes (unfoldedWord)

1 John - Introduction

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the book of 1 John

This is a letter that the apostle John wrote to challenge and correct false teachings that were leading followers of Jesus to believe wrong things and live in wrong ways. John used the normal letter form of that time, which had distinct opening and closing sections with the main body of the letter in between them.

1. Opening of Letter (1:1-4)
2. Main Body of Letter (1:5-5:12)
 - Genuine believers obey God and love one another (1:5-2:17)
 - It is false teaching to deny that Jesus is the Messiah (2:18-2:27)
 - Genuine children of God do not sin (2:28-3:10)
 - Genuine believers help one another sacrificially (3:11-18)
 - Genuine believers have confidence in prayer (3:19-24)
 - It is false teaching to deny that Jesus became human (4:1-6)
 - Genuine believers love one another as God has loved them (4:7-21)
 - It is false teaching to deny that Jesus is the Son of God (5:1-12)
3. Closing of Letter (5:13-21)

Who wrote the book of 1 John?

The author of this letter does not give his name. However, since early Christian times, the church

has widely considered the apostle John to be the author. He wrote the Gospel of John, and there are many similarities between the content of that book and this letter. If John did write this letter, he probably did so near the end of his life.

To whom was the book of 1 John written?

The author wrote this letter to people whom he addresses as “beloved” and as “my little children.” This probably refers to believers in various churches located in the area where John was then living.

What is the book of 1 John about?

False teachers were encouraging followers of Jesus to believe wrong things and to live in wrong ways. John wanted to challenge and correct those false teachings so that the people who received his letter would continue to believe the truth that they had been taught and live in right ways. The false teachers were saying that these people were not saved; John wanted to assure them that they were saved.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, “1 John” or “First John.” They may also choose a different title, such as “The First Letter from John” or “The First Letter John Wrote.” (See: How to Translate Names)

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Who were the people against whom John spoke?

The false teachers whom John was challenging seem to have held beliefs similar to what would later become known as Gnosticism. Those false teachers believed that the physical world was evil. They thought that God would not become human, since they considered the physical body to be evil, so they denied that in the person of Jesus, God had come to earth in human form. (See: Evil)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

“sin”

In chapter 1, John says that we should not deny that we sin. Rather, if we confess our sin, God will forgive us. In chapter 2, John says that he is writing this letter so that the recipients will not sin, but he adds that if they do sin, Jesus will advocate on their behalf. But in chapter 3, John says that everyone who has been begotten from God and who remains in God does not commit sin and is not able to sin. And in chapter 5, John says that we should not pray for people who are sinning in certain ways, although we should pray for people who are sinning in other ways. These ideas may seem confusing and contradictory.

However, the explanation is that the people whose teachings John challenged and corrected in this letter were saying that it did not matter what people did in their bodies. This was because they thought that physical matter was evil, and so they thought that God did not care about it. In effect, they were saying that there was no such thing as sin. So John needed to say, in chapter 1, that sin is real and that everyone sins and that God does care about that. So when believers sin they need to confess it and for God to forgive them. Some of the believers may have been deceived by the false teaching and may have begun living sinfully again, so John also needed to reassure them that if they repented and confessed their sins, God would forgive them. John says similar things in chapter 2. Then in chapter 3 he explains that the new nature that believers have as children of God is one that rejects sin. A believer does not want to sin and does not enjoy sinning. They should recognize that those who excuse or condone sin are not truly children of God, and that as children of God themselves, God helps them to become more and more obedient and free from sin. Finally, in chapter 5, John warns that if a person sins wantonly and continually, this likely means that they have rejected Jesus and are not influenced by the Holy Spirit. He says that, in that case, it may not be effective to pray for them. But he then encourages his readers that if a person sins occasionally but feels remorse, he is influenced by the Spirit, and so the prayers of other believers will help him to repent and to live in a right way again. (See: Sin and Faith and Forgive)

“remain”

In this letter, John often uses the word “remain” (which could also be translated as “reside” or

“abide”) as a spatial metaphor. John speaks of a believer becoming more faithful to Jesus and knowing Jesus better as if the teaching of Jesus “remained” in the believer. He speaks of a person being spiritually joined to someone else as if that person “remained” in the other person: He writes that Christians “remain” in Christ and in God, and he says that the Father “remains” in the Son, the Son “remains” in the Father, the Son “remains” in believers, and the Holy Spirit “remains” in believers.

Translators may find it difficult to represent these ideas in their own languages if they try to use exactly the same words and expressions each time. For example, in [2:6](#), when John speaks of a believer “remaining” in God, he intends to express the idea of that believer being spiritually unified with God. Accordingly, the UST speaks of how the believer “shares life with God.” To give another example, for the statement in [2:14](#) that “the word of God remains in you,” the UST says, “you continue to obey what God commands.” This shows how other expressions can be found that accurately communicate the various ideas that John is expressing through the term “remain.”

“appear”

In several places in this letter, John uses a term that the ULT usually translates as “appear.” This is actually a passive verbal form in Greek, but as is often the case with such forms in that language, it can have an active meaning. When it has an active meaning, it is important to recognize that it does not simply mean “seemed to be there,” as the word “appeared” might suggest. Rather, it means “came to be there.” This is illustrated well by the use of the term in another New Testament book, 2 Corinthians, in which Paul writes in [5:10](#) that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” Clearly this does not mean that we must only seem to be present there. Rather, we must actually arrive there.

Throughout the letter, it is a subtle matter of interpretation to decide whether John is using the term “appear” in an active sense or in a passive sense. For example, in [1:2](#), John applies the term twice to the “Word of life,” that is, to Jesus. But it is not clear whether he is saying that Jesus himself “appeared,” that is, he came to earth, or that he “was made apparent” (made visible), with the emphasis on the idea that God revealed Jesus to the world and in the process revealed himself to the world through Jesus. At each place where John uses

this term, notes will call attention to it and discuss what it likely means in that context.

"the world"

John also uses the term "world" in a variety of senses in this letter. It can mean the earth, something material, the people who live in the world, the people who do not honor God, or the values of the people who do not honor God. Notes will address the meaning of the term "world" in each instance where John uses it.

"to know"

The verb "to know" is used in two different ways in this letter. Sometimes it is used about knowing a fact, as in 3:2, 3:5, and 3:19. Sometimes it means to experience and understand someone or something, as in 3:1, 3:6, 3:16, and 3:20. Sometimes John uses it in two different senses in the same sentence, as in 2:3, "in this we know that we have known him." Your language may have different words for these different meanings. If so, you must be careful to use the appropriate word in the right place in your translation.

"We"

In most cases in this letter, the first-person plural pronouns ("we, our," etc.) are inclusive, and so if your language marks that distinction, use the inclusive form in your translation. In those cases, John is speaking of what both he and the recipients know, or of things that are true of both him and the recipients. However, in a few cases, the first-person pronouns are exclusive, since John is telling the recipients what he and his fellow apostles saw and heard from Jesus. The notes will identify all such places, and in them you should use the exclusive forms if your language marks that distinction. (See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We')

"You, your"

The words "you" and "your" in this letter are plural.

Light and darkness

In 1:5–7 and 2:8–11 John uses an extended metaphor in which light represents what is good or holy and darkness represents what is evil. If this is not easily understood in your language, you may need to say explicitly that light represents goodness or that light is like goodness, or you may choose to talk about goodness without using the symbol of light. There will be a note explaining the

metaphor in each place. (See: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors)

Major textual issues in the book of 1 John

When ancient manuscripts of the Bible differ, the ULT puts the reading that scholars consider to be the most accurate in its text, but it puts other possibly accurate readings in footnotes. The introductions to each chapter will discuss places where the ancient manuscripts differ in significant ways, and notes will address those places again where they occur in the book. If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using the readings found in that version. If not, we recommend that you follow the readings in the ULT text. (See: Textual Variants)

1 John - Chapter 1 Introduction

Structure and formatting

4. Opening of the letter (1:1–4)
5. Genuine believers obey God and love one another (1:5–10, continues through 2:17)

Important Translation Issues in this Chapter

The Word of Life

John uses the phrase "the Word of life" to refer to Jesus in 1:1. "The Word" is a title that John uses for Jesus. If you have translated the beginning of the Gospel of John, see how you translated it there. This title does not refer to a word that is spoken by someone. By using this title for Jesus, John is saying that Jesus is God's most important message to all people. Jesus is the one who reveals who God is. In your translation of this title, try to make it clear that this is the title of a person whose role it is to communicate a message. Something like "The Message" or "The Revealer" might be appropriate. Consider also the title that is used in an accepted translation in your area. Here, John connects the title "the Word" with the phrase "of life." By this, John probably means that Jesus reveals God to the world and that Jesus also is the source of life. A translation of this entire phrase could be something like, "Jesus, the Message of God who gives life." (See: Word of God)

Order of Information

Like many Greek compositions of this time, for stylistic purposes, this letter begins with a very long sentence. It goes from the beginning of 1:1 to the middle of 1:3. The parts of this sentence may not be in the order that is customary in many languages. The direct object comes first, and it is very long, made up of many different clauses. The subject and verb do not come until near the end. And in the middle, there is a long digression. So think about the best way to translate and arrange the parts of this sentence in your language.

One approach that might work well in your language would be to create a verse bridge that includes all of 1:1–3. You could break up this long sentence into several smaller sentences, repeating the subject and verb for clarity. This would allow you to present the parts of the sentence in an order that might be more customary in your language and that your readers might understand better. Here is an example of 1 John 1:1–3 rearranged into an order that might be clearer in your language:

"We want you to have fellowship with us, and also with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are declaring to you what we have seen and heard. We are declaring to you what was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched. It has to do with the Word of life. Indeed, the life appeared, and we have seen it, and we are testifying to it. Yes, we are announcing to you the eternal life that was with the Father and that then came to us."

If you take this approach, another way to translate a combination of the second and third sentences would be, "So we are declaring to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and what our hands have touched."

Another approach that could also work well and which would not require a verse bridge would be to leave the phrases in their present order, but to divide the sentence into three parts at the verse divisions. If you do that, you could also put your translation of the phrase "regarding the Word of life" at the beginning rather than the end of 1:1 and present it as a topical introduction to the letter. Otherwise, your readers might not get the sense that this is a letter until they reached 1:4, where John formally states his purpose for writing. An example of 1 John 1:1–3 in this order would be:

"1 This is about the Word of life. This Word was from the beginning. We have heard him, we have seen him with our eyes, we have looked at him and our hands have touched him. 2 Indeed, this one who is life appeared, and we have seen him, and we are testifying about him. Yes, we are announcing to you the eternal life that was with the Father and that then came to us. 3 We are declaring to you what we have seen and heard so that you will have fellowship with us, and this fellowship is also with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

The notes to 1:1–4 provide further specific suggestions for how to translate this long opening sentence. (See: Verse Bridges)

Important Textual Issues in this Chapter

In 1:4, the most accurate ancient manuscripts read "so that our joy may be fulfilled." The ULT follows that reading. However, some other ancient manuscripts read, "your joy" instead of "our joy." If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using whichever reading is found in that version. If a translation does not already exist, we recommend that you follow the reading in the ULT text. (See: Textual Variants)

1 John 1:1 (#1)

""

If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 1. Suggested heading: "The Word of Life"

See:

1 John 1:1 (#2)

"What was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, regarding the Word of life"

See the discussion in the General Notes to this chapter for how to translate the long sentence in 1:1–3. If you follow the suggestion to translate the phrase **regarding the Word of life** as a topical introduction to this letter, you will already have indicated that the four clauses in this verse refer to a person, Jesus. If you have pronouns in your language that refer to people, such as "he," "who," and "whom," it would be appropriate to use them here. Alternate translation: "Regarding the Word of

life—he is the one who has existed from all eternity, whom we heard speak, whom we saw with our own eyes, and whom we looked at and touched with our own hands”

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 1:1 (#3)

"from the beginning"

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the fact that Jesus has always existed. Alternate translation: “from all eternity”

See: Idiom

1 John 1:1 (#4)

"we have heard," - "we have seen" - "our" - "we have looked at" - "our"

Here the pronouns **we** and **our** are exclusive, since John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to the earthly life of Jesus, but the people to whom he is writing did not see Jesus. So use exclusive forms here if your language marks that distinction.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’

1 John 1:1 (#5)

"which we have heard"

The implication is that what John and the other eyewitnesses **heard** was Jesus speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could include this information, as in the UST. Alternate translation: “whom we heard speak”

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 1:1 (#6)

"which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at"

These two phrases mean the same thing. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and show the emphasis in another way.

Alternate translation: “whom we saw clearly ourselves”

See: Parallelism

1 John 1:1 (#7)

"which we have seen with our eyes"

In your language, it might seem that this phrase expresses unnecessary extra information. If so, you could abbreviate it. However, your language may have its own way of using such extra information for emphasis, and you could also do that in your translation. Alternate translation: “whom we saw” or “whom we saw with our own eyes”

See: Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit

1 John 1:1 (#8)

"our hands have touched"

In your language, it might seem that this phrase expresses unnecessary extra information. If so, you could abbreviate it. However, your language may have its own way of using such extra information for emphasis, and you could also do that in your translation. Alternate translation: “whom we touched” or “whom we touched with our own hands”

See: Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit

1 John 1:1 (#9)

"we have seen with our eyes," - "our hands have touched"

The false teachers were denying that Jesus was a real human being and saying that he was only a spirit. But the implications of what John is saying here are that Jesus was a real human being. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly, as in the UST.

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 1:1 (#10)

"regarding the Word of life"

As the General Notes to this chapter suggest, you could put your translation of this phrase, **regarding the Word of life**, at the beginning of this verse and present it as a sentence of its own as a topical introduction to the letter, as UST does. Alternate translation: "This is about Jesus, the Word of life"

See: Information Structure

1 John 1:1 (#11)

"regarding the Word of life"

Letter writers of this time typically began by giving their own names. That is the case for most of the letters in the New Testament. This letter is an exception, but if it would be helpful to your readers, you could supply John's name here, as UST does. As noted above, John uses the plural pronoun "we" because he is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to Jesus' earthly life. But it may be more natural in your language for him to refer to himself with a singular pronoun, and if so, you could also do that in your translation, as in the UST. Alternate translation: "This is John, writing to you about Jesus, the Word of life"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 1:1 (#12)

"the Word of life"

Here, **the Word of life** is implicitly a description of Jesus. As the General Introduction explains, there are many similarities between this letter and the Gospel of John. That gospel begins by saying about Jesus, "In the beginning was the Word." So when John speaks in this letter of **the Word of life** that **was from the beginning**, he is also speaking about Jesus. ULT indicates this by capitalizing **Word** to indicate that this is a title for Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus, the Word of God, who gives life"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 1:1 (#13)

"of life"

This could be referring either to the **life** that Jesus has or to the life that Jesus gives. But since John is writing this letter to reassure believers, it seems

more likely that this expression is referring to the **life** that "the Word" (Jesus) gives to those who believe. Alternate translation: "who gives life to everyone who believes in him"

See: Possession

1 John 1:1 (#14)

"of life"

In this letter, John uses **life** in different ways, either to refer literally to physical life or to spiritual life. Here the reference is to spiritual life. Alternate translation: "of spiritual life"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:2 (#1)

"indeed, the life appeared"

See the discussion of the term "appear" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the term could mean one of two things. (1) John could be emphasizing how Jesus came to this earth. (See the UST.) It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "Indeed, the life came right here" (2) John could be emphasizing how God revealed Jesus to the world and thereby revealed himself to the world through Jesus. To bring out that emphasis, you could translate this with a passive verbal form or, if your language does not use passive forms, you can use an active form and say who did the action. Alternate translation: "Indeed, the life was made visible" or "Indeed, God made the life visible"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 1:2 (#2)

"the life"

John is speaking of Jesus, whom he calls the "Word of life" in the previous verse, by referring to **the life** that is associated with him. In this case it seems to describe the **life** that Jesus embodies rather than the **life** that he gives. Alternate translation: "Jesus" or "Jesus, who is life"

See: Metonymy

1 John 1:2 (#3)

"we have seen {it}," - **"we are testifying {to it},"** -
"we are announcing" - **"to us"**

John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to the earthly life of Jesus, so the pronouns **we** and **us** are exclusive in this verse.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

1 John 1:2 (#4)

"to you"

As the General Introduction explains, John is writing this letter to believers in various churches, and so the pronouns **you**, "your," and "yourselves" are plural throughout the entire letter.

See: Forms of You

1 John 1:2 (#5)

"we have seen {it}, and we are testifying {to it}"

If you decided to use personal pronouns in [1:1](#), you could use them in these cases as well. Alternate translation: "we have seen him, and we are testifying that we saw him"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 1:2 (#6)

"we are testifying {to it}, and we are announcing to you"

These two phrases mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and express the emphasis in another way, as UST does. Alternate translation: "we are enthusiastically telling you about"

See: Parallelism

1 John 1:2 (#7)

"the eternal life"

As earlier in the verse, John is speaking of Jesus by referring to the **life** that is associated with him.

Alternate translation: "Jesus, the eternal life" or "Jesus, the one who has always been alive,"

See: Metonymy

1 John 1:2 (#8)

"the Father"

The title **the Father** is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "God the Father"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 1:2 (#9)

"and appeared to us"

See how you translated **appeared** earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: "and came right to us" or "and was made visible to us" or "and whom God made visible to us"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 1:3 (#1)

"what we have seen and heard, we declare also to you, so that you also may have fellowship with us"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could rearrange the parts of this section. You could move the clause beginning with **so that you also** to the beginning of the verse, since that clause gives the reason for the action that the rest of the verse describes. As the General Notes to this chapter suggest, it may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "So that you also may have fellowship with us, we are declaring to you what we have seen and heard"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 1:3 (#2)

"what we have seen and heard"

John is referring implicitly to the way that he and the other eyewitnesses had **seen and heard** Jesus when he was alive on earth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could include this information, as in the UST. Alternate translation: "what we saw and heard from Jesus when he was alive on earth"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 1:3 (#3)

"we have seen and heard, we declare" - "us"

John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to the earthly life of Jesus, so the pronouns **we** and **us** are exclusive.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

1 John 1:3 (#4)

"you also may have fellowship with us." - "our fellowship {is} with the Father and with his Son"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **fellowship**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "so that you could be close friends with us ... we are all close friends with God the Father and with his Son"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 1:3 (#5)

"our fellowship {is} with"

The word **our** here is likely inclusive, since John is writing to fellow believers. So if your language marks that distinction, you should translate the term as inclusive. Even if your language does not mark that distinction, you can indicate in your translation that the term applies both to John and to the people to whom he is writing. Alternate translation: "we are all close friends with"

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

1 John 1:3 (#6)

"the Father" - "his Son"

Father and **Son** are important titles. Alternate translation: "God the Father ... his Son"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 1:4 (#1)

"we are writing these things"

As the General Notes to this chapter explain, here John is formally stating his purpose for writing. If you decided in [1:1](#) that it would be more natural in your language for him to refer to himself with a singular pronoun in such a context, you could do the same thing here. Alternate translation: "I, John, am writing these things"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 1:4 (#2)

"we" - "our"

If you use the plural pronoun **we** here, it would be exclusive, since John is speaking of himself and the other eyewitnesses on whose behalf he is writing. However, the term **our** in the second clause is likely inclusive, since John probably means that he wants both himself and his readers to have **joy** in the shared fellowship with one another and with the Father and the Son whom he describes in the previous verse.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

1 John 1:4 (#3)

"our joy"

See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to follow the reading of ULT and say **our joy** or to follow the reading of some other versions and say "your joy."

