Gender-neutralization in Bible Translation and its Debate

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Abstract: The feminist concern over gender politics in language has inspired a new practice in Bible translation into English. The practice focuses on making translation gender-neutral by systematically eliminating masculine terms that are used to express general truths. Among other things, the appropriateness and faithfulness of gender-neutral translation arouse great controversy.

Key words: Bible; translation; masculine terms; gender-neutral language
he/him/his/himself, and/or any other person, people, mankind, human being, man, woman, child, children, son and daughter, father(s), mother(s), forefather(s), foremother(s), brother(s), brotherhood (huioi), son(s), daughter(s), father(s), mother(s), forefather(s), foremother(s), ancestor(s), brother(s), father and sister, someone, believer(s), son(s), child, children, son and daughter, father(s), mother(s), forefather(s), foremother(s).

NIV: A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke.

TNIV: A wise child heeds a parent’s instruction, but a mocker does not respond to rebukes.

1 Moreover, the things that are not alike in themselves do not make up one family. . . .

NRSV: . . .

16;9: ‘A man’s mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”

NCV: People may make plans in their minds, but the Lord decides what they will do, and the Lord determines your steps.

CEV: We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.

RSV: Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. (Gen. 5:2)

NRSV: Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them “Humankind” when they were created. (Gen. 5:2)
“Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them.”

RSV: Jesus answered him, “If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

NRSV: Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them.”


