

1 John 4:16 – RVR95 vs NVI

Complete Study Conversation Record (Vocabulary, Grammar, Theology, Cross-linguistic)

1. Initial Comparison: RVR95 vs NVI (Spanish)

Texts

RVR95 (Reina-Valera 1995):

> Y nosotros hemos conocido y creído el amor que Dios tiene para con nosotros. Dios es amor, y el que permanece en amor permanece en Dios y Dios en él.

NVI (Nueva Versión Internacional):

> Y nosotros hemos llegado a saber y creer que Dios nos ama. Dios es amor. El que permanece en amor, en Dios permanece y Dios en él.

2. Vocabulary Comparison: conocer vs saber

conocer

- Experiential, relational knowledge
- Knowing through encounter, relationship, lived experience
- Closely reflects Greek γινώσκω (ginōskō)
- Common in biblical and theological contexts for “knowing God”

In RVR95:

- hemos conocido ... el amor
 - Emphasis: believers have **experienced** God's love
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saber

- Factual, propositional knowledge
- Knowing information or recognizing a truth
- Common in everyday modern Spanish

In NVI:

- hemos llegado a saber que Dios nos ama
 - Emphasis: believers have **come to recognize as true** that God loves them
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Key Insight

- RVR95 focuses on **relational knowledge**
 - NVI focuses on **recognized truth**
 - Both are faithful, but they highlight different dimensions of knowing
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3. Grammar Comparison

RVR95

- Two perfect verbs: hemos conocido y creído
- Direct object noun phrase: el amor
- Preserves Greek syntax and object focus
- Formal-equivalence translation philosophy

NVI

- Periphrastic construction: hemos llegado a saber
 - Content clause: que Dios nos ama
 - Adds a sense of process (“arriving at knowledge”)
 - Dynamic-equivalence translation philosophy
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4. Theological Nuance

RVR95

- Love treated as a **theological reality**
- Emphasizes covenantal, lived relationship
- Aligns strongly with Johannine theology of “knowing God”

NVI

- Love expressed as a **personal assurance**
- Emphasizes clarity and accessibility for modern readers
- The relational aspect is present but implicit

Shared theology:

- God's essence = love
 - Abiding in love = abiding in God
 - Mutual indwelling between God and believer
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5. English Parallels

English lacks two separate verbs, but uses constructions:

Fact-based (saber)

- I know that God loves me.
- I realize that God loves me.

Relational / experiential (conocer)

- I know God.
- I have come to know God's love.
- I have experienced God's love.

Key English tool:

> “come to know”

6. Chinese Vocabulary Comparison

知道 (zhīdào)

- Factual knowledge
- Information-based
- Equivalent to **saber**

Example:

- 我知道神爱我
I know that God loves me.

認識 / 认识 (rènshí)

- Relational, experiential knowledge
- Standard biblical term for “knowing God”
- Equivalent to **conocer**

Example:

- 我認識神

I know God.

Chinese Bible usage:

- Consistently prefers 認識 in 1 John 4:16

Additional Chinese Terms

- 明白 – intellectual understanding (not relational enough)
 - 體會 / 体会 – deep experience (used more in commentary)
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7. Japanese Vocabulary Comparison

知る / 知っている

- Knowing facts or being aware
- Can refer to people, but often shallow acquaintance
- Closest to **saber**

Example:

- 神が私を愛していると知っている

分かる

- To understand
 - Cognitive comprehension, not relational
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体験する

- To experience deeply
 - Strong experiential meaning
 - Rarely used in Bible translations, common in explanation
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Japanese Bible Strategy

- Relational meaning often carried by **context**, not verb choice
- Heavy use of:
 - 信じる (believe)

- 住む / とどまる (abide, remain)

Key shift:

- From knowing → believing → abiding

8. Cross-linguistic Mapping

Meaning	Spanish	English	Chinese	Japanese
Fact knowledge	saber	know that	知道	知っている
Relational knowing	conocer	know / come to know	認識	(contextual 知る)
Experiential emphasis	conocer pro- fundamente	experience	體會	体験する
Covenant knowing	conocer a Dios	know God	認識神	神を知る (文脈)

9. Core Johannine Insight

Across languages, 1 John 4:16 consistently moves through:

Knowing → Believing → Abiding

The verse is not primarily about information,
but about **living in a relationship defined by divine love.**

End of full conversation record.