See: Textual Variants

1 John 1:4 (#4)

"our joy"

If you follow the variant reading "your joy" here instead of **our joy**, the word "your" would be plural, as in the rest of this letter, since it would refer to a group of believers.

See: Forms of You

1 John 1:4 (#5)

"so that our joy may be fulfilled"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **joy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "so that we will be completely happy"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 1:4 (#6)

"so that our joy may be fulfilled"

If your language does not use this passive form, you can express this with an active form. Alternate translation: "so that we will be completely happy"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 1:4 (#7)

"so that our joy may be fulfilled"

The implications are that John and his readers will be completely happy together if his readers recognize the truth of what he is writing to them about. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly, as UST does.

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 1:5 (#1)

""

If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 5. Suggested heading: "Sin Prevents Fellowship with God"

See:

1 John 1:5 (#2)

"we have heard"

The pronoun **we** is exclusive, since John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses to the earthly life of Jesus.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

1 John 1:5 (#3)

"from him"

The pronoun **him** in this first instance in the verse refers to Jesus, since John is speaking of the message that he and the other eyewitnesses heard from Jesus. Alternate translation: "from Jesus"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 1:5 (#4)

"God is light, and darkness is not in him at all"

These two phrases mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "God is entirely light" or, if you represent these metaphors plainly (See: next two notes), "God is completely holy"

See: Parallelism

1 John 1:5 (#5)

"God is light"

John often uses **light** in this letter to mean what is holy, right, and good. Here, in reference to God, it indicates holiness. Alternate translation: "God is holy"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:5 (#6)

"darkness is not in him at all"

John often uses the word **darkness** in this letter to mean what is evil. Alternate translation: "God is not evil at all"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:5 (#7)

"darkness is not in him at all"

John is using a double negative in Greek for emphasis. In English it would translate as "darkness is not in him not at all." In Greek, the second negative does not cancel the first negative to create a positive meaning. In English, the meaning would inaccurately be positive, which is why ULT uses only one negative and says "darkness is not in him at all." But if your language

uses double negatives for emphasis that do not cancel one another, it would be appropriate to use that construction in your translation.

See: Double Negatives

1 John 1:5 (#8)

"in him"

In this second instance in the verse, the pronoun **him** refers to God. Alternate translation: "in God"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 1:6 (#1)

"If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we are lying and we are not doing the truth"

John is using a hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the importance of consistency between their words and their actions. Alternate translation: "Suppose we say that we have fellowship with him, but we walk in darkness. Then we are lying and are not doing the truth"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 1:6 (#2)

"If we say that we have fellowship with him"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for **fellowship**, see how you expressed this idea in [1:3](#). Alternate translation: "If we say that we are close friends with God"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 1:6 (#3)

"with him"

Here, **him** refers back to "God" in the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could repeat the word "God" here. Alternate translation: "with God"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 1:6 (#4)

"and"

John is using the word **and** here to introduce the contrast of a person claiming to have fellowship with God and behaving differently than that. In your translation, indicate this contrast in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: "but"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

1 John 1:6 (#5)

"walk in the darkness"

John is using the word **walk** to mean how a person lives and behaves. Alternate translation: "do what is evil"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:6 (#6)

"walk in the darkness"

As in [1:5](#), John is using the word **darkness** to mean evil. Alternate translation: "do what is evil"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:6 (#7)

"we are lying and we are not doing the truth"

These two phrases mean similar things. It is likely that John is using repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "we are really not truthful at all"

See: Parallelism

1 John 1:6 (#8)

"we are not doing the truth"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "we are not living according to God's true message"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 1:7 (#1)

"But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another"

John is using another hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the value and benefits of living a life that is holy, as God is holy. Alternate translation: "But suppose we walk in the light as he is in the light. Then we have fellowship with one another"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 1:7 (#2)

"we walk in the light"

John is using the word **walk** to mean how a person lives and behaves. Alternate translation: "we do what is right"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:7 (#3)

"we walk in the light"

As in 1:5, John is using the word **light** to mean what is holy, right, and good. Alternate translation: "we do what is holy" or "we do what is right"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:7 (#4)

"as he is in the light"

Here the pronoun **he** refers to God. Alternate translation: "as God is in the light"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 1:7 (#5)

"as he is in the light"

John is using the word **light** here to refer to God's holiness. Alternate translation: "as God is holy"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:7 (#6)

"we have fellowship with one another"

If your language does not use an abstract noun for **fellowship**, see how you expressed this idea in 1:3. Alternate translation: "then we are close friends with one another"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 1:7 (#7)

"the blood of Jesus"

John is using the word **blood** here to refer to the sacrificial death of Jesus by association with the **blood** that Jesus shed when he died for our sins. Alternate translation: "the sacrificial death of Jesus"

See: Metonymy

1 John 1:7 (#8)

"of Jesus his Son"

Son is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 1:7 (#9)

"cleanses us from all sin"

John is speaking of **sin** as if it made a person dirty and of the **blood** of Jesus as if it made a person clean. Alternate translation: "takes away all of our sin"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:8 (#1)

"If we say that we have no sin, we are leading ourselves astray, and the truth is not in us"

John is using another hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the importance of consistency between their words and their actions. Alternate translation: "Suppose we say that we have no sin. Then we are leading ourselves astray, and the truth is not in us"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 1:8 (#2)**"we are leading ourselves astray"**

John speaks of those who say this as if they were guides who were leading people—themselves, actually—in the wrong direction. Alternate translation: "we are deceiving ourselves"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:8 (#3)**"the truth is not in us"**

John speaks of the **truth** as if it were an object that could be inside believers. Alternate translation: "we do not believe that what God says is true"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:8 (#4)**"the truth is not in us"**

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: "we do not believe that what God says is true"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 1:9 (#1)**"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous"**

John is using another hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the value and benefits of living in holiness. Alternate translation: "Suppose we confess our sins. Then he is faithful and righteous"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 1:9 (#2)**"If we confess our sins"**

Part of confessing sin to God is rejecting them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state

that explicitly. Alternate translation: "If we confess our sins to God and turn away from them"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 1:9 (#3)**"he is faithful" - "that he should forgive"**

The pronoun **he** refers to God in both instances in this verse. Alternate translation: "God is faithful ... and God will forgive"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 1:9 (#4)**"that he should forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness"**

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. John is likely using them together for emphasis. If including both phrases would be confusing for your readers, you could combine them and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "and he will completely forgive us of what we have done wrong"

See: Parallelism

1 John 1:9 (#5)**"he should forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness"**

As in [1:7](#), John is speaking figuratively as if **sins** made a person physically dirty and of God's forgiveness as if it made a person physically clean. Alternate translation: "he should not hold against us anything that we have done wrong"

See: Metaphor

1 John 1:9 (#6)**"all unrighteousness"**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **unrighteousness** with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: "anything that we have done wrong"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 1:10 (#1)

"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar"

John is using another hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the serious implications of not living in holiness. Alternate translation: "Suppose we say that we have not sinned. Then we are calling God a liar"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 1:10 (#2)

"him" - "his"

The pronouns **him** and **his** refer to God in this verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use that here. Alternate translation: "God ... God's"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 1:10 (#3)

"we make him a liar"

Be sure that it is clear in your translation that God would not actually be a **liar** in this case. Rather, a person who claimed to be without sin would be calling God a liar, since God has said that everyone is a sinner. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "that is the same as calling God a liar, because God has said that we have all sinned"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 1:10 (#4)

"his word is not in us"

John is using the term **word** here to mean what God has said by using words. Alternate translation: "we do not believe what God has said"

See: Metonymy

1 John 1:10 (#5)

"his word is not in us"

John is speaking of God's **word** here as if it were an object that could be inside believers. (He also spoke of "truth" in this way in [1:8](#).) Alternate translation: "we do not believe what God has said"

See: Metaphor

1 John - Chapter 2 Introduction*Structure and Formatting*

6. Genuine believers obey God and love one another (2:1–17, continuing from 1:5)
7. It is false teaching to deny that Jesus is the Messiah (2:18–2:27)
8. Genuine children of God do not sin (2:28–29, continues through 3:10)

In order to show that John is writing something like poetry in [2:12–14](#), some translations set the statements in those verses farther to the right than the rest of the text, and they begin a new line at the start of each statement.

*Special Concepts in this Chapter***Antichrist**

In [2:18](#) and [2:22](#), John writes both about a specific person called the Antichrist and about many people who will be "antichrists." The word "antichrist" means "opposed to Christ." The Antichrist is a person who will come just before the return of Jesus and imitate Jesus' work, but he will do that for evil purposes. Before that person comes, there will be many other people who work against Christ. They too are called "antichrists," but as a description rather than as a name. (See: Antichrist and Lastday and Evil)

Important Textual Issues in this Chapter

In [2:20](#), some ancient manuscripts read "you all know," and that is the reading that ULT follows. However, other ancient manuscripts read "you know all things." It seems more likely, based on everything else in the letter, that "you all know" is the correct original reading, since John is countering the claim of false teachers to know more than other believers. The reading "you know all things" seems to have arisen because copyists felt a need to have an object for the verb "know." Nevertheless, if a translation of the Bible already

exists in your region, consider using whichever reading is found in that version. If a translation does not already exist, we recommend that you follow the reading in the ULT text. (See: Textual Variants)

1 John 2:1 (#1)

"My little children"

Here and in several other places in the book, John uses the diminutive form of the word **children** as an affectionate form of address. The ULT shows this by adding the word **little**. If your language has diminutive forms, you may wish to use one here. You could also express the meaning of the diminutive as a term of endearment. Alternate translation: "My dear children"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:1 (#2)

"My little children"

John is using the word **children** to describe the believers to whom he is writing, even though they are adults. They are under his spiritual care, and so he regards them in that sense as if they were his own children. You could translate this plainly, or you could represent the metaphor as a simile, as UST does. Alternate translation: "You dear believers who are under my care"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:1 (#3)

"I am writing these things"

Here, **these things** refers generally to everything that John has written about in the letter so far. Alternate translation: "I am writing this letter"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:1 (#4)

"And"

The word **And** here introduces a contrast between what John hopes to achieve by writing, that these believers will not sin, and what might happen, that

one of them might sin. Alternate translation: "However,"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

1 John 2:1 (#5)

"if anyone would sin, we have an advocate with the Father"

John is describing a hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: "suppose someone does sin. Then we have an advocate with the Father"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 2:1 (#6)

"we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"

John assumes that his readers will know that an **advocate** is someone who takes a person's side and pleads on his behalf. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "Jesus Christ the righteous will take our side and ask God the Father to forgive us"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:1 (#7)

"the Father"

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "God the Father"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 2:1 (#8)

"the righteous"

John is using the adjective **righteous** as a noun in order to indicate a specific type of person. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "the one who is righteous"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 2:2 (#1)**"he"**

The pronoun **he** here refers to Jesus, the antecedent in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Jesus"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:2 (#2)

"he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world"

The abstract noun **propitiation** refers to something that someone does for someone else or gives to someone else so that he will no longer be angry. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this term by translating it with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "because of Jesus, God is no longer angry about our sins, and not only about ours, but also about those of the whole world"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 2:2 (#3)

"the whole world"

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it refers to the people living in the world. Alternate translation: "everyone in the world"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:2 (#4)

"and not for ours only, but also for the whole world"

John leaves out the word for "sins" in these clauses because it is understood from the previous clause. If it would be helpful in your language, you could include the missing word. Alternate translation: "and not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 2:3 (#1)

"in this we know that we have known him, if we keep his commandments"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "if we obey what he has commanded, then we can be assured that we have a close relationship with him"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 2:3 (#2)

"in this we know that we have known him, if we keep his commandments"

If your language would not use a conditional statement with **if** for something that is true, you could express the same idea using a word like "by" or another way. Alternate translation: "there is a way to be sure that we truly know God. This is by obeying his commandments"

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

1 John 2:3 (#3)

"in this we know"

John uses the idiomatic expression **in this we know** many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "this is how we know"

See: Idiom

1 John 2:3 (#4)

"in this"

The pronoun **this** refers to the next thing that John says, that is, **if we keep his commandments**. Use a natural way in your language to make this clear. Alternate translation: "this is how"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:3 (#5)

"we know that we have known him"

John is using the word **know** in two different senses here. See the discussion of the word **know** in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. If your language has different words for these different senses, it would be appropriate to use them here. Alternate translation: "we can be assured that we have a close relationship with him"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:3 (#6)

"him," - "his"

In this verse, the pronouns **him** and **his** refer to God, the one who has given the commandments that people must obey. Alternate translation: "God ... God's"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:3 (#7)

"if we keep his commandments"

Here, **keep** is an idiom that means "obey." Alternate translation: "if we obey what he has commanded"

See: Idiom

1 John 2:3 (#8)

"if we keep his commandments"

If it would be more natural in your language, you could put this phrase first, as in the UST.

See: Information Structure

1 John 2:4 (#1)

"The one who says, "I know him," and is not keeping his commandments is a liar"

John is describing a hypothetical situation in order to challenge his readers. Alternate translation: "Suppose someone says, 'I have a close relationship with God,' but he does not obey what God has commanded. Then that person is a liar"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 2:4 (#2)

"The one who says"

By **one**, John does not have a specific person in mind. He means anyone who says this. Alternate translation: "Anyone who says" or "The person who says"

See: Generic Noun Phrases

1 John 2:4 (#3)

"I know him"

As in the second instance in [2:3](#), John is using the word **know** in the sense of knowing someone by personal experience. Alternate translation: "I am living in close relationship with God"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:4 (#4)

"him," - "his"

In this verse, the pronouns **him** and **his** refer to God, the one who has given the commandments that people must obey. Alternate translation: "God ... God's"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:4 (#5)

"and"

John is using the word **and** to introduce a contrast between what such a person might say and what his conduct actually indicates to be true. Alternate translation: "but"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

1 John 2:4 (#6)

"is not keeping"

In this instance, the word **keep** is an idiom that means "obey." Alternate translation: "does not obey" or "disobeys"

See: Idiom

1 John 2:4 (#7)**"is a liar, and the truth is not in this one"**

These two phrases mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "is certainly not speaking the truth"

See: Parallelism

1 John 2:4 (#8)**"and the truth is not in this one"**

John is speaking of the **truth** as if it were an object that could be inside someone. See how you translated a similar expression in [1:8](#). Alternate translation: "and such a person is not speaking the truth"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:4 (#9)**"and the truth is not in this one"**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **truth** with an adjective such as "true." Alternate translation: "and what such a person says is not true"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 2:5 (#1)**"But"**

This sentence makes a contrast by saying in a positive way what the previous sentence said in a negative way. Indicate this contrast in a natural way in your language. Alternate translation: "On the other hand,"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

1 John 2:5 (#2)**"But whoever keeps his word, in this one truly the love of God has been perfected"**

John is suggesting another hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: "But suppose someone keeps his word. Then the love of God truly has been perfected in that person."

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 2:5 (#3)**"keeps his word"**

John is using the term **word** to mean what God has commanded by using words. Alternate translation: "obeys God's commandments"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:5 (#4)**"keeps his word"**

In this instance, the word **keep** is an idiom that means "obey." Alternate translation: "obeys God's commandments"

See: Idiom

1 John 2:5 (#5)**"his" - "him"**

The pronouns **his** and **him** in this verse refer to God. Alternate translation: "God's ... God"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:5 (#6)**"in this one truly the love of God has been perfected"**

The phrase **the love of God** could mean one of two things. (1) It could refer to a person loving God. Alternate translation: "that person indeed loves God completely" (2) It could refer to God loving people. Alternate translation: "God's love has completely achieved its purpose in that person's life"

See: Possession

1 John 2:5 (#7)

"in this one truly the love of God has been perfected"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could restate the passive verbal form **has been perfected** with an active verbal form in its place. The person or thing doing the action will depend on how you decide to translate the phrase **the love of God**. Alternate translation: "that person indeed loves God completely" or "God's love has completely achieved its purpose in that person's life"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 2:5 (#8)

"In this we know that we are in him"

The word **this** could be referring to (1) what John is about to say in verse 6, or (2) what John has just said in verse 5, or (3) both. If your language allows it, you could choose option (3) since both verses are talking about completely obeying God, but most languages will need to choose one or the other.

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:5 (#9)

"we are in him"

John is speaking as if believers could be inside of God. This expression describes having a close relationship with God. Alternate translation: "we are living in fellowship with God"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:5–6 (#1)

"In this we know that we are in him" - "the one saying he remains in him ought, just as that one walked, also to walk himself"

If it would be a more natural order in your language, you could move the last sentence of verse 5 to the end of verse 6. You would then present the combined verses as 5–6. Alternate translation: "The one saying he remains in him ought, just as that one walked, also to walk himself. That is how we know that we are in him."

