

Spiritual Terms Evaluation—WALKTHROUGH

Intro: This resource will help translators evaluate the use of spiritual terms throughout their whole New Testament. In Step 7 of MAST, translators chose which key words and terms to check for each chapter. This evaluation provides an added layer for checking key terms. The words have been chosen in advance, and the evaluation will span many parts of the New Testament instead of only a chapter. This can confirm that the translation of spiritual terms has been consistent and clear.

Ask: What kinds of terms do you think would be helpful to check across the New Testament?

Explain that these terms are ones that have an abstract or spiritual meaning. They are based on Greek words that may have various meanings. They may even have a symbolic meaning that could be missed if not fully understood. Share some examples:

1. In the New Testament, the word “tree” is used in several places to mean “cross” and to refer to the death of Jesus on the cross. (1 Peter 2:24)
2. In the New Testament, the word “adoption” is used to explain the way God brings believers into his family. (Ephesians 1:5)
3. In the New Testament, the word “flesh” is sometimes used to mean humanity. It is sometimes used to mean carcasses even of animals. It is sometimes used to mean the tendency or desire in humans to do evil. These different meanings make it difficult (and sometimes incorrect) to use the same word or phrase to translate it every time. (Matthew 16:17, 1 Corinthians 15:39, Romans 8:13)

Ask: Why do you think this resource is designed to check these words across the whole New Testament?

Explain that since a team worked together to translate the whole New Testament, different people have worked on different parts. Up until this point, the team has done checks on verses, chapters, and books, but not an overall review that covers the way terms are used across many books. This evaluation will help the translation team to see if individual translators used different terms or even spelled the same terms differently, so they can address these differences and standardize the terms as needed.

Explain:

- To use the Spiritual Terms Evaluation Tool, you will need a team of people working together. It is recommended for the translation team to work together on this (although they can break out into groups of 2 to 4 and split up the work).
- The resource will be available through RDDs and on DOC. For each term listed, one or more definitions will be given. Then several verses (up to 15) will be shown, with the gateway language for that verse in one column and the heart language for that verse in the other column.
- The team will read each verse in the list and evaluate the spiritual term as it is used in the verse. If the term has multiple meanings, the team should determine the intended meaning in each verse and confirm that the correct translation has been used. All verses with the same meaning of the term should have a similar/same translation of the term.
- If they find anything that causes concern, the team should work together on any necessary changes.
 - They should refer first to the definitions of the word and consider what will be most easily understood. If they have internet access, they can look at definitions for the Strong's numbers for the word.
 - They may use other resources such as Translation Notes or Greek Words for Translators.
 - They may consult spiritual leaders in their community.

The team should work through each term on the list. The resource's selection of verses for each word is a sample. It is not complete or exhaustive. If the team finds inconsistency with any term, they can access an exhaustive list of verse references to check every verse where that term appears in the New Testament. (This list is available through RDDs.)

Exercise

Using the sample portion of the resource, check the verses in a common translation in your language. Discuss the following: Did the translation maintain consistency across verses? Did the chosen word/phrase represent the correct meaning of the word for that verse? If you were the translator, what changes would you make?

Confirm: Conducting a Spiritual Terms Evaluation is an important way to maintain consistency and clarity throughout the translation.

Note to Trainers in Gateway Languages: For the exercise, contact your leader to find out if the Spiritual Terms Evaluation Tool is available in your language. If it is, print out the first four pages to use for the exercise.