See: Verse Bridges

1 John 2:6 (#1)

"he remains in him"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to this book. Here to **remain in** God means very much the same thing as to have "fellowship with God" in [1:3](#) and [1:6](#) and to "be in" God in [2:5](#). John is repeating the same idea in different ways. Alternate translation: "he has close fellowship with God" or "he shares life with God"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:6 (#1)

"he remains in him"

John once again speaks as if believers could be inside of God. Alternate translation: "he is close friends with God" or "he shares life with God"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:6 (#2)

"in him"

The pronoun **him** refers to God. Alternate translation: "in God"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:6 (#3)

"ought, just as that one walked, also to walk himself"

As in [1:6](#) and [1:7](#), John is using the word **walk** to mean how a person lives and behaves. Alternate translation: "must live as Jesus lived" or "must obey God just as Jesus did"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:6 (#4)

"ought, just as that one walked, also to walk himself"

John is using the phrase **just as that one walked** specifically to refer to the way that Jesus behaved when he lived on earth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "must walk in the same way as Jesus walked when he was living on earth"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:6 (#5)

"that one"

John is using the demonstrative pronoun **that one** to refer to Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:7 (#1)

"Beloved"

Beloved is another term of affection by which John addresses the believers to whom he is writing. It involves using the adjective "beloved" as a noun in order to indicate a specific group of people. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "You people whom I love" or "My dear friends"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 2:7 (#2)

""

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the time when the people to whom he is writing first believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "ever since you first believed in Jesus"

See: Idiom

1 John 2:7 (#3)

"the word that you heard"

John is using **word** to refer to the message that these believers heard, which was communicated through words. Alternate translation: "the message that you heard"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:7 (#4)

"the word that you heard"

The implication is that the specific **word** or message that John is describing is the commandment Jesus gave to believers that they should love one another. See the Gospel of John [13:34](#) and [15:12](#). John indicates this explicitly in this letter in [3:23](#) and [4:21](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly at this point as well. Alternate translation: "the commandment Jesus gave that we should love one another"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:8 (#1)

"Again"

John is using the term **Again** in the sense of "Looking at this again from another perspective." Alternate translation: "On the other hand"

See: Idiom

1 John 2:8 (#2)

"I am writing a new commandment to you"

John is referring to the same **commandment** as in [2:7](#), the commandment that Jesus gave to love one another, which the believers have had all along. So he does not mean that he is now writing a **new** and different commandment, but rather that this same commandment, which he called "old" there, can also be considered **new** in a certain sense. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly which **commandment** John is referring to, and you could give the likely reason why it can be considered **new** as well as "old." Alternate translation: "the commandment that I am writing to you, to love one another, is also, in a sense, a new commandment, because it is characteristic of a new way of life"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:8 (#3)

"which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is going away, and the true light is already shining"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these clauses, since the second clause gives the reason for the result that the first clause describes. It may also be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "Because the darkness is going away and the true light is already shining, this commandment is true in Jesus and in you"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 2:8 (#4)

"which is true in him and in you"

Since Jesus consistently obeyed the commandment to love, it is likely that John is emphasizing that believers are doing the same thing themselves. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could bring out this implicit emphasis in your translation. It may also be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "Jesus truly obeyed this commandment, and you are now truly obeying it as well"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:8 (#5)

"which is true in him and in you"

John is speaking as if this commandment were **true** inside of Jesus and these believers. Alternate translation, as a new sentence: "Jesus truly obeyed this commandment, and you are now truly obeying it as well"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:8 (#6)

"him"

The pronoun **him** refers to Jesus. John is using him as the supreme example of loving others. Alternate translation: "Jesus"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:8 (#7)

"the darkness is going away, and the true light is already shining"

As in [1:5](#), John is using the word **darkness** to represent evil and the word **light** to represent what is holy, right, and good. The **shining** of the light represents its influence on people. Alternate translation: "what is evil is going away and people are able to see what is genuinely good more and more"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:8 (#8)

"the true light"

Since John calls God "the True One" in [5:20](#), he may be referring to God's goodness and holiness when he says **the true light**. Alternate translation: "the goodness of God" or "the holiness of God"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:9 (#1)

"The one saying he is in the light and hating his brother is in the darkness until now"

John is suggesting a further hypothetical situation in order to challenge his readers. Alternate translation: "Suppose someone says that he is in the light, but he hates his brother. That person is actually still in the darkness."

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 2:9 (#2)

"he is in the light"

As in [1:5](#) and [2:8](#), John is using the word **light** to mean what is holy, right, and good. Alternate translation: "he does what is right"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:9 (#3)

"and"

John is using the word **and** here to introduce a contrast between what such a person might say and what his conduct actually indicates to be true. Alternate translation: "but"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

1 John 2:9 (#4)

"his brother"

John is using the term **brother** to mean someone who shares the same faith. Alternate translation: "a fellow believer"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:9 (#5)

"his brother"

Although the term **brother** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "a fellow believer"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

1 John 2:9 (#6)

"his brother"

The phrase **his brother** represents any fellow believer in general, not one particular fellow believer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural expression. See the UST.

See: Generic Noun Phrases

1 John 2:9 (#7)

"is in the darkness"

As in 1:5, John is using the word **darkness** to mean what is wrong or evil. Alternate translation: "is doing what is wrong"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:10 (#1)

"The one loving his brother remains in the light"

John is suggesting a further hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: "Suppose someone does love his fellow believers. Then he is genuinely doing what is right"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 2:10 (#2)

"his brother"

See how you translated **his brother** in 2:9. Alternate translation: "each fellow believer"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:10 (#3)

"his brother"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this term by translating this in the plural, since John is speaking of loving all believers. Alternate translation: "each of his brothers"

See: Generic Noun Phrases

1 John 2:10 (#4)

"remains in the light"

John is using the word **light** to mean what is holy, right, and good. Alternate translation: "is genuinely doing what is right"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:10 (#5)

"remains in the light"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the word seems to describe behavior that is recognized to be genuine because it is consistent. Alternate translation: "is genuinely doing what is right"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:10 (#6)

"a stumbling block is not in him"

John is using the term **stumbling block**, which means something that a person would trip over, to mean something that would cause a person to sin. Alternate translation: "he has no reason to sin" or "nothing will cause him to sin"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:10 (#7)

"a stumbling block is not in him"

John speaks of this **stumbling block** being **in** or inside a person because it represents the hatred for a fellow believer that he describes in [2:9](#). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this explicitly. Alternate translation: "he has no hatred inside of him that will cause him to sin"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:11 (#1)

"his brother"

See how you translated **his brother** in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: "a fellow believer"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:11 (#2)

"is in the darkness and walks in the darkness"

These two phrases mean similar things. It is likely that John is using repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases and express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: "is living in complete darkness"

See: Parallelism

1 John 2:11 (#3)

"is in the darkness and walks in the darkness"

As in [1:5](#), John is using the word **darkness** to mean what is wrong or evil. Alternate translation: "thinks in a way that is evil and acts in a way that is evil"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:11 (#4)

"walks in the darkness"

John is using the word **walks** to mean how a person lives and behaves. Alternate translation: "conducts his life in wrong ways"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:11 (#5)

"he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "because the darkness has blinded his eyes, he does not know where he is going"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 2:11 (#6)

"he does not know where he is going"

This is a continuation of the metaphor of walking as a figurative description of how a person lives and behaves. Alternate translation: "he does not know the right way to live"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:11 (#7)

"because the darkness has blinded his eyes"

John is using blindness to mean a loss of moral sense. Alternate translation: "because his evil thoughts are keeping him from knowing right and wrong"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:12 (#1)

"little children"

The term **little children** here could refer to: (1) all of the believers to whom John is writing. This is the way that he uses this term in [2:1](#) and in several other places in this letter. See the explanation of it

in two of the notes to [2:1](#). If that is the sense, then John divides the believers into only two groups in verses 12–14, the older ones and the younger ones. See the UST. Or it could refer to: (2) only some of the believers. In that case, John is addressing the believers in three different groups in verses 12–14, and this group would represent new believers, that is, those who have very recently put their faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. This would also apply to the similar term in [2:14](#). Alternate translation: “new believers”

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:12 (#2)

“because”

The word translated as **because** here could also be translated as “that.” This also applies to the same phrase that is used several times in verses 13 and 14. In other words, what follows this word could be: (1) the reason that John is writing. Alternate translation: “since” (2) the content that John wants to communicate. Alternate translation: “that”

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:12 (#3)

“your sins have been forgiven”

If your language does not use this passive form, you can express this with an active form, and you can state who has done the action. Alternate translation: “God has forgiven your sins”

See: Active or Passive

1 John 2:12 (#4)

“because of his name”

The pronoun **his** refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: “because of the name of Jesus”

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:12 (#5)

“because of his name”

John is using the **name** of Jesus to represent who Jesus is and what he has done. Alternate translation: “on account of Jesus”

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:13 (#1)

“fathers”

The term **fathers** here is likely a figurative description of one part of the believers. In that case, it could mean either: (1) mature believers or (2) church leaders

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:13 (#2)

“you know”

As in the second usage in [2:4](#), John is using the word **know** in the sense of knowing a person. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: “you know very well”

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:13 (#3)

“the one {who is} from the beginning”

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it describes Jesus or possibly God the Father. John refers to Jesus with these same words at the beginning of this letter and in a similar way in John 1:1–2. Alternate translation: “him who has always existed” or “Jesus, who has always existed”

See: Idiom

1 John 2:13 (#4)

“young men”

Here, **young men** is likely a figurative description of a part of the group of believers. It probably refers to people who have become strong in their faith, even if they are not yet as mature as those in the group of **fathers**, since **young men** are in the time of life when they are strong and vigorous. Alternate translation: “strong believers”

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:13 (#5)

"young men"

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is likely using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "strong believers"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

1 John 2:13 (#6)

"you have triumphed over the evil one"

John speaks of these strong believers refusing to do what the devil wants them to do as if they had defeated him in a struggle. Alternate translation: "you refuse to do what the evil one wants you to do"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:13 (#7)

"the evil one"

John is using the adjective **evil** as a noun in order to indicate a specific being. ULT adds **one** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "the one who is evil"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 2:13 (#8)

"the evil one"

John is speaking of Satan, also known as the devil, by association with his characteristic of being **evil**. Alternate translation: "the devil" or "Satan"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:14 (#1)

"I have written to you, young children, because you know the Father"

This sentence is similar to the sentence in [2:12](#). The next two sentences in this verse mean basically the same thing as the two sentences in [2:13](#). John is using these repetitions for emphasis and for poetic effect. For those reasons, it would be appropriate to translate all of these sentences separately and not combine them with the ones in the previous two verses, even if you combine parallel statements with similar meanings elsewhere in the book.

See: Parallelism

1 John 2:14 (#2)

"I have written to you, young children, because you know the Father"

In some Bibles, this sentence comes at the end of [2:13](#) instead of at the beginning of this verse. The verse divisions were introduced to the Bible many centuries after its books were written, and their purpose is only to help readers find things easily. So the placement of this sentence, either at the start of this verse or at the end of the previous one, does not create any significant difference in meaning. If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using the placement in that version. If not, we recommend that you follow the placement in the ULT text.

See: Textual Variants

1 John 2:14 (#3)

"I have written to you"

By saying **I have written**, John is expressing himself slightly differently than in [2:12-13](#), where he says, "I am writing." The difference is likely only for emphasis, as John looks back at what he has just said and indicates that he is saying it again. However, if your language distinguishes between the present and present perfect tenses, it would be appropriate to show the difference in your translation.

See: Verbs

1 John 2:14 (#4)

"young children"

While **young children** is a different term from "little children" in [2:12](#), it means the same thing. See how you translated the similar term there. Alternate translation: "who are like my own children" or "new believers"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:14 (#5)

"you know"

As in [2:4](#), John is using the word **know** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there and in [2:13](#). Alternate translation: "you are very close with"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:14 (#6)

"the Father"

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "God the Father"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 2:14 (#7)

"fathers"

The term **fathers** likely has the same figurative meaning as in [2:13](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: (1) "mature believers" or (2) "church leaders"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:14 (#8)

"you know"

As in [2:4](#), [2:13](#), and earlier in this verse, John is using the word **know** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "you are very close with"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:14 (#9)

"the one {who is} from the beginning"

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it describes Jesus or possibly God the Father. John refers to Jesus with these same words at the beginning of this letter, in [2:13](#), and in a similar way in John 1:1–2. Alternate translation: "him who has always existed" or "Jesus, who has always existed"

See: Idiom

1 John 2:14 (#10)

"young men"

The term **young men** likely has the same figurative meaning here as in [2:13](#). Alternate translation: "strong believers"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:14 (#11)

"young men"

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is likely using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "strong believers"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

1 John 2:14 (#12)

"you are strong"

John is using the word **strong** not literally to describe believers' physical strength, but to describe their faithfulness to Jesus. Alternate translation: "you are faithful to Jesus"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:14 (#13)

"the word of God remains in you"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the word seems to describe behavior that is recognized to be genuine because it is consistent. Alternate translation: "you genuinely obey what God has commanded"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:14 (#14)**"the word of God"**

John is using the term **word** to refer to what God has commanded using words. Alternate translation: "what God has commanded"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:14 (#15)**"you have triumphed over the evil one"**

John speaks of these strong believers refusing to do what the devil wants them to do as if they had defeated him in a struggle. Alternate translation: "you have refused to do what the devil wants you to do"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:14 (#16)**"the evil one"**

John is using the adjective **evil** as a noun in order to indicate a specific being. ULT adds **one** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "the one who is evil"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 2:14 (#17)**"the evil one"**

John is speaking of the devil by association with his characteristic of being **evil**. Alternate translation: "the devil" or "Satan"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:15 (#1)**"Do not love the world nor the things in the world"**

In the second phrase in this sentence, John leaves out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the first phrase.

Alternate translation: "Do not love the world, and do not love any of the things that are in the world"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 2:15 (#2)**"Do not love the world"**

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it refers to the system of values that people share who do not honor God. This system is necessarily contrary to the values that godly people have. Alternate translation: "Do not share the ungodly value system of the people who do not honor God"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:15 (#3)**"nor the things in the world"**

This phrase is more specific than the preceding one. Here, John warns believers against loving the things that are part of our material world. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "No, do not love the things that ungodly people want to get for themselves"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:15 (#4)**"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"**

John is describing a hypothetical situation in order to challenge his readers. Alternate translation: "Suppose someone loves the world. Then the love of the Father is not in him"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 2:15 (#5)**"the love of the Father is not in him"**

The phrase **the love of the Father** could mean: (1) the love that a person has for God the Father. Alternate translation: "that person does not really love God the Father" or (2) the love that God has for people. Alternate translation: "God the Father's love is not genuinely at work in that person"

See: Possession

1 John 2:15 (#6)

"**of the Father**"

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "of God the Father"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 2:16 (#1)

"**For**"

In this verse, John is giving the reason why the previous sentence is true. If it would be helpful in your language, you could put this reason before that statement of result by combining this verse and the previous one into a verse bridge. In order to create a verse bridge, you could begin this verse with "Since" instead of **For**; you could end it with a comma instead of a period; and you could make it the beginning of the second sentence in the previous verse, putting it before "if anyone loves the world."

See: Verse Bridges

1 John 2:16 (#2)

"**everything that {is} in the world**"

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:15](#). Alternate translation: "everything that characterizes the ungodly value system of the people who do not honor God"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:16 (#3)

"**the lust of the flesh**"

John is using the term **flesh** to mean the physical human body, which is made of **flesh**. Alternate translation: "the strong desire to have sinful physical pleasure"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:16 (#4)

"**the lust of the eyes**"

John is using the term **eyes** to mean the ability to see. Alternate translation: "the strong desire to have the things that we see"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:16 (#5)

"**the arrogance of life**"

John is likely using the Greek term that ULT translates as **life** in one of its specific senses, to mean "possessions," as in [3:17](#). Alternate translation: "pride in one's possessions"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:16 (#6)

"**is not from the Father but is from the world**"

See how you translated the term **world** in [2:15](#). It has a similar meaning in this verse. Alternate translation: "does not represent how God the Father wants us to live, but instead comes from an ungodly value system"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:16 (#7)

"**the Father**"

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "God the Father"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 2:17 (#1)

"**the world**"

See how you translated the term **world** in [2:15](#). It has a similar meaning in this verse. Alternate translation: "the ungodly value system of the people who do not honor God"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:17 (#2)

"the world is going away"

John speaks of the **world** as if it were leaving.
Alternate translation: "the world is ending"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:17 (#3)

"and its desire"

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and its desire is also going away"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 2:17 (#4)

"its desire"

John is using the possessive form to show that the **world** is the source of this **desire** and gives it its character. Alternate translation: "the worldly desire" or "people's desire for the world" or "the desire that this system of values creates in people"

See: Possession

1 John 2:17 (#5)

"its desire"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this term by translating this in the plural, since John is referring to all of the different types of **desire** associated with the **world** that he described in [2:16](#). Alternate translation: "worldly desires" or "the desires that this system of values creates in people"

See: Generic Noun Phrases

1 John 2:17 (#6)

"remains to eternity"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the word refers to

continuing existence. Alternate translation: "will live forever"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:17 (#7)

"to eternity"

This is an idiom. Consider using an idiom in your language that has this meaning. Alternate translation: "forever"

See: Idiom

1 John 2:18 (#1)

""

If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 18. Suggested heading: "False Teaching and True Teaching"

See:

1 John 2:18 (#2)

"Young children"

Young children is the same term that John used in [2:14](#) that seems to be a stylistic variation of the term that he uses in [2:1](#) and [2:12](#), as well as in several other places in the book, to address all of the believers to whom he is writing. See how you translated this in those places. Alternate translation: "My dear children" or "You dear believers who are under my care"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:18 (#3)

"it is the last hour," - "it is the last hour"

John is using the term **hour** to refer a specific time. The expression **the last hour** refers specifically to the period of time at the end of earthly history just before Jesus returns. Alternate translation: "Jesus will return soon ... Jesus will return soon"

See: Idiom

1 John 2:18 (#4)

"antichrist is coming, indeed now many antichrists have come"

See the discussion of the terms **antichrist** and **antichrists** in the General Notes to this chapter.
Alternate translation: "someone is coming who will lead a great opposition to Jesus, already many people are opposing Jesus in that way now"

See: Translate Unknowns

1 John 2:19 (#1)

"They went out from us"

These people formerly met with the group of believers to whom John is writing. While they physically left the places where the believers met, John is also using the expression **went out** to mean that these people stopped being part of the group.
Alternate translation: "They left our group of believers in Jesus"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:19 (#2)

"but they were not from us." - "they are all not from us"

John is using the expression **from us** in a slightly different sense in these two instances than in the first instance that says, **They went out from us**. In the first instance, it means that these people left the group. In these instances, it means that they were never genuinely part of the group. Alternate translation: "but they were never genuinely part of our group ... none of them are genuinely part of our group"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:19 (#3)

"they were not from us"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly why John makes this claim.
Alternate translation: "they were never genuinely part of our group, because they did not actually believe in Jesus in the first place"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:19 (#4)

"For if they had been from us, they would have remained with us"

John is presenting a situation that is not real to help his readers recognize why the claim that he is making is true. Alternate translation: "We know that they were not genuinely part of our group, because they did not continue to participate in it"

See: Connect — Contrary to Fact Conditions

1 John 2:19 (#5)

"they would have remained with us"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the word seems to refer to continuing participation in a group.
Alternate translation: "they would have continued to participate in our group"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:19 (#6)

"but so that they would be made apparent that they are all not from us"

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous sentence. Alternate translation: "but they went out from us so that they would be revealed as not genuinely part of our group"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 2:19 (#7)

"so that they would be made apparent"

See the discussion of the term "appear" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here, the people were revealed as unbelievers when they left the group. If your language does not use passive forms, you can express this with an active form, and you can state what is doing the action. Alternate translation: "they left so that their actions would reveal"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 2:20 (#1)**"And"**

John is using the word **And** to introduce a contrast between the people who left the group and the remaining believers to whom he is writing. Alternate translation: "However,"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

1 John 2:20 (#2)**"you have an anointing from the Holy One"**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **anointing** with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "the Holy One has anointed you"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 2:20 (#3)**"you have an anointing from the Holy One"**

The word **anointing** refers to the practice, seen often in the Old Testament, of pouring oil on a person to set that person apart to serve God. If your readers would not be familiar with this practice, you could describe it specifically in your translation. Alternate translation: "the Holy One has poured oil on you to set you apart to serve him"

See: Translate Unknowns

1 John 2:20 (#4)**"you have an anointing from the Holy One"**

Here John is using **anointing** to refer to the Holy Spirit. Just as people poured oil on kings and priests to set them apart for service to God, God gives the Holy Spirit to believers to set them apart and equip them to serve God. John says specifically in [3:24](#) and [4:13](#) that God has given the Spirit to believers in this way. Alternate translation: "the Holy One has given you his Spirit"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:20 (#5)**"the Holy One"**

John is using the adjective **Holy** as a noun in order to indicate a specific person. ULT adds **One** to show this. John is referring specifically to God, and so ULT capitalizes both of these words to show that they are describing a divine person. Your language may allow you to use this adjective as a noun. If not, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "God, the One who is holy"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 2:20 (#6)**"you all know"**

See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to follow the reading of ULT and say **you all know** or to follow the reading of some other versions and say "you know all things."

See: Textual Variants

1 John 2:20 (#7)**"you all know"**

Based on what he says in the next verse, John likely means here that the believers to whom he is writing **all know** the truth. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "you all know the truth"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:21 (#1)**"I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it"**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this double negative by translating it as a positive statement. Since John then repeats the statement in positive form in the next phrase, you could make the connection to that phrase as an affirmation rather than as a contrast. Alternate translation: "I have written to you because you know the truth, yes, because you do know it"

See: Double Negatives

1 John 2:21 (#2)

"I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it"

If saying **I have not written to you** seems wrong or confusing in your language, you could move the negative to the next clause. Alternate translation: "I have written to you not because you do not know the truth, but because you do know the truth" or "I have written to you not to inform you of the truth, but I have written to you because you already know it"

See: Connect — Exception Clauses

1 John 2:21 (#3)

"the truth," - "from the truth"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **truth** with an adjective such as "true." Alternate translation: "what is true ... from what is true"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 2:21 (#4)

"the truth," - "from the truth"

John is likely referring to the teaching that believers have received from Jesus by association with the way that it is true. Alternate translation: "the true teaching that we received from Jesus ... from this true teaching"

See: Metonymy

1 John 2:21 (#5)

"and that every lie is not from the truth"

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: "and you know that every lie is not from the truth"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 2:21 (#6)

"every lie is not from the truth"

If it would be clearer in your language, you could make the subject of this phrase negative and the verb positive. Alternate translation: "no lie is from the truth"

See: Double Negatives

1 John 2:21 (#7)

"from the truth"

This second occurrence of **the truth** could refer to: (1) The same as the first occurrence. Alternate translation: "part of God's true message" (2) God, who is the source of all truth. Alternate translation: "from God, the One who is true"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:22 (#1)

"Who is the liar if not the one denying that Jesus is the Christ"

John is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question by translating his words as a statement or exclamation. Alternate translation: "Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Messiah is certainly a liar!"

See: Rhetorical Question

1 John 2:22 (#2)

"not the one denying that Jesus is the Christ"

For emphasis, John is using a double negative in Greek, specifically, a negative verb (**denies**) with a negative particle, "not." In English, it would come out as "the one who denies that Jesus is not the Christ." In Greek, the second negative does not cancel the first to create a positive meaning. But in English, the meaning would inaccurately be positive, which is why ULT uses only one negative. It leaves out "not" and says **the one denying that Jesus is the Christ**. However, if your language uses double negatives for emphasis that do not cancel one another, it would be appropriate to use that construction in your translation.

See: Double Negatives

1 John 2:22 (#3)

"This one is the antichrist"

John is not referring here to the ultimate **antichrist** who will appear at the end of earthly history. John does not have a specific person in view here. Rather, he is speaking generally of all people who oppose Christ. See how you translated the term **antichrist** in [2:18](#). Alternate translation: "Such a person is the enemy of Jesus"

See: Generic Noun Phrases

1 John 2:22 (#4)

"the one denying the Father and the Son"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate explicitly why John says this about these people. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "By denying that Jesus is the Messiah, he is denying both God the Father, who sent Jesus to be the Messiah, and Jesus his Son, whom he sent"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:22 (#5)

"the Father and the Son"

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. Alternate translation: "God the Father and Jesus his Son"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 2:23 (#1)

"Everyone denying the Son"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly what this means in light of what John says in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Everyone who denies that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:23 (#2)

"the Son" - "the Son"

Son is an important title for Jesus.

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 2:23 (#3)

"does not have the Father." - "also has the Father"

The language of possession that John is using actually indicates that such a person does or does not belong to God, rather than that God does or does not belong to such a person. Alternate translation: "does not belong to the Father ... belongs to the Father as well"

See: Possession

1 John 2:23 (#4)

"the Father." - "the Father"

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "God the Father ... God the Father"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 2:23 (#5)

"The one confessing the Son"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly what this means in light of what John says in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Everyone who truly believes and acknowledges publicly that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:24 (#1)

"You"

Here John turns from talking about people in general to giving direct instruction to his readers. He indicates this emphasis by beginning his instruction with **You**. Use a natural way to indicate this emphasis in your language. Alternate translation: "As for you"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:24 (#2)

"what you have heard" - "what you have heard"

John is referring implicitly to the teaching about Jesus that these believers **have heard**. Alternate translation: "the teaching you have heard ... the teaching you have heard"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:24 (#3)

"from the beginning." - "from the beginning"

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the time when the people to whom he is writing first believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "ever since you first believed in Jesus ... ever since you first believed in Jesus"

See: Idiom

1 John 2:24 (#4)

"let remain in you" - "remains in you"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In these instances, in reference to the teaching about Jesus, the word seems to refer to continuing belief in that teaching. Alternate translation: "continue to believe ... you continue to believe"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:24 (#5)

"If what you have heard from the beginning remains in you, you will also remain in the Son and in the Father"

John is describing a conditional situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: "As long as what you have heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will also remain in the Son and in the Father"

See: Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

1 John 2:24 (#6)

"you will also remain in the Son and in the Father"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "you will also continue to have a close relationship with the Son and with the Father"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:24 (#7)

"the Son" - "the Father"

Son and **Father** are important titles for Jesus and God, respectively. Alternate translation: "Jesus the Son of God ... God the Father"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 2:25 (#1)

"the promise that he promised to us"

John is using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have another way of expressing this. Alternate translation: "the promise that he made to us" or "what he promised us"

See: Poetry

1 John 2:25 (#2)

"he"

The pronoun **he** could refer in this context either to Jesus or to God the Father. However, it seems more likely that it refers to Jesus, since John has just talked in [2:22-23](#) about denying or confessing him, and it was Jesus who promised **eternal life** to everyone who believed in him. See, for example, the Gospel of John [3:36](#) and [6:47](#). Alternate translation: "Jesus"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:25 (#3)**"eternal life"**

John means more than physical **life**. This expression can indicate living forever in the presence of God after death, a commonly recognized meaning, but it can also indicate receiving power from God in this life to live in a new way. Alternate translation: "that we would have power to live a new life now and that we would live with him forever after we die"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:26 (#1)**"the ones leading you astray"**

John speaks of these people as if they were guides who were **leading** others in the wrong direction. This is a metaphor for their attempts to get the people to whom John is writing to believe things that are not true. Alternate translation: "those who are deceiving you" or "those who are trying to get you to believe things that are not true"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:26 (#2)**"the ones leading you astray"**

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly in what way these people are **leading** others **astray**. Alternate translation: "the people who are leading you astray about Jesus" or "the people who are lying to you about Jesus"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:27 (#1)**"And you," - "as"**

Here John states again the emphasis that he started in [2:24](#), continuing his direct instruction to his readers. Use a natural way to indicate this continuing emphasis in your language. Alternate translation: "Now as for you"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 2:27 (#2)**"the anointing that you received from him"**

See how you translated the word **anointing** in [2:20](#). Alternate translation: "the Spirit, whom Jesus has given you"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:27 (#3)**"from him" - "in him"**

Like the pronoun "he" in [2:25](#), the words **him** and **his** in this verse likely refer to Jesus. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the name instead of a pronoun. Alternate translation: "from Jesus ... in Jesus"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:27 (#4)**"remains in you"**

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to refer to the continuing presence of the Spirit with a believer. Alternate translation: "lives inside of you"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:27 (#5)**"and"**

John is using the word **and** to introduce the results of what he says in the previous part of this sentence. Alternate translation: "and so"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 2:27 (#6)**"his anointing"**

See how you translated **his anointing** earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: "his Spirit"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:27 (#7)**"about all things"**

This is a generalization for emphasis. If this is confusing in your language, you can be more specific. Alternate translation: "about the things that you need to know"

See: Hyperbole

1 John 2:27 (#8)**"it has taught you"**

Since the Spirit is a person, if you translate **anointing** as "Spirit" in this verse, it may also be more appropriate in your language to use a personal pronoun in this clause. Alternate translation: "he has taught you" or "the Spirit has taught you"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:27 (#9)**"remain in him"**

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "continue to have a close relationship with him"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:27 (#10)**"remain in him"**

John is speaking as if believers could be inside of God. Alternate translation: "continue to have a close relationship with him"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:28 (#1)

...

If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 28. Suggested heading: "Children of God"

See:

1 John 2:28 (#2)**"And now"**

John uses the expression **And now** to introduce a new part of the letter, in which he will talk about being children of God and about the return of Jesus. In your translation, you could use a word, phrase, or other method that is natural in your language for introducing a new topic.

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

1 John 2:28 (#3)**"little children"**

John readdresses the recipients as he begins a new section of the letter. See how you translated **little children** in [2:1](#). Alternate translation: "you dear believers who are under my care"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:28 (#4)**"remain in him"**

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, John seems to be using the expression in the same way that he has just used it in [2:27](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "continue to have a close relationship with him"

See: Metaphor

1 John 2:28 (#5)**"him," - "whenever he appears," - "by him" - "his"**

The pronouns **him**, **he**, and **his** refer to Jesus in this verse, since John speaks of his **coming** or return. Consider whether it might be helpful to your readers or more natural in your language to use the name "Jesus" in one or more of these instances.

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:28 (#6)**"whenever he appears"**

See the discussion of the term "appear" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the term could have either an active or a passive meaning. In either case, John is not saying that Jesus will only appear to return. He is saying that Jesus will return actually and physically. (1) If the meaning is active, John is speaking of the act of Jesus physically returning to earth. Alternate translation: "when Jesus returns" (2) If the meaning is passive, John is speaking of God revealing Jesus to the world as its true king. Alternate translation: "when Jesus is revealed" or "when God brings Jesus"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 2:28 (#7)**"we may have boldness and not be put to shame by him"**

These two phrases mean similar things. John is likely using the repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases into an emphatic expression. Alternate translation: "we may be completely confident at his coming"

See: Parallelism

1 John 2:28 (#8)**"we may have boldness"**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **boldness** with an adjective. Alternate translation: "we may be bold"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 2:28 (#9)**"not be put to shame by him"**

John is using the word **him**, meaning Jesus, to mean the presence of Jesus. Alternate translation: "we will not be ashamed to be in his presence"

See: Synecdoche

1 John 2:28 (#10)**"not be put to shame by him"**

If your language does not use this passive form, you can express this with an active form. Alternate translation: "we will not be ashamed to be in his presence"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 2:29 (#1)**"If you know that he is righteous"**

John is using the form of conditional possibility here, but he is stating something that is actually true. In Greek, this was a way of affirming that the part that follows this statement is also true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what John is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since you know that God is righteous"

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

1 John 2:29 (#2)**"he is" - "him"**

The pronouns **he** and **him** likely refer to God the Father, since in the next two verses John says that believers are "children of God," and he speaks in this verse of those who have **been begotten from him**. Alternate translation: "God is ... God"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 2:29 (#3)**"everyone doing righteousness"**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **righteousness** with an adjective such as "right." Alternate translation: "everyone who does what is right"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 2:29 (#4)

"everyone doing righteousness has been begotten from him"

If your language does not use this passive form, you can express this with an active form. Alternate translation: "God is the father of everyone who does what is right"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 2:29 (#5)

"everyone doing righteousness has been begotten from him"

John is speaking figuratively here. He says in [4:9](#) that Jesus is the "only-begotten" of God, since God is the actual Father of Jesus in a way that he is not the actual father of believers. God is the father of believers only in a spiritual sense. Alternate translation: "God is the spiritual father of everyone who does what is right"

See: Metaphor

1 John - Chapter 3 Introduction

Structure and Formatting

9. Genuine children of God do not sin ([3:1–10](#), continuing from [2:28](#))
10. Genuine believers help one another sacrificially ([3:11–18](#))
11. Genuine believers have confidence in prayer ([3:19–24](#))

Special Concepts in this Chapter

"children of God"

People are sometimes described as "children of God" because God created them. However, John uses this expression in a different sense in this chapter. He uses it to describe people who have entered into a father-child relationship with God by putting their faith and trust in Jesus. God indeed created all people, but people can only become children of God in this sense by believing in Jesus. "Children" in this usage does not refer to those who are young, but only to the relationship that people have at any age to their father. (See: Believe)

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

"the one who keeps his commandments remains in him, and he in him" (3:24)

This does not mean that keeping our salvation is conditional on doing certain works. Rather, John is describing the results of keeping the commandments that he describes in [3:32](#). Those commandments are to believe in Jesus and to love one another. John is saying that the person who believes in Jesus and loves others shows that he has a close relationship with God, and that he will continue to have that close relationship because of this obedience. Christians around the world hold different beliefs about whether people who have been saved can lose their salvation. That is not what John is addressing here, and translators should be careful not to let how they understand that issue affect how they translate this passage. (See: Eternity and Save)

Important Textual Issues in this Chapter

In [3:1](#), the most accurate ancient manuscripts include the words "and we are." That is the reading that ULT follows. However, some other ancient manuscripts do not include these words, and so some Bibles do not have them. If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using whichever reading is found in that version. If a translation does not already exist, we recommend that you follow the reading in the ULT text. (See: Textual Variants)

1 John 3:1 (#1)

"See"

John is using the term **See** to focus his reader's attention on what he is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you could use in your translation. Alternate translation: "Consider"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:1 (#2)

"the Father"

Father is an important title for God. Alternate translation: "God the Father"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 3:1 (#3)

"that we should be called children of God"

If your language does not use this passive form, you can express this with an active form. Alternate translation: "that God should call us his children"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 3:1 (#4)

"children of God"

Here John expresses the same metaphor as in [2:29](#) in a slightly different way. See whether you decided to indicate the figurative meaning there. If you translate **children** using a literal term, choose a word that can refer to people of any age in relation to their father. Alternate translation: "spiritual children of God"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:1 (#5)

"and we are"

See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to follow the reading of ULT and include these words or to follow the reading of some other versions and not include them.

See: Textual Variants

1 John 3:1 (#6)

"For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know him"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Because the world did not know God, for that reason it does not know us"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 3:1 (#7)

"For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know him"

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it refers to people who do not honor God and who do not live as God wishes. Alternate translation: "because ungodly people have not known God, for that reason they do not know us"

See: Metonymy

1 John 3:1 (#8)

"does not know us," - "it did not know him"

John is using the word **know** in two different senses. See the discussion of the word "know" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. If your language has different words for these different senses, it would be appropriate to use them in your translation. Alternate translation: "does not recognize who we are ... it did not become acquainted with him"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:1 (#9)

"does not know us"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly what **the world does not know** about believers in Jesus. Alternate translation: "does not recognize that we are God's children"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:1 (#10)

"him"

The pronoun **him** refers to God here. If this is not clear for your readers, you could supply this from the previous sentence. Alternate translation: "God"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:2 (#1)

"Beloved"

See how you translated **Beloved** in [2:7](#). Alternate translation: "You people whom I love" or "My dear ones"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 3:2 (#2)

"children of God"

See whether you decided to indicate the figurative meaning of this expression in [3:1](#). Alternate translation: "spiritual children of God"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:2 (#3)

"and"

John is using the word **and** to introduce a contrast between what is **now** known about believers and what is **not yet** known. Alternate translation: "but"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

1 John 3:2 (#4)

"what we will be has not yet been revealed"

If your language does not use passive forms, you can use an active form and say who will do the action. Alternate translation: "God has not yet revealed what we will be"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 3:2 (#5)

"whenever he appears"

See the discussion of the term "appear" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. The meaning of the term in this instance seems to be the same as in [2:28](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "when Jesus returns" or "when Jesus is revealed" or "when God reveals Jesus"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 3:2 (#6)

"whenever he appears," - "him" - "him" - "he is"

The pronouns **he** and **him** likely refer to Jesus in this verse, since John speaks of **when he appears** or returns. Consider whether it might be helpful to your readers or more natural in your language to use the name "Jesus" in one or more of these instances.

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:2 (#7)

"we will be like him because we will see him just as he is"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "we will see him just as he is, and so we will be like him"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 3:3 (#1)

"everyone having this hope upon him"

The pronoun **him** here does not refer to **everyone**; it refers to Jesus. The expression **this hope** refers to the hope that John describes in the previous verse, of seeing Jesus as he is. Alternate translation: "everyone who hopes to see Jesus as he really is"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:3 (#2)

"him" - "that one"

These pronouns refer to Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus ... Jesus"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:4 (#1)

"Everyone committing sin also commits lawlessness. Indeed, sin is lawlessness"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **lawlessness** with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "Everyone who commits sin is also breaking God's law. Indeed, sin is breaking God's law"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 3:4 (#2)

"Everyone committing sin also commits lawlessness. Indeed, sin is lawlessness"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain why John gives this warning. See the discussion of "sin" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Suggested footnote: "The false teachers were saying that it does not matter what people do in their physical bodies. In this way, they were tempting the people to sin."

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:5 (#1)

"that one" - "he might take away" - "him"

The pronouns **that one**, **he**, and **him** refer to Jesus in this verse. Consider whether it might be helpful to your readers or more natural in your language to use the name "Jesus" in one or more of these instances.

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:5 (#2)

"that one appeared"

See the discussion of the term "appear" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the term seems to have an active meaning. Alternate translation: "Jesus came to earth"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 3:5 (#3)

"sin is not in him"

John speaks of **sin** as if it were an object that could be inside of Jesus, although he is emphasizing that **sin** is not in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus has never sinned"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:6 (#1)

"Everyone remaining in him"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "Everyone who has a close relationship with Jesus"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:6 (#2)

"Everyone remaining in him"

John is speaking as if believers could be inside of Jesus. Alternate translation: "Everyone who has a close relationship with Jesus"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:6 (#3)

"him" - "him" - "him"

The pronoun **him** refers to Jesus in this verse. Consider whether it might be helpful to your readers or more natural in your language to use the name "Jesus" in one or more of these instances.

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:6 (#4)

"does not sin"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state what this implicitly means in light of the situation that John is addressing in this letter. See the discussion of "sin" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. John acknowledges elsewhere in this letter that genuine believers actually do sin, but they do not sin continually or wantonly. Alternate translation: "does not sin wantonly or continually"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:6 (#5)

"has not seen him and has not known him"

The words **seen** and **known** mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it

would be helpful in your language, you could combine these terms into a single expression. Alternate translation: "certainly does not have a close relationship with Jesus"

See: Doublet

1 John 3:6 (#6)

"has not seen him"

John is not referring to people literally seeing Jesus. Rather, he is using sight to mean perception and recognition. Alternate translation: "has not recognized who Jesus is"

See: Metaphor

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly what the term **righteous** means in this context. Alternate translation: "is acceptable to God, just as Jesus is acceptable to God"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:7 (#5)

"that one"

The demonstrative pronoun **that one** refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:8 (#1)

"is from the devil"

Here the preposition **from** indicates influence. The usage here is similar to that in the phrase "from the world" in [2:16](#). Alternate translation: "is acting under the influence of the devil"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:7 (#1)

"Little children"

See how you translated **Little children** in [2:1](#). Alternate translation: "You dear believers who are under my care"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:7 (#2)

"let no one lead you astray"

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:26](#). Alternate translation: "do not be deceived by anyone" or "do not let anyone get you to believe things that are not true"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:8 (#2)

"from the beginning"

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the time when God created the world. In this case, the word **from** indicates not that the devil began to sin at that time, but that he had already begun to sin by that time. Alternate translation: "even before the world was created"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:7 (#3)

"The one doing righteousness"

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: "The one who does what is right"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 3:8 (#3)

"the Son of God"

Son of God is an important title for Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus, the Son of God" or "God's Son Jesus"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 3:7 (#4)

"is righteous, just as that one is righteous"

1 John 3:8 (#4)**"appeared"**

See the discussion of the term "appear" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Here the term seems to have an active meaning and to mean the same thing as in [3:5](#), that Jesus came to earth. It does not mean that he only appeared to come. Alternate translation: "came to earth"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 3:8 (#5)**"so that he might destroy the works of the devil"**

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly what **works** John is talking about. Alternate translation: "so that he might free people from continually sinning, as the devil had influenced them to do"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:9 (#1)**"Everyone having been begotten from God" - "because he has been begotten from God"**

See how you translated this in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: "Everyone whose father is God ... because God is his father"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 3:9 (#2)**"Everyone having been begotten from God" - "because he has been begotten from God"**

See whether in [2:29](#) you decided to explain this metaphor. Alternate translation: "Everyone whose spiritual father is God ... because God is his spiritual father"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:9 (#3)**"does not commit sin," - "he is not able to sin"**

See the discussion of the term "sin" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. The form of the verbs

commit and **able** here may indicate a continual or habitual action. Alternate translation: "does not keep sinning ... he is not able to keep sinning"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:9 (#4)**"his seed remains in him"**

In this phrase, **his** refers to **God** and **him** refers to the person **who has been begotten from God**. Alternate translation: "God's seed remains in such a person"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:9 (#5)**"his seed remains in him"**

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, as in [2:27](#), it seems to refer to a continuing presence. Alternate translation: "God's seed continues to be present in such a person"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:9 (#6)**"his seed remains in him"**

John is using the word **seed** here to represent something that God gives to every believer that marks that believer as belonging to God and empowered to live for him. It could represent: (1) the new life from God that comes from his Spirit. Alternate translation: "the new life that God gave to that person continues with him" or "the Spirit that God put within that person stays with him" (2) the characteristics of a father that a child inherits from him. Alternate translation: "the characteristics that show that God is his father are always part of him"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:10 (#1)**"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are apparent"**

In this means something similar to the idiomatic expression "in this we know" that John uses many

times in this letter. The word **this** refers to what John says in the next sentence. Alternate translation: "This is how we can tell the difference between the children of God and the children of the devil"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:10 (#2)

"the children of God and the children of the devil"

John is using the word **children** in both of these instances. His usage is similar to the Hebrew idiom in which the "child" of something shares its characteristics. Alternate translation: "people who are living a new life in close relationship with God and people who are still in their old way of life influenced by the devil"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:10 (#3)

"Everyone not doing righteousness is not from God"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this double negative by translating it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "Everyone who does wrong is alienated from God"

See: Double Negatives

1 John 3:10 (#4)

"Everyone not doing righteousness"

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: "Any person who does not do what is right"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 3:10 (#5)

"is not from God"

The expression **from God** is an idiom. John uses it in various ways in this letter. Alternate translation: "does not belong to God" or "is not living in relationship with God"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:10 (#6)

"and the one not loving his brother"

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: "and the one who does not love his brother is not from God"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 3:10 (#7)

"his brother"

See how you translated **his brother** in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: "a fellow believer"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:11 (#1)

""

If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 11. Suggested heading: "What Love Is"

See:

1 John 3:11 (#2)

"from the beginning"

John uses the phrase **from the beginning** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to the time when the people to whom he is writing first heard about or first believed in Jesus. See how you translated this phrase in [2:7](#). Alternate translation: "ever since you first heard about Jesus"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:12 (#1)

"not like Cain"

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to

be complete. Alternate translation: "so we should not be like Cain"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 3:12 (#2)

"Cain—" - "killed his brother"

John assumes that his readers will know that **Cain** was a son of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. As the book of Genesis describes, Cain was jealous of his younger **brother** Abel and murdered him. If your readers might not know this, you could express this explicitly in a footnote or by putting the names of his parents and brother in the text. Alternate translation: "Cain, the son of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, ... murdered his younger brother Abel"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:12 (#3)

"he was from the evil one"

This is similar to the phrase "from the devil" in [3:8](#). See how you translated that phrase. Alternate translation: "who belonged to the evil one" or "who was influenced by the evil one"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:12 (#4)

"the evil one"

John is using the adjective **evil** as a noun in order to indicate a specific being. ULT adds **one** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "the one who is evil"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 3:12 (#5)

"the evil one"

John is speaking of the devil by association with the way that he is **evil**. Alternate translation: "the devil"

See: Metonymy

1 John 3:12 (#6)

"And on account of what did he kill him? Because"

John is using a question as a teaching tool. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question by translating his words as a statement. Alternate translation: "He killed him because"

See: Rhetorical Question

1 John 3:12 (#7)

"but those of his brother, righteous"

John is leaving out a word, "were," that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. The word "were" can be supplied for clarity. Alternate translation: "but his brother's works were righteous"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 3:13 (#1)

"Do not be amazed"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could show the connection between this sentence and the previous one by using a connecting word like "so" or "therefore." Using the example of Cain, John shows that evil people naturally hate righteous people. Alternate translation: "So do not be surprised"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 3:13 (#2)

"brothers"

See how you translated **brothers** in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: "my friends"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:13 (#3)**"if the world hates you"**

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it refers to people who do not honor God and who do not live as God wishes, as in [3:1](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "if ungodly people hate you"

See: Metonymy

1 John 3:14 (#1)**"We know that we have relocated from death into life, because we love the brothers"**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Because we love the brothers, we know that we have relocated from death into life"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 3:14 (#2)**"we have relocated from death into life"**

John is speaking of the conditions of being dead and alive as if they were physical locations between which a person could move. Alternate translation: "we are no longer dead but have become alive"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:14 (#3)**"we have relocated from death into life"**

Since John and his readers were not literally dead, he is referring to spiritual **death** and to spiritual **life**. Alternate translation: "we are no longer dead spiritually but have become alive spiritually"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:14 (#4)**"the brothers"**

See how you translated **the brothers** in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: "the other believers"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:14 (#5)**"The one not loving"**

John does not say specifically whom such a person **does not love**. In context, it appears that he means other believers. But it is also possible that John means other people in general. Alternate translation: "The one who does not love his fellow believers" or "The one who does not love other people"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 3:14 (#6)**"remains in death"**

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it means staying in the same place. John is once again speaking of the state of **death** as if it were a location. Alternate translation: "remains dead spiritually"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:15 (#1)**"Everyone hating his brother is a murderer"**

John is using the term **murderer**, and he is echoing the teaching of Jesus that is recorded in Matthew [5:21-22](#). John means that since people commit murder because they hate other people, anyone who hates is the same on the inside as someone who actually kills another person. It may be helpful to translate this metaphor as a simile. Alternate translation: "Whoever hates another believer is just like someone who kills a person"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:15 (#2)**"his brother"**

See how you translated **his brother** in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: "a fellow believer"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:15 (#3)

"every murderer does not have eternal life"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could make the subject negative and the verb positive. Alternate translation: "no murderer has eternal life"

See: Double Negatives

1 John 3:15 (#4)

"eternal life"

Since John is speaking of a present reality, by **eternal life** he does not mean living forever in the presence of God after death, which is one thing that this expression can describe. Rather, he means the regenerating power that God gives to believers in this life that helps them to stop sinning and to do what pleases him. Clearly, anyone who is a **murderer** does not have this power at work in him. Alternate translation: "the power that God gives to help us become new people"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:15 (#5)

"does not have eternal life remaining in him"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, John seems to be using the term literally, in the sense of "residing," to depict **eternal life** as if it were a living thing that could actively reside within a person. Alternate translation: "has not received eternal life"

See: Personification

1 John 3:16 (#1)

"In this we have known love"

In this we have known means something similar to the idiomatic expression "in this we know" that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how we have come to understand what love is"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:16 (#2)

"that one"

The demonstrative pronoun **that one** refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:16 (#3)

"laid down his life for us"

"This is an idiom that means ""died willingly for us." If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use an idiom from your language that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "willingly gave his life for us" or "sacrificed himself for us""

See: Idiom

1 John 3:16 (#4)

"And we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers"

John is not saying that we should seek out ways to die for our fellow believers in a literal sense, but that we should be prepared to do so, if necessary. However, he is also using the expression **lay down our lives** to mean that we should seek ways to love our fellow believers in sacrificial ways, as he illustrates in the next verse.

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:16 (#5)

"the brothers"

See how you translated **the brothers** in [2:9](#).
Alternate translation: "our fellow believers"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:17 (#1)

"whoever has the possessions of the world"

John uses this expression to introduce a hypothetical situation, which he discusses over the

course of the whole verse. He is not talking about any specific person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could restate this as in the UST.

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 3:17 (#2)

"the possessions of the world"

In this letter, John uses **world** to mean various things. Here it refers to the created world, and so refers to material things such as, in this context, money, food, and clothing. Alternate translation: "material possessions"

See: Metonymy

1 John 3:17 (#3)

"his brother"

See how you translated **his brother** in [2:9](#).
Alternate translation: "one of our fellow believers"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:17 (#4)

"closes his entrails from him"

This is an idiom in which the **entrails** or internal organs represent the emotions that would lead a person to act generously. Your language may have an equivalent figurative expression that you could use. You could also express the plain meaning in your translation. Alternate translation: "closes his heart to him" or "refuses to have compassion on him" or "declines to help him"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:17 (#5)

"how does the love of God remain in him"

John is using the question form as a teaching tool. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question by translating his words as a statement or exclamation. Alternate translation: "the love of God does not remain in such a person!"

See: Rhetorical Question

1 John 3:17 (#6)

"how does the love of God remain in him"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. As in [2:14](#), here the word seems to describe behavior that is recognized to be genuine because it is consistent. Alternate translation: "such a person does not genuinely love others with love that is from God!"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:17 (#7)

"how does the love of God remain in him"

As in [2:5](#), the phrase **the love of God** could mean: (1) God loving people. Alternate translation: "Is love from God really working in him" (2) a person loving God. Alternate translation: "is it really possible that he truly loves God" We recommend option (1) if you must choose. But it is probable that John intends both meanings here, so if your translation can leave the possibilities open, that would be best. Alternate translation: "is he really loving others the way that God loves him"

See: Possession

1 John 3:18 (#1)

"Little children"

See how you translated **Little children** in [2:1](#).
Alternate translation: "You dear believers who are under my care"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:18 (#2)

"let us not love in word nor in tongue"

The phrases **in word** and **in tongue** mean similar things. John is likely using repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these terms into a single expression. Alternate translation: "let us not love only by what we say"

See: Doublet

1 John 3:18 (#3)**"let us not love in word nor in tongue"**

John is using the phrases **in word** and **in tongue** to refer to what a person says. Alternate translation: "let us not love only by what we say"

See: Metonymy

1 John 3:18 (#4)**"let us not love in word nor in tongue"**

John is not saying that we should never express love through words. He is using hyperbole to make a contrast between words and actions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could include a word such as "only" or "merely." Alternate translation: "let us not love only by what we say"

See: Hyperbole

1 John 3:18 (#5)**"let us not love in word nor in tongue"**

If it would be clearer in your language, you could put the negative **not** before **in word**, rather than before **love**. Alternate translation: "let us love not in word nor in tongue"

See: Information Structure

1 John 3:18 (#6)**"but in deed and truth"**

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: "but let us love in deed and in truth"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 3:18 (#7)**"in deed and truth"**

John is expressing a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **truth** indicates the quality that loving **in deed** would have. Alternate translation: "truly, in actions"

See: Hendiadys

1 John 3:19 (#1)

""

If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 19. Suggested heading: "Have Confidence When You Pray"

See:

1 John 3:19 (#2)**"In this we will know" - "and we will persuade our hearts"**

John describes a result in this verse. He gives the reason for that result in the next verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could put the reason before the result by creating a verse bridge. You could put [3:20](#) first in your translation, making it a separate sentence and leaving out both instances of the word "that." You could put this verse next, translating it as in the following suggestions. Alternate translation: "That is how we can know ... and how we can persuade our hearts"

See: Verse Bridges

1 John 3:19 (#3)**"In this"**

In this could refer either to: (1) What John has just said in verse 18. Alternate translation: "If we do that" (2) What John is about to say in verse 20. Alternate translation: "I will tell you how"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:19 (#4)**"In this we will know"**

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how we can know"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:19 (#5)

"we will know that we are from the truth, and we will persuade our hearts"

The phrases **we will know** and **we will persuade our hearts** mean similar things. John is likely using the repetition for emphasis. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases into an emphatic expression. Alternate translation: "we will be completely convinced that we are from the truth"

See: Parallelism

1 John 3:19 (#6)

"we are from the truth"

This could mean one of two things. (1) John could be referring to God by association with the way that God is true. In other words, God always tells **the truth** and does what he says. Alternate translation: "we are from God, who is true" (2) As in [2:21](#), the word **truth** could refer to the true teaching that believers have received from Jesus. Alternate translation: "we are conducting our lives according to the true message"

See: Metonymy

1 John 3:19 (#7)

"we are from the truth"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **truth** with an adjective such as "true." Alternate translation: "we are from the One who is true"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 3:19 (#8)

"we are from the truth"

See how you translated the expression in [3:10](#) that has a similar meaning. Alternate translation: "we belong to God" or "we are living in relationship with God"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:19 (#9)

"we will persuade our hearts"

John is speaking of **hearts** to mean thoughts and feelings. There may be a similar expression in your language. Alternate translation: "we can reassure ourselves about this"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:19 (#10)

"before him"

The pronoun **him** refers to God. Alternate translation: "before God"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:19 (#11)

"before him"

The word **before** means "in front of" or "in the presence of" someone. It likely refers to when we pray to God or are otherwise aware that he sees everything that we do. Alternate translation: "when we pray to God"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:20 (#1)

"that if our heart condemns {us}, that God is greater than our heart and knows everything"

John is discussing a hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: "Suppose our heart condemns us. Then we should remember that God is greater than our heart and knows everything"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 3:20 (#2)

"if our heart condemns {us}"

John continues speaking of the **heart** to mean the thoughts and feelings. There may be a similar expression in your language. Alternate translation: "if our feelings condemn us" or "if our thoughts accuse us"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:20 (#3)

"if our heart condemns {us}"

The topic here, continuing from [3:19](#), is how we can know that “we are from the truth,” so this is likely a reference to needing reassurance about that. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “if we ever feel that we do not belong to God”

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:20 (#4)

"our heart" - "our heart"

If it would be unusual in your language to speak of one **heart** in reference to many people, and if you decide to retain the word **heart** as a metaphor in your translation, you could make it plural. Alternate translation: “our hearts … our hearts”

See: Possession

1 John 3:20 (#5)

"God is greater than our heart and knows everything"

Since John is using the **heart** to mean the thoughts and feelings, the statement that **God is greater than our heart** likely means that God knows and understands more than we do and that God has greater compassion for us than we have for ourselves. In that case, the phrases **is greater than our heart** and **knows everything** would mean similar things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could combine these phrases into an emphatic expression. Alternate translation: “God certainly knows better than we do that we belong to him”

See: Parallelism

1 John 3:20 (#6)

"God is greater than our heart and knows everything"

The implications are that, given God’s greater knowledge, we should believe what he has said rather than what our thoughts and feelings are saying. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: “God certainly knows better than we do that we belong to him, and so we should believe that because he has said so”

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:21 (#1)

"Beloved"

See how you translated **Beloved** in [2:7](#). Alternate translation: “You people whom I love”

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 3:21 (#2)

"if the heart does not condemn, we have confidence toward God"

John discusses another hypothetical situation in order to reassure his readers. Alternate translation: “Suppose our hearts do not condemn us. Then we have confidence toward God”

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 3:21 (#3)

"if the heart does not condemn"

See how you translated the similar expression in [3:20](#). Alternate translation: “if we do not feel that we do not belong to God” or, positively, “if we feel assured that we belong to God”

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:21 (#4)

"the heart"

If you decided in the previous verse to retain the word **heart** as a metaphor in your translation and you made it plural there, you could make it plural in this instance as well. You can also use the same possessive pronoun as in the previous verse. Alternate translation: “our hearts”

See: Possession

1 John 3:21 (#5)

"we have confidence toward God"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly what this **confidence** applies to, in light of what John says in the next verse. Alternate translation: "we can pray to God confidently"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:21 (#6)

"we have confidence toward God"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **confidence** with an adverb such as "confidently." Alternate translation: "we can pray to God confidently"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 3:22 (#1)

"because we keep his commandments and we do the pleasing things before him"

John is not saying that we **receive whatever we ask** in return for obeying God's commandments and doing what pleases him. Our obedience does not obligate God to give us what we ask for. Our obedience is simply what God has a right to expect from us. Rather, the word **because** reaches back to the statement earlier in this sentence, in the previous verse, that "we have confidence toward God," that is, we can pray to God confidently. Living in obedience and doing what pleases God gives us confidence to ask for things according to his will. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this explicitly by starting a new sentence here that refers back to that statement and explains how John's statement in this verse relates to it. Alternate translation: "We can pray confidently like this because we obey God's commandments and do what pleases him, and that assures us that we belong to him"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 3:22 (#2)

"we keep his commandments"

As in [2:3](#), the word **keep** is an idiom that means "obey." Alternate translation: "we obey his commandments"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:22 (#3)

"the pleasing things before him"

John is using the adjective **pleasing** as a noun. ULT adds **things** to show this. (The word is plural.) Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "the things that please him"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 3:22 (#4)

"the pleasing things before him"

The word **before** means "in front of" or "in the presence of" another person. In this case, **before him** indicates "in God's sight." Seeing, for its part, represents attention and judgment. So this means the things that God regards as pleasing. Alternate translation: "the things that please him" or "what God considers to be good"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:23 (#1)

"this is his commandment"

The pronoun **his** refers to God in this verse. Alternate translation: "this is what God has commanded"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:23 (#2)

"in the name of his Son Jesus Christ"

As in [2:12](#), John is using the **name** of Jesus to represent who Jesus is and what he has done.

Alternate translation: "in Jesus Christ his Son and what he has done for us"

See: Metonymy

1 John 3:23 (#3)

"of" - "Son"

Son is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 3:23 (#4)

"he gave"

The pronoun **he** here may refer to: (1) Jesus or (2) God.

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:24 (#1)

"the one keeping his commandments remains in him"

The pronouns **his** and **him** here refer to God. Alternate translation: "the one who keeps God's commandments remains in God"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 3:24 (#2)

"the one keeping his commandments"

The word **keep** is an idiom that means "obey." Alternate translation: "the person who obeys God's commandments"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:24 (#3)

"remains in him"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "continues to have a close relationship with him"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:24 (#4)

"remains in him"

John is speaking as if believers could be inside of God. Alternate translation: "continues to have a close relationship with God"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:24 (#5)

"and he in him"

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: "and God remains in him"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 3:24 (#6)

"and he in him"

John is speaking as if God could be inside of believers. Alternate translation: "and God continues to have a close relationship with that person"

See: Metaphor

1 John 3:24 (#7)

"and he in him"

Although the term **him** here is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that includes both men and women. Alternate translation: "and God continues to have a close relationship with that person"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

1 John 3:24 (#8)

"in this we know that"

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "this is how we know that"

See: Idiom

1 John 3:24 (#9)

"he remains in us"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as it does earlier in the verse. Alternate translation: "he continues to have a close relationship with us"

See: Metaphor

1 John - Chapter 4 Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- 12.** It is false teaching to deny that Jesus became human (4:1-6)
- 13.** Genuine believers love one another as God has loved them (4:7-21)

Special Concepts in this Chapter

"Spirit" and "spirit"

John uses the word "spirit" in different ways in this chapter. Sometimes the word "spirit" clearly refers to a supernatural being. Sometimes the word "spirit" may refer either to the human spirit, to the character of something, or to a supernatural being. Therefore, the expressions "the spirit of the antichrist," "the spirit of truth," and "the spirit of error" may refer to the spirit of the humans who promote those things, the attitudes and thinking that are typical of those things, or to spiritual beings who inspire those things. When the word is written with a capital letter, as in the expressions "the Spirit of God" and "his Spirit," it refers to the Holy Spirit.

Other Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

Loving God

If people love God, they should show it in the way that they live and the way that they treat other people. Doing this may assure us that God has saved us and that we belong to him. But loving others does not save us. Be sure that this is clear in your translation. John says in 4:7 that "everyone

who loves is begotten from God and knows God." As the notes explain, this means that God is the spiritual father of everyone who loves, and everyone who loves is in a close relationship with God. But this love from God is a sign that they belong to God only because of what Jesus did for them on the cross, as John says in 4:10. They were saved by what Jesus did, not because they themselves loved others. (See: Save)

Important Textual Issues in this Chapter

In [4:3](#), the most accurate ancient manuscripts say "acknowledge Jesus." That is the reading that ULT follows. Some other ancient manuscripts say "acknowledge Jesus Christ having come in the flesh." (Some of these manuscripts say "Jesus" or "the Lord Jesus" instead of "Jesus Christ.") If a translation of the Bible already exists in your region, consider using whichever reading is found in that version. If a translation does not already exist, we recommend that you follow the reading in the ULT text. (See: Textual Variants)

1 John 4:1 (#1)

""

If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 1. Suggested heading: "Recognizing the Spirit of God"

See:

1 John 4:1 (#2)

"Beloved"

See how you translated **Beloved** in [2:7](#). Alternate translation: "You people whom I love"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 4:1 (#3)

"do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits"

John is speaking of a prophet by association with the **spirit** that would inspire a prophet to speak. Alternate translation: "do not believe every prophet; instead, consider carefully what prophets say"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:1 (#4)**"whether they are from God"**

John uses the expression **from God** in various ways in this letter. Here it refers to origin. Alternate translation: "in order to determine whether God has sent them" or "in order to determine whether God is inspiring them"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:1 (#5)**"whether they are from God"**

This sentence leaves out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words. Alternate translation: "to see whether they are from God or whether they are not from God"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 4:1 (#6)**"have gone out into the world"**

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it refers to the people living in the world. Alternate translation: "are out there speaking to people"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:2 (#1)**"In this you know"**

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how you can recognize"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:2 (#2)**"Every spirit that confesses"**

John is speaking of a prophet by association with the **spirit** that would inspire a prophet to speak. Alternate translation: "Every prophet who teaches"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:2 (#3)**"Jesus Christ having come in the flesh"**

As in [2:16](#), John is using the term **flesh** to mean the physical human body, which is made of **flesh**. See Part 2 of the Introduction to 1 John for an explanation of why the false teachers denied that Jesus had a human body. Alternate translation: "that Jesus Christ had a real human body"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:2 (#4)**"is from God"**

See how you translated this expression in [4:1](#). Alternate translation: "is inspired by God" or, if your language does not use passive forms, "God is inspiring," placing that phrase before **every spirit** or "every prophet"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:3 (#1)**"every spirit that does not confess"**

See how you translated the similar expression in [4:2](#). Alternate translation: "every prophet who does not teach"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:3 (#2)**"Jesus"**

See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to follow the reading of ULT and say **Jesus** here or to follow the reading of some other manuscripts and say "Jesus Christ having come in the flesh."

See: Textual Variants

1 John 4:3 (#3)**"Jesus"**

If you follow the variant reading "Jesus Christ having come in the flesh," see how you translated that expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "that Jesus Christ had a real human body"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:3 (#4)**"Jesus"**

Even if you do not follow the reading of the textual variant here, you may wish to explain more fully what John means by **Jesus** in this context in order to make the implied information explicit for your readers. Alternate translation: "that Jesus Christ had a real human body"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:3 (#5)**"is not from God"**

See how you translated the similar expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "is not inspired by God" or, if your language does not use passive forms, "God is not inspiring," placing that phrase before **every spirit** or "every prophet"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:3 (#6)**"this is that of the antichrist"**

The word **this** refers to **every spirit that does not confess Jesus** in the previous sentence and the word **that** here is a shorter way to say "the one" or "the spirit." Alternate translation: "every spirit that does not confess Jesus is the spirit of the antichrist"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:3 (#7)**"this is that of the antichrist"**

Since that the word **that** means "the spirit," see the discussion of the word "spirit" in the General Notes to this chapter. In this instance, John is referring to either: (1) the characteristic attitude of something, or (2) a supernatural being who inspires that attitude. Also see how you translated the term **antichrist** in [2:18](#). Alternate translation: "this is the false teaching that is opposed to Jesus"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:3 (#8)**"which you have heard about, that it is coming, and it is now already in the world"**

The word **which** refers to the **spirit of the antichrist**, which was **already in the world** at the time when John wrote. It does not refer to **the antichrist** himself, who was not yet **in the world**. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "You have heard that this false teaching is coming, and it is now already circulating among people"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:3 (#9)**"in the world"**

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here, while it could possibly mean the literal earth (so this expression would mean "on this earth"), it more likely refers to the people living in the world. Alternate translation: "circulating among people"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:4 (#1)**"You are from God"**

The expression **from God** means something different in this verse than in the previous three verses, since it refers to believers rather than to the spirits that are inspiring prophets. It means the same thing as in [3:10](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "You belong to God" or "You are living in relationship with God"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:4 (#2)**"little children"**

See how you translated **little children** in [2:1](#). Alternate translation: "you dear believers who are under my care"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:4 (#3)**"you have overcome them"**

As in [2:13](#) and [2:14](#), John is using the word **overcome**. He is speaking of the believers' refusal to believe the false prophets as if the believers had defeated these prophets in a struggle. Alternate translation: "you have refused to believe these false teachers"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:4 (#4)**"them"**

The pronoun **them** refers to the false prophets whom John describes in [4:1](#). Alternate translation: "these false teachers"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:4 (#5)**"greater is the one in you"**

As in [3:24](#), John is speaking as if God could be inside of believers. Alternate translation: "God, with whom you have a close relationship, is greater"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:4 (#6)**"the one in the world"**

The phrase **in the world** here and in [4:5](#) seems to have a different meaning than in [4:1](#) and [4:3](#). There, it refers to location, so when John says in [4:3](#) that the spirit of the antichrist is "in the world," it means "on this earth" or "circulating among people." But here, John seems to be using the term **world** to mean the value system that is opposed to God. In

that case, the phrase **the one in the world** would refer to the devil by association with the way that he inspires that system. Alternate translation: "the devil"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:5 (#1)**"They are from the world. Because of this, they speak from the world"**

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here in these first two instances, it refers to the system of values shared by people who do not know God. Alternate translation: "These false teachers are influenced by the ungodly value system of the people who do not honor God. As a result, they express the perspectives of that system"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:5 (#2)**"They"**

The pronoun **They** refers to the false prophets whom John describes in [4:1](#). Alternate translation: "These false teachers"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:5 (#3)**"the world listens to them"**

In this instance, the term **world** refers to people who share the world's value system. That is, they do not honor or obey God. Alternate translation: "ungodly people listen to them"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:5 (#4)**"the world listens to them"**

The word **listens** is an idiom that means "believes" or "is persuaded by." Alternate translation: "ungodly people believe them"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:6 (#1)**"We" - "to us." - "to us"**

The pronouns **We** and **us** in the first three sentences of this verse are probably exclusive, and so if your language marks that distinction, we recommend using the exclusive form in your translation. John appears to be speaking here of himself and his fellow eyewitnesses of the resurrection as teachers of the truth about Jesus. He has already said that the believers to whom he is writing are from God in [4:4](#).

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

1 John 4:6 (#2)**"We are from God"**

Here, **from God** could mean: (1) that John and his fellow eyewitnesses teach the truth about Jesus because God has sent them to do that. Alternate translation: "God has sent us" (2) the same thing as it does in [4:4](#) and in [4:1-3](#). Alternate translation: "We belong to God"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:6 (#3)**"We are from God"**

If you have decided that **We are from God** means "God has sent us," and if it would be helpful to your readers, either here or in a footnote you could state explicitly what God has sent John and the other eyewitnesses to do. Alternate translation: "God has sent us to teach the truth about Jesus as eyewitnesses to his life on earth"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:6 (#4)**"The one knowing God"**

As in [2:3-4](#), John is using the word **knowing** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "Anyone who has a close relationship with God"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:6 (#5)**"listens to us." - "does not listen to us"**

As in [4:5](#), the word **listens** is an idiom that means "believes" or "is persuaded by." Alternate translation: "believes what we teach ... does not believe what we teach"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:6 (#6)**"Whoever is not from God"**

The expression **from God** means the same thing in this verse as in [4:4](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "Whoever does not belong to God" or "Whoever is not living in relationship with God"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:6 (#7)**"From this we know"**

This is an idiomatic expression. It means the same thing as the expression "in this we know" which John uses several times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how we can recognize"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:6 (#8)**"From this we know"**

Here, **this** refers back to what John has just written in the previous two sentences. We can know if someone is teaching a true message if it agrees with what John and the other apostles teach, and that it is a false message if it does not. John may have intended for **this** to also include what he said in [4:2-3](#).

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:6 (#9)**"we know"**

In the last sentence of this verse, John is once again speaking of himself and the believers to whom he

is writing. If your language has an inclusive form of **we**, then use that in your translation here. This inclusive usage continues through [4:13](#).

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

1 John 4:6 (#10)

"the spirit of truth and the spirit of error"

See the discussion of the word **spirit** in the General Notes to this chapter. In these instances, the word may refer to: (1) spirits that inspire messages of a certain kind. In this case, **the spirit of truth** would refer to God's Spirit, and **the spirit of error** would refer to the devil. These would also be what John refers to as "the one in you" and "the one in the world" in [4:4](#). See the UST. (2) the character of something. In this case, John would be using **spirit** to refer to people whose teaching has a certain character. Alternate translation: "whose teaching is true and whose teaching is false"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:6 (#11)

"the spirit of truth and the spirit of error"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract nouns **truth** and **error** with the adjectives "true" and "false." Alternate translation: "the spirit whose messages are true and the spirit whose messages are false"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 4:7 (#1)

""

If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 7. Suggested heading: "Love Comes from God"

See:

1 John 4:7 (#2)

"Beloved"

See how you translated **Beloved** in [2:7](#). Alternate translation: "You people whom I love"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 4:7 (#3)

"love is from God"

The expression **from God** means something similar to what it does in [4:1-3](#). Alternate translation: "God inspires us to love"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:7 (#4)

"everyone loving has been begotten from God"

See how you translated this metaphor in [2:29](#) and [3:9](#). Alternate translation: "God is the spiritual father of everyone who loves"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:7 (#5)

"everyone loving has been begotten from God"

If your language does not use this passive form, you can express this with an active form. Alternate translation: "God is the father of everyone who loves"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 4:7 (#6)

"and knows God"

As in [2:4](#), John is using the word **knows** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "and such a person has a close relationship with God"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:8 (#1)

"The one not loving does not know God, for God is love"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Since God

is love, the one who does not love does not know God"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 4:8 (#2)

"does not know God"

As in 2:4, John is using the word **know** in a specific sense. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "does not have a close relationship with God"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:8 (#3)

"God is love"

This is a metaphor that describes what God is like in his character. Alternate translation: "God is entirely loving"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:8 (#4)

"God is love"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **love** with an adjective such as "loving." Alternate translation: "God is entirely loving"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 4:9 (#1)

"In this"

In this means something similar to the idiomatic expression "in this we know" that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:9 (#2)

"In this"

Here, **this** refers forward to what John will say in the rest of the sentence. God demonstrated that he loves us by sending his Son.

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:9 (#3)

"the love of God appeared among us"

See the discussion of the term "appear" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. This verbal form could be translated **appeared** or "was revealed." If your language does not use passive forms, you can use an active form and say who did the action. Alternate translation: "God showed us how much he loves us"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 4:9 (#4)

"the love of God"

Here, **the love of God** refers to God loving people. Alternate translation: "God's love for us"

See: Possession

1 John 4:9 (#5)

"among us"

The expression **among us** likely refers to all of humanity, not just to the people who saw and heard Jesus when he was alive, so this would be an inclusive use of the term **us** that would include the believers to whom John is writing. John says later in the sentence that Jesus came **so that we might live through him**, and **we** in that instance does include these believers. So it is likely that **us** earlier in the sentence includes them as well.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

1 John 4:9 (#6)

"his Son"

Son is an important title for Jesus. Alternate translation: "his Son Jesus"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 4:9 (#7)**"the One and Only"**

The adjectives **One and Only** function here as nouns to mean that God has no other Son like Jesus. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could add the noun "Son" to this phrase. Alternate translation: "his One and Only Son"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 4:9 (#8)**"into the world"**

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it refers to the created world. Alternate translation: "to live on earth"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:9 (#9)**"so that we might live through him"**

Since people were already literally alive before Jesus came, John means this in a figurative sense. He is likely referring to what he calls "eternal life" in [3:15](#). That includes both living forever in the presence of God after death and receiving power from God in this life to live in a new way. Alternate translation: "so that through him we might receive power from God to live as new people in this life and to live forever in God's presence after we die"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:10 (#1)**"In this is love"**

In this means something similar to the idiomatic expression "in this we know" that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how we have experienced genuine love"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:10 (#2)**"In this is love"**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the abstract noun **love** by stating the meaning behind it with a verb. Alternate translation: "This is how we know what it means to love"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 4:10 (#3)**"his Son"**

Son is an important title for Jesus. Alternate translation: "his Son Jesus"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 4:10 (#4)**"sent his Son {as the} propitiation for our sins"**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the abstract noun **propitiation** by stating the meaning behind it with an equivalent expression. See how you translated the term in [2:2](#). Alternate translation: "sent his Son to be the offering that made him no longer angry with us because of our sins"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 4:11 (#1)**"Beloved"**

See how you translated **Beloved** in [2:7](#). Alternate translation: "You people whom I love"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 4:11 (#2)**"if God thus loved us"**

John is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what John is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "because God loved us in this way"

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

1 John 4:11 (#3)**"thus"**

The word **thus** refers to the manner in which God showed his love to us, as described in verses 9 and 10. Alternate translation: "in that way"

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

1 John 4:12 (#1)

"If we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is perfected in us"

John is speaking of a real situation as if it were a hypothetical condition. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is already real, and if your readers might think that what John is saying is not real, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "But as we love each other, God remains in us, and his love is perfected in us" or "But we do love each other, so that means that God remains in us, and his love is perfected in us"

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

1 John 4:12 (#2)**"God remains in us"**

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "God continues to have a close relationship with us"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:12 (#3)**"his love is perfected in us"**

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:5](#). In this case, it is clear that John is referring to God's love for us, rather than to our love for God. Alternate translation: "God's love has achieved its purpose in our lives"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 4:13 (#1)

"In this we know that we remain in him and he in us: that he has given us of his Spirit"

The expression **In this** introduces a note of assurance that contrasts with the idea in the previous verse, "No one has ever seen God." This verse is very similar to the second half of [3:24](#). See how you translated that verse. Alternate translation: "Nevertheless, this is how we know that we remain in him, and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit" or "But we know that we remain in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

1 John 4:13 (#2)**"In this we know that"**

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how we know that"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:13 (#3)**"In this we know"**

The pronoun **this** refers forward to what John says in the second part of this verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "Here is the reason that we know"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:13 (#4)**"we remain in him and he in us"**

In the expression **and he in us**, John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "we remain in him and he remains in us"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 4:13 (#5)**"we remain in him and he in us"**

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "we continue to have a close relationship with God, and God continues to have a close relationship with us"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:13 (#6)**"he has given us of his Spirit"**

The word **of** here means "some of." However, God's Spirit is not something that can be divided. Rather, John is saying that God is sharing his Spirit with us. God's Spirit can be in many places, and he is fully present in every place. John is saying that through his Spirit, God is fully present in the entire community, and that each believer experiences some of that full presence of God through the presence of the Spirit in his own life. Be sure that it is also clear in your translation that God does not have less of his Spirit now that each of us has some. Alternate translation: "he has sent his Spirit to live in each of us"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:14 (#1)**"we have seen and we testify that"**

In this verse, John is speaking on behalf of himself and the other eyewitnesses of the earthly life of Jesus, so the pronoun **we** is exclusive. Alternate translation: "we apostles have seen and bear witness to the fact that"

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

1 John 4:14 (#2)**"the Father" - "the Son"**

Father and **Son** are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus. Alternate translation: "God the Father ... Jesus his Son"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 4:14 (#3)**"as the} Savior of the world"**

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter. Here it refers to the people living in the world. Alternate translation: "to save the people in the world"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:15 (#1)**"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God"**

This can be translated as a conditional statement if that would be helpful in your language. John is saying that what he describes in the second phrase will happen only if what he describes in the first phrase happens. Then it will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "If someone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, then God will remain in him and he will remain in God"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 4:15 (#2)**"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God"**

The meaning of this expression is similar to the expression "the one who confesses the Son" in [2:23](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "Everyone who truly believes and acknowledges publicly that Jesus is the Son of God"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:15 (#3)**"the Son of God"**

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 4:15 (#4)**"God remains in him and he in God"**

In the expression **and he in God**, John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "God remains in him and he remains in God"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 4:15 (#5)

"God remains in him and he in God"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "God continues to have a close relationship with him, and he continues to have a close relationship with God"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:16 (#1)

"we" - "us"

Here and in the rest of the letter, John speaks of himself and the believers to whom he is writing, so the words **we** and **us** will be inclusive. If your language marks that distinction, use the inclusive form in your translation.

See: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

1 John 4:16 (#2)

"the love that God has in us"

The phrase translated **in us** here is the same as the phrase translated "among us" in [4:9](#). Here it could mean: (1) God's love directed to us. Alternate translation: "the love that God has for us" (2) God's love directed to others through us. Alternate translation: "the love that God has put into us" It may also be that John used a very general phrase in order to include both meanings.

See: Idiom

1 John 4:16 (#3)

"God is love"

This is a metaphor that describes what God is like in his character. See how you translated it in [4:8](#). Alternate translation: "God is entirely loving"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:16 (#4)

"the one remaining in love"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. As in [2:24](#), in this instance the word seems to refer to maintaining a pattern of behavior. Alternate translation: "a person who continues to love others"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:16 (#5)

"remains in God, and God remains in him"

See the discussion of the term "remain" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. In this instance, it seems to mean the same thing as in [2:6](#) and in [4:15](#). See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "continues to have a close relationship with God, and God continues to have a close relationship with him"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:17 (#1)

"In this"

As in [4:9](#), **In this** means something similar to the idiomatic expression "in this we know" that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "By doing this"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:17 (#2)

"In this"

In this may refer: (1) backward to the last sentence of verse 16. Alternate translation: "By remaining in God," (2) forward to the clause beginning **because just as that one is**. Alternate translation: "By loving others just the way that Jesus does,"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:17 (#3)**"love has been perfected with us"**

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:5](#). Since John speaks in the previous verse of God's love, here John is probably continuing to refer to God's love for us, rather than to our love for God. Alternate translation: "God's love has achieved its purpose in our lives"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 4:17 (#4)**"so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment"**

The clause beginning **so that** could function as: (1) a result clause. That is, John may be saying that as a result of God's love achieving its purposes in our lives now, we will be confident on the day of judgment of his forgiveness and acceptance. If you decide that is the case, then your translation should follow the conventions of your language for result clauses. Alternate translation: "with the result that we may have confidence in the day of judgment" (2) a purpose clause. That is, John may be saying that one reason why God is having his love achieve its purpose in our lives now is that on the day of judgment, he wants us to be confident of his forgiveness and acceptance. If you decide that is the case, then your translation should follow the conventions of your language for purpose clauses.

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 4:17 (#5)**"so that we may have confidence"**

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly what believers will **have confidence** about. Alternate translation: "so that we will be confident that God has forgiven us and will accept us"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:17 (#6)**"so that we may have confidence"**

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **confidence** with an adjective such as "confident." Alternate translation: "so that we will be confident that God has forgiven us and will accept us"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 4:17 (#7)**"in the day of judgment"**

John is using the term **day** to refer to a specific time. Alternate translation: "at the time when God judges us"

See: Idiom

1 John 4:17 (#8)**"because"**

The word translated **because** here can be understood in different ways, depending on how you translated **In this** at the beginning of the verse. (1) If you translated **In this** as referring back to verse 16, then this word can be translated as "because." (2) If you translated **In this** as referring to the clause beginning with this word, then translate this word with one that introduces the content of **In this**, such as "that."

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:17 (#9)**"because, just as that one is, we also are"**

The phrase **that one** refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "since we are becoming more and more like Jesus"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:17 (#10)**"in this world"**

John uses **world** to mean various things in this letter, usually in a figurative sense. Here, however, it refers literally to the created world. Alternate translation: "as we live in this world" or "in our lives on this earth"

See: Metonymy

1 John 4:18 (#1)

"Fear is not in love, but perfect love throws fear outside, because fear has punishment"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could put the third clause before the first clause, since the third clause gives the reason for the result that the first clause describes. Alternate translation: "Because fear has punishment, fear is not in love, but perfect love throws fear outside"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 4:18 (#2)

"Fear is not in love, but perfect love throws fear outside, because fear has punishment"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could state explicitly what John means by **fear**, **perfect love**, and **punishment**, particularly in light of what he says in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "A person who thinks he is going to be punished is afraid, but no one who truly understands how much God loves him will be afraid, because when God's love has achieved its purpose in our lives, we are confident that he has forgiven us and will accept us"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:18 (#3)

"Fear is not in love"

John speaks as if **Fear** could be inside of **love**. Alternate translation: "no one who truly understands how much God loves him will be afraid"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:18 (#4)

"perfect love throws fear outside"

By **perfect love**, John means the same thing as when he speaks in the previous verse of love that "has been perfected." See how you translated that expression. Alternate translation: "when God's love

has achieved its purpose in our lives, it keeps us from being afraid"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:18 (#5)

"perfect love throws fear outside"

John speaks of **love** as if it could actively throw **fear** far away from us. Alternate translation: "when God's love has achieved its purpose in our lives, it keeps us from being afraid"

See: Personification

1 John 4:18 (#6)

"fear has punishment"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could clarify the relationship between **fear** and **punishment**. Alternate translation: "fear has to do with punishment" or "people are afraid when they think they will be punished"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:18 (#7)

"So the one fearing has not been perfected in love"

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:5](#). Here, as there, **love** could mean: (1) God's love for us. Alternate translation: "So if someone is afraid, then God's love has not achieved its purpose in his life" (2) our love for God. Alternate translation: "So if someone is afraid, then he does not yet love God perfectly" It could also mean both things, as in [3:17](#). If you must choose, then we recommend option (1). But if your translation can leave both possibilities open, that would be best. Alternate translation: "So if someone is afraid, then love is not yet fully working in his life"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 4:18 (#8)

"So the one fearing has not been perfected in love"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly what such a person **fears**. This is clear from the previous verse. Alternate translation: "So if someone is afraid that God has not forgiven him and that God will not accept him, then God's love has not achieved its purpose in his life"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:19 (#1)

"We love because he first loved us"

This verse summarizes the idea of verse [10](#). See how you translated there. If it would be helpful in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: "Because God first loved us, we love"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 4:19 (#2)

"We love"

If you need to say who it is that **We love**, there are two possibilities, and John probably intended both here. If you must choose, then we recommend option (1) below, but if your translation can include both possibilities as in the UST, that would be best. Alternate translation: (1) "We love God" or (2) "We love others"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:19 (#3)

"he first loved us"

The pronoun **he** refers to God. Alternate translation: "God first loved us"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:20 (#1)

"If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar"

John is using a hypothetical situation to help his readers recognize the importance of consistency

between their words and their actions. Alternate translation: "Suppose someone says, 'I love God,' but he hates his brother. Then he is a liar"

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 4:20 (#2)

"and"

John is using the word translated as **and** to introduce a contrast between what would be expected, that someone who loved God would also love his fellow believers, and what would actually be true of this hypothetical person. Alternate translation: "but"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

1 John 4:20 (#3)

"his brother"

See how you translated **his brother** in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: "one of his fellow believers"

See: Metaphor

1 John 4:20 (#4)

"the one not loving his brother," - "is not able to love God"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this double negative by translating it as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "only the person who loves his fellow believers ... is able to love God"

See: Double Negatives

1 John 4:20 (#5)

"For the one not loving his brother, whom he has seen, is not able to love God, whom he has not seen"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could state explicitly why this is true. Alternate translation: "This is true because it is much easier to love your fellow believer who is right in front of you than to love God, whom you could not even see."

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 4:21 (#1)

"from him"

The pronoun **him** refers to God. Alternate translation: "from God"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 4:21 (#2)

"the one loving God"

Here, **the one** refers to anyone who loves God. Alternate translation: "anyone who loves God"

See: Generic Noun Phrases

1 John 4:21 (#3)

"his brother"

See how you translated **his brother** in [2:9](#). Alternate translation: "each fellow believer"

See: Metaphor

1 John - Chapter 5 Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- 14.** It is false teaching to deny that Jesus is the Son of God (5:1-12)
- 15.** Closing of Letter (5:13-21)

Possible Translation Difficulties in this Chapter

"a sin toward death"

It is not entirely clear what John means by this phrase. The word "death" could refer either to physical death or to spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God. See the further discussion in the notes to [5:16](#). (See: death)

"the whole world lies in the power of the evil one"

The phrase "the evil one" refers to Satan. God has allowed him to rule the world, but, ultimately, God

is in control over everything. God keeps his children safe from the evil one. (See: Satan)

Important textual issues in this chapter

In [5:7-8](#), all ancient manuscripts say: "For there are three who testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and the three are unto the one." That is the reading that ULT follows. Some much later manuscripts say: "For there are three who testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one; and there are three who testify on earth: the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three are unto the one." In this case, translators are advised to translate this as the ULT text does, since there is wide agreement that it follows the accurate reading. However, if there are older versions of the Bible in your region that have the longer reading, you could include it, but you should put it inside square brackets [] and indicate in a footnote that it was most likely not in the original version of 1 John. (See: Textual Variants)

In [5:18](#), the majority of ancient manuscripts say: "the one begotten from God keeps himself." This means that the believer, whom John has just said is "having been begotten from God" in a spiritual sense, keeps himself away from sin. But many ancient manuscripts say: "the one begotten from God keeps him." This means that Jesus, who is God's actual, only-begotten Son, keeps the believer from sin. The ULT follows the reading of the majority of ancient manuscripts, but most English translations follow the other reading. This is probably because the reading with "him" seems to make a more meaningful theological statement than the other reading. Scholars are divided about this, so either choice is acceptable. You may want to follow the reading of the respected translations in your area.

1 John 5:1 (#1)

""

If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 1. Suggested heading: "Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God"

See:

1 John 5:1 (#2)

"Everyone believing that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten from God"

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: "God is the father of everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 5:1 (#3)

"Everyone believing that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten from God"

See whether in [2:29](#) you decided to explain this metaphor. Alternate translation: "God is the spiritual father of everyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:1 (#4)

"everyone loving the one begetting also loves the one having been begotten from him"

John includes this short saying to teach something that is generally true about life and that applies to the point he has been developing since [4:7](#), that genuine believers love one another as God has loved them. Use the natural form in your language for a true saying. Alternate translation: "everyone who loves a father also loves that father's child"

See: Proverbs

1 John 5:1 (#5)

"everyone loving the one begetting also loves the one having been begotten from him"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly what this means and how it applies to John's argument in this part of the letter. See the UST. Alternate translation: "everyone who loves God will also love his fellow believers, since God is their spiritual father"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:2 (#1)

"In this we know that"

This is an idiomatic expression that John uses many times in this letter. Alternate translation: "This is how we know that"

See: Idiom

1 John 5:2 (#2)

"the children of God"

Since John says in the previous verse that God is the spiritual father of believers, by **the children of God** he means other believers. Alternate translation: "our fellow believers"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:2 (#3)

"we keep his commandments"

Here, **keep** is an idiom that means "obey." Alternate translation: "we obey his commandments"

See: Idiom

1 John 5:3 (#1)

"For"

In this verse, John gives a reason why his readers should recognize that the statement he makes in the previous verse is true. Alternate translation: "After all,"

See: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

1 John 5:3 (#2)

"For this is the love of God, that we should keep his commandments"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly why this is the reason for the statement that John makes in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "And this is why: If we really do love God, we will love other believers, as he has commanded"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:3 (#3)**"the love of God"**

In this context, the phrase **the love of God** refers to believers loving God. John speaks in the previous verse of "when we love God." Alternate translation: "what it means to love God"

See: Possession

1 John 5:3 (#4)**"that we should keep his commandments"**

Here, **keep** is an idiom that means "obey." Alternate translation: "that we should obey his commandments"

See: Idiom

1 John 5:3 (#5)**"his commandments are not burdensome"**

John speaks of God's **commandments** as if they had weight but did not weigh very much. Alternate translation: "his commandments are not difficult to obey"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:4 (#1)**"For everyone who has been begotten from God triumphs over the world"**

Verses 3 and 4 might be clearer in your language if you reorder and combine them as a verse bridge. To do so, you could begin this sentence with "Since" instead of **For**; you could end it with a comma instead of a period; and you could make it the beginning of the second sentence in the previous verse. It would go before "his commandments are not burdensome." The word "And" would be left out. The result would be: "For this is the love of God, that we should keep his commandments. Since everyone who has been begotten from God overcomes the world, his commandments are not burdensome. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith."

See: Verse Bridges

1 John 5:4 (#2)**"everyone who has been begotten from God"**

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: "everyone whose father is God"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 5:4 (#3)**"everyone who has been begotten from God"**

See whether in [2:29](#) you decided to explain this metaphor. Alternate translation: "everyone whose spiritual father is God"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:4 (#4)**"triumphs over the world"**

As in [2:13](#), John is using the word translated as **triumphs over**. Here John is speaking of the believers' refusal to live by the value system of ungodly people as if the believers had defeated that system in a struggle. Alternate translation: "does not live by the value system of ungodly people"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:4 (#5)**"the world"**

See how you translated the term **world** in [2:15](#). It has a similar meaning in this verse. Alternate translation: "the value system of ungodly people"

See: Metonymy

1 John 5:4 (#6)**"the triumph that has triumphed over"**

Here, **the triumph that has triumphed over** is an emphatic construction that uses a noun and verb that come from the same root. You may be able to use a similar construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your

language may have another way of showing the emphasis.

See: Poetry

1 John 5:4 (#7)

"the triumph that has triumphed over"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **triumph** by combining it with the verb **triumphed over**. Alternate translation: "what has enabled us to triumph over"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 5:4 (#8)

"the triumph"

John is speaking of the thing that has won **the triumph** as if it were **the triumph** itself. Alternate translation: "what has won the triumph and"

See: Metonymy

1 John 5:4 (#9)

"that has triumphed over the world"

Once again John is using the word translated as **triumphed over**. He is speaking of the **faith** that he and his readers share as if it had defeated the ungodly value system in a struggle. Alternate translation: "that enables us to live differently from the value system of ungodly people"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:4 (#10)

"the world"

John is using the term **world** to mean the same thing as in the previous sentence. Alternate translation: "the value system of ungodly people"

See: Metonymy

1 John 5:4 (#11)

"our faith"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **faith** with a verb such as "believe." Alternate translation: "that we believe in Jesus"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 5:5 (#1)

"But who is the one triumphing over the world if not the one believing that Jesus is the Son of God"

John is using the question form for emphasis, to reaffirm what he said in the first sentence of the previous verse. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this question by translating his words as a statement and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: "But only someone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God triumphs over the world."

See: Rhetorical Question

1 John 5:5 (#2)

"triumphing over the world"

See how you translated **triumphs over the world** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "who does not live by the value system of ungodly people"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:5 (#3)

"the world"

See how you translated **the world** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "the value system of ungodly people"

See: Metonymy

1 John 5:5 (#4)

"the Son of God"

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 5:6 (#1)

"This is the one having come by water and blood"

John is specifying here what it means to believe fully that "Jesus is the Son of God," as he described in the previous verse. The terms **water** and **blood** are metonyms representing different important ways that the Son of God **came** to us. You may want to clarify these meanings in the text or do so in a footnote. The **blood** represents Jesus' death on the cross, when he shed his blood as the Savior of the world. The **water** could stand for: (1) Jesus' baptism. When John baptized Jesus in the water of the Jordan River, the Son of God began his ministry of reconciling the world to God. See the UST. (2) Jesus' birth. There was the breaking of the birth water when the Son of God was born as a man. Alternate translation: "This is the one who came through the water of human birth and the blood of his sacrificial death"

See: Metonymy

1 John 5:6 (#2)

"the one having come"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state more explicitly what **having come** means, as UST does.

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:6 (#3)

"by water and blood"

John is using a metaphor that pictures **water and blood** conveying Jesus to us or Jesus coming to us through water and through blood. The meaning is that Jesus became our Savior as he experienced baptism in water and submitted himself to death on the cross. Alternate translation "as our Savior, undergoing baptism and death"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:6 (#4)

"not in water alone, but in water and in blood"

If it sounds confusing in your language to say **not in water ... but in water**, you could reword this to

avoid repeating the phrase **in water**. Alternate translation: "not in water alone, but also in blood"

See: Connect — Exception Clauses

1 John 5:6 (#5)

"the Spirit is truth"

Like the statement "God is love" in [4:8](#) and [4:16](#), which describes God's character, this is a metaphor that describes the character of the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "the Spirit always tells the truth"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:7 (#1)

"For there are three who are testifying"

In this statement, John reaffirms that the three things that he mentions in verse [6](#) give us confidence that Jesus is the Son of God and came from him. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this explicitly. Alternate translation: "So there are three who testify that Jesus is God's Son and came from him"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:7 (#2)

"For there are three who are testifying"

See the discussion of textual issues at the end of the General Notes to this chapter to decide whether to follow the reading of ULT or to follow the reading of some late manuscripts and say in your translation, "For there are three who testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three who testify on earth." As the General Notes recommend, if you decide to use the longer reading, put it inside square brackets [] to indicate that it was most likely not in the original version of 1 John.

See: Textual Variants

1 John 5:7 (#3)

"who are testifying"

Here, John speaks of water and blood as though they were people who could **testify**, or speak about what they saw. If this might be confusing for your readers, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "ways that God has given us to know that he sent Jesus"

See: Personification

1 John 5:8 (#1)

"the water and the blood"

See how you decided to translate the terms **water** and **blood** in [5:6](#). Alternate translation: (1) "the baptism of Jesus and his death on the cross" or (2) "the birth of Jesus and his death on the cross"

See: Metonymy

1 John 5:8 (#2)

"the three are unto the one"

This is an idiom. If this does not communicate well in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "these three all say the same thing" or "these three all agree"

See: Idiom

1 John 5:9 (#1)

"If we receive the testimony of men"

John is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something this way if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what John is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "Since we receive the testimony of men"

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

1 John 5:9 (#2)

"we receive the testimony of men"

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "we believe people when they give testimony"

See: Idiom

1 John 5:9 (#3)

"of men"

Although the term **men** is masculine, John is using the word in a generic sense that could include both men and women. Alternate translation: "of people"

See: When Masculine Words Include Women

1 John 5:9 (#4)

"the testimony of God is greater"

The word **greater** implicitly means that the testimony of God is more reliable than human testimony since God knows everything and God always tells the truth. Alternate translation: "the testimony of God is more reliable"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:9 (#5)

"the testimony of God is greater"

John is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages in order to be complete. These words can be supplied from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "we should certainly receive the testimony of God since it is greater" or "we should certainly believe God when he gives testimony since his testimony is even more reliable"

See: Ellipsis

1 John 5:9 (#6)

"For this is the testimony of God, that he has testified about his Son"

Here, **For** could be introducing: (1) the content of God's testimony to his Son. In that case, the content itself comes in [5:11](#) after he repeats, "this is the testimony." Verse 10 talks about the importance of believing God's testimony. Alternate translation: "Now this is the testimony that God himself has given regarding his Son" (2) the reason why the testimony of God is greater than human testimony.

Alternate translation: "After all, this is God who has told us about his own Son."

See: Connecting Words and Phrases

1 John 5:9 (#7)

"this is the testimony of God"

Here, **this** could refer to: (1) God's testimony, which John says in [5:11](#). Alternate translation: "I will tell you what God's testimony is" (2) the three testimonies from [5:8](#). Alternate translation: "those things are the testimony of God"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 5:9 (#8)

"his Son"

Son is an important title for Jesus. Alternate translation: "his Son Jesus"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 5:10 (#1)

"The one believing in the Son of God has the testimony in him. The one not believing God has made him a liar because he has not believed in the testimony that God has testified about his Son"

This verse comes in between John's two introductions of God's testimony. If this is confusing in your language, you can state something explicitly that tells your reader that the testimony is still coming, as in the UST.

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:10 (#2)

"The one believing"

John is speaking of everyone who believes, not of any particular person. Alternate translation: "Any person who believes"

See: Generic Noun Phrases

1 John 5:10 (#3)

"in the Son of God"

John implicitly means that they believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Alternate translation: "that Jesus is the Son of God"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:10 (#4)

"the Son of God"

Son of God is an important title for Jesus.

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 5:10 (#5)

"has the testimony in him"

John speaks of the **testimony** as if it were an object that could be inside believers. Alternate translation: "completely accepts what God has said"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:10 (#6)

"the testimony"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **testimony** with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "what God has said"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 5:10 (#7)

"has made him a liar"

As in [1:10](#), be sure that it is clear in your translation that God would not actually be a **liar** in this case. Rather, since God has said that Jesus is his Son, a person who did not believe that would be calling God a liar. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: "is, in effect, saying that God is a liar"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:10 (#8)

"the testimony that God has testified about his Son"

"John is using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language. Alternatively, your language may have another way of saying this. Alternate translation: "what God has testified about his Son" or ""the testimony that God has given about his son"""

See: Poetry

1 John 5:11 (#1)

"God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this as a direct quotation, as in the UST.

See: Direct and Indirect Quotations

1 John 5:11 (#2)

"God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"

John speaks of **life** as if it were an object that was inside Jesus. Alternate translation: "God gave us eternal life, which people receive by believing in his Son Jesus"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:11 (#3)

"eternal life"

As in [4:9](#), **eternal life** means two things at once. It means receiving power from God in this life to live in a new way, and it also means living forever in the presence of God after death. See how you translated the expression in [4:9](#).

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:11 (#4)

"Son"

Son is an important title for Jesus. Alternate translation: "his Son Jesus"

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 5:12 (#1)

"The one having the Son has life. The one not having the Son of God does not have life"

John speaks of believers who are in a close relationship with Jesus as if Jesus were their possession. If this is confusing in your language, you can use a different expression. Alternate translation: "Anyone who is in a close relationship with the Son has life. Anyone who is not in a close relationship with the Son of God does not have life"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:12 (#2)

"has life." - "does not have life"

Since both groups of people are physically alive, John means this in a spiritual sense. As in [4:9](#), he is likely referring to what he calls "eternal life" in [3:15](#) and [5:11](#). See how you translated that term in those verses. Alternate translation: "has power from God to live as a new person now and will live forever in God's presence after death ... does not have power from God to live as a new person now and will not live forever in God's presence after death"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:12 (#3)

"the Son" - "the Son of God"

Son and **Son of God** are important titles for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 5:13 (#1)

""

If you are using section headings, you could put one here before verse 13. Suggested heading: "Eternal Life with the True God"

See:

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:13 (#2)

"these things"

Here, **these things** refers back to everything that John has written so far in the letter. Alternate translation: "all of this"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 5:13 (#3)

"the ones believing in the name of the Son of God"

As in [2:12](#), John is using the **name** of Jesus to represent who Jesus is and what he has done. Alternate translation: "who believe in the Son of God and what he has done for you"

See: Metonymy

1 John 5:13 (#4)

"of the Son of God"

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 5:13 (#5)

"that you have eternal life"

The emphasis in this verse seems to be more on the future aspect of the expression **eternal life**. Alternate translation: "that you will live forever in God's presence after you die"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:14 (#1)

"this is the confidence that we have toward him"

If it would be helpful to your readers, as in [3:21](#) you could state explicitly what this **confidence** applies to in light of what John says in the rest of this sentence. Alternate translation: "we can be confident of this as we pray to God"

1 John 5:14 (#2)

"this is the confidence that we have toward him"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **confidence** with an adjective such as "confident." Alternate translation: "we can be confident of this as we pray to God"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 5:14 (#3)

"this"

The pronoun **this** refers to what John is about to say in the rest of the verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: "I will tell you what"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 5:14 (#4)

"him," - "his" - "he listens"

The pronouns **him**, **his**, and **he** refer to God in this verse. Consider whether it might be helpful to your readers or more natural in your language to use the name "God" in one or more of these instances.

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 5:14 (#5)

"he listens to us"

As in [4:5](#), the word **listens** is an idiom. However, the meaning here is different than the meaning there, which was, "is persuaded by." Rather, here it refers to God being willing to grant what we ask. Alternate translation: "he is willing to give it to us"

See: Idiom

1 John 5:15 (#1)

"if we know that he listens to us"

John is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a possibility if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what John is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: "since we know that he listens to us"

See: Connect — Factual Conditions

1 John 5:15 (#2)

"he listens to us"

As in 5:14, the word **listens** is an idiom. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: "he is willing to give us what we ask for"

See: Idiom

1 John 5:15 (#3)

"he listens to us"

It may be helpful to repeat the condition that John specifies in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "he is inclined to give us what we ask for if it is according to his will"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:15 (#4)

"he listens" - "him"

The pronouns **he** and **him** refer to God in this verse. Consider whether it might be more natural in your language to use the name "God" for **he** and to say **him** later in the verse.

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 5:16 (#1)

"If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not toward death, he will ask"

John is describing a hypothetical situation in order to counsel his readers. UST models an alternative way of showing this.

See: Hypothetical Situations

1 John 5:16 (#2)

"his brother"

See how you translated **his brother** in 2:9. Alternate translation: "a fellow believer"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:16 (#3)

"sinning a sin"

John is using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have another way of expressing this. Alternate translation: "committing a sin"

See: Poetry

1 John 5:16 (#4)

"a sin not toward death," - "for the ones sinning not toward death." - "a sin toward death"

The word **death** in this verse and the next refers to spiritual death, that is, to eternal separation from God. (See the later note to this verse for a discussion of what kind of sin John may have in mind that would lead to that.) Alternate translation: "a sin that does not lead to eternal separation from God ... for those whose sin will not lead to eternal separation from God ... a sin that does lead to eternal separation from God"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:16 (#5)

"he will ask"

John is using a future statement to give an instruction and command. Alternate translation: "he should pray for that fellow believer"

See: Statements — Other Uses

1 John 5:16 (#6)

"he will give him life"

In this clause, the pronoun **him** refers to the believer who is sinning, and the pronoun **he** could refer to: (1) God since only God can give spiritual life. Alternate translation: "God will give life to the believer who is sinning" (2) **anyone**, that is, the person praying. In this case, John may be picturing God giving life by means of the person's prayers, as in James 5:15, 20. Alternate translation: "he will be God's instrument to give life to the believer who is sinning"

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 5:16 (#7)

"he will give him life"

The word **life** here refers to spiritual life, that is, to eternal life with God. Alternate translation: "God will make sure that the believer who is sinning is not separated from him eternally"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:16 (#8)

"There is a sin toward death; I am not saying that he should pray about that"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state more explicitly what this means. In the context of the whole letter, by **a sin toward death**, John is probably referring to behavior such as the false teachers engaged in and encouraged. As Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John explains, these false teachers claimed that it did not matter what people did in their bodies, and so they would have been committing many serious sins without feeling any conviction that their actions were wrong. This showed that they had abandoned faith in Jesus and had rejected the influence of the Holy Spirit. John implicitly corrects this false teaching again in [5:18](#). Here John is not telling the believers not to pray for some people. Rather, he is explaining that it will not do any good to pray for them since they are determined to live in a way that is contrary to faith in Jesus and the influence of the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "There are people (such as the false teachers) who are sinning in a way that shows that they have decided to be separated from God for eternity. Praying for them is not likely to make any difference"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:17 (#1)

"All unrighteousness is sin"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **unrighteousness** with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "Every time we do what God does not want, that is sin"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 5:17 (#2)

"and"

John is using the word **and** to introduce a contrasting statement that is intended to encourage the believers to whom he is writing. Alternate translation: "however,"

See: Connect — Contrast Relationship

1 John 5:17 (#3)

"there is sin not toward death"

See how you translated the word **death** in the previous verse. There and here, it refers to spiritual death. Alternate translation: "not every sin leads to eternal separation from God" or "not every sin causes a person to die spiritually"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:18 (#1)

"everyone having been begotten from God"

See how you translated the similar expression in [2:29](#). Alternate translation: "everyone whose father is God"

See: Active or Passive

1 John 5:18 (#2)

"everyone having been begotten from God"

See whether in [2:29](#) you decided to explain this metaphor. Alternate translation: "everyone whose spiritual father is God"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:18 (#3)

"does not sin"

See how you translated this expression in [3:6](#) and see the discussion of "sin" in Part 3 of the Introduction to 1 John. Alternate translation: "does not sin wantonly and continually"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:18 (#4)

"the one begotten from God keeps himself"

Many ancient manuscripts read "the one begotten from God keeps himself." The ULT follows that reading. In this case, **the one begotten from God** refers to the believer, just as the earlier phrase, **everyone having been begotten from God**, refers to the believer. In this reading, the believer guards himself from sin. Other ancient manuscripts read "the one begotten from God keeps him." In this case, **the one begotten from God** refers to Jesus, who guards the believer from sin. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the reading that it uses. See the notes in the introduction to this chapter.

See: Textual Variants

1 John 5:18 (#5)

"the evil one"

As in [2:13](#), John is using the adjective **evil** as a noun in order to indicate a specific being. ULT adds **one** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "the one who is evil"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 5:18 (#6)

"the evil one"

John is speaking of the devil by association with the way that he is **evil**. Alternate translation: "the devil"

See: Metonymy

1 John 5:18 (#7)

"does not touch him"

This is an idiom. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: "cannot hurt him"

See: Idiom

1 John 5:19 (#1)

"we are from God"

See how you translated the similar expression in [4:4](#). Alternate translation: "we are sharing life with God" or "we are living in relationship with God"

See: Idiom

1 John 5:19 (#2)

"the whole world"

John uses the term **world** in various ways in this letter. In this instance, it likely refers both to the people living in the **world** who do not honor God and to their value system. Alternate translation: "every ungodly person along with the way that he thinks"

See: Metonymy

1 John 5:19 (#3)

"lies in the evil one"

The expression **lies in** represents being controlled by someone or something. Alternate translation: "is controlled by the evil one" or "is controlled by evil influences"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:19 (#4)

"the evil one"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the abstract noun **evil** by stating the

meaning behind it with an equivalent expression. This could mean that: (1) John may be speaking of the devil, as in [2:13](#). Alternate translation: "the devil" (2) John may be speaking of evil influences. Alternate translation: "evil influences"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 5:20 (#1)

"the Son of God"

Son of God is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 5:20 (#2)

"has come"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state more explicitly what this means, as you may have done in [5:6](#). Alternate translation: "has come to earth from God"

See: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

1 John 5:20 (#3)

"has given us understanding"

If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the idea behind the abstract noun **understanding** with a verb such as "understand." Alternate translation: "has enabled us to understand"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 5:20 (#4)

"has given us understanding"

If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state explicitly what Jesus has enabled us to understand. Alternate translation: "has enabled us to understand the truth" or "has enabled us to understand the truth about God"

See: Abstract Nouns

1 John 5:20 (#5)

"the True One." - "the True One"

John is using the adjective **True** as a noun in order to indicate a specific being. ULT adds **One** to show this. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you could translate this with an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: "the One who is true ... the One who is true"

See: Nominal Adjectives

1 John 5:20 (#6)

"the True One." - "the True One"

John is speaking of God by association with the way that he is **True**. This could mean: (1) The God who is genuine, in contrast to false gods. Alternate translation: "the real God ... the real God" (2) The God who is true in all that he says and does. Alternate translation: "God, who always tells the truth and does what he says he will do ... God, who always tells the truth and does what he says he will do"

See: Metonymy

1 John 5:20 (#7)

"we are in the True One, in his Son Jesus Christ"

As in [2:5](#), John is speaking as if believers could be inside of God and Jesus. This expression describes having a close relationship with God and Jesus. Alternate translation: "we have a close relationship with the true God, with his Son Jesus Christ"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:20 (#8)

"we are in the True One, in his Son Jesus Christ"

This second occurrence of **the True One** could refer to: (1) Jesus, as the rest of the clause makes clear. In this case, John is saying that both God and Jesus are the true God, and we are in both. See the UST. (2) God, just as the first occurrence of **the True One** refers to God. In this case, John is saying that we are in God because of being in Jesus. Alternate translation: "we are in the True One through being in Jesus Christ, his Son"

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:20 (#9)

"**his Son**"

Son is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

See: Translating Son and Father

1 John 5:20 (#10)

"**This is the true God**"

This could refer either to (1) Jesus, who was mentioned just before, or (2) God, who was mentioned earlier.

See: Pronouns — When to Use Them

1 John 5:20 (#11)

"**the true God and eternal life**"

John is expressing a single idea by using two noun phrases connected with **and**. The phrase **eternal life** describes a quality of **the true God**, that he gives eternal life. Alternate translation: "the true God, who gives eternal life"

See: Hendiadys

1 John 5:20 (#12)

"**eternal life**"

As in [4:9](#), **eternal life** means both receiving power from God in this life to live in a new way and living forever in the presence of God after death. See how you translated the expression **eternal life** there.

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:21 (#2)

"**keep yourselves from**"

Here, **keep yourselves from** is an idiom that means "avoid." If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use an idiom from your language that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: "have nothing to do with" or "stay away from"

See: Idiom

1 John 5:21 (#3)

"**the idols**"

Here, **idols** could mean: (1) figurative idols, that is, anything that might take the place of the real God in a person's life. Alternate translation: "anything that might take the place of God in your life" (2) literal idols, that is, statues that were worshiped as if they embodied a god.

See: Metaphor

1 John 5:21 (#1)

"**Little children**"

See how you translated **children** in [2:1](#). Alternate translation: "You dear believers who are under my care"

See: Metaphor