

The Use of “Should” and “Must” in the Translation of the New Testament

We recommend that the HCSB reduce the usage of *should* and *must* for the translation of imperatives and imperative equivalent constructions in passages where the life of sanctification is encouraged, especially reducing the occurrences of *must*. Specifically, we recommend that *must* be eliminated from passages with first person exhortations. We recommend that second person imperatives generally be translated with English second person imperatives.

What is the right way to translate portions of the Scripture that contain imperatives or exhortations to live a new life? In the WELS, the HCSB has come under criticism for a tendency to overuse words like *should*, *must* and *ought to* in these contexts.¹ Certainly, there are times when the Scriptures speak that way and we wouldn't want B & H to avoid language that God uses. But we are also concerned about legalism creeping into our thinking through the choices made in translating those portions of Scripture which deal with the new life God calls us to lead.

Why do God's people strive to live a new and holy life? It is not because we are motivated by God's law. We don't live in slavish fear or act under compulsion by God's law. We don't obey because we imagine that God is up in heaven just waiting for the chance to slap his children down because they have not obeyed. Likewise, we don't obey so that we can be like the Pharisee in Luke 18 who thanked God that he wasn't like the tax collector because he fasted twice a week and gave a tenth of all that he owned. Jesus said that the tax collector who asked the Lord for mercy, not the Pharisee, went home justified.

We fear that words like *must* and *should* can have a different connotation in human minds and hearts than simple imperatives. We recognize that the English modal system is extensive and complicated, with many subtleties of implication. We can only sympathize with the Oversight Committee as it struggles to translate a daunting variety of Greek constructions into something that is faithful to the original and that comes close to capturing the meaning in English. Some people might call that a herculean task.

Our primary concern is with sanctification contexts.

We are not concerned with all uses of *should* or *must*. Some scholars speak of a *deontic* use of these terms. Deontic *should* and *must* express some kind of obligation. It may be rooted in God's moral will or some human morality or laws passed by governments or even the desires of one's conversation partner (“You should try this dessert—it's delicious!”). There are several other usages which translators naturally employ:

- epistemic *should* and *must*, which indicate that a statement is based on inferential knowledge (“He should be in Chicago by now since he started driving three hours ago”; “If he's not at home, he must be at the office”);
- putative *should*, used sometimes to speak tentatively or about a potential situation (“I am surprised that you should want to help him”; “If our efforts should fail, we could seek help from others”);
- dynamic *must*, which refers to a necessity arising from natural forces (“The cows must eat or die”).

No doubt there are still other varieties. Our concern is deontic *should* and *must*.

¹ In reality, the HCSB only seems to use *ought to* as a direct translation of words like ὀφείλω and δεῖ so we will focus on *should* and *must*.

Many of our pastors fear that *must* and *should* tend to provoke feelings of guilt. (“We should be doing this, but we’re not.” “We must do this!”). Of course, the impact of *should* is different from that of *must*. Our sense is that *should* is a bit more likely to imply an unfulfilled obligation while *must* is more likely to come across as overbearing or threatening. We believe that when the Bible addresses believers and calls us to lead a new and holy life, it is calling us to joyfully make changes, not pressuring us to comply because we feel guilty. So we would prefer to see simple commands rather than pressure words.

Certainly, this is a complicated subject and to a degree, it is a question of tone. We believe that in a context where *should* is clearly deontic and not epistemic, it normally implies non-fulfilment when it is followed by *be* and a present participle (“You should be doing your homework”) or by *have* and a past participle (“You should have finished your work before leaving”). Our analysis of the usage of *should* in the current edition of the HCSB shows that you have not fallen into this trap. On those rare occasions (like Luke 11:42, Matthew 23:23 and 25:27) where you do employ this type of construction, it seems to fit well with the intent and the context of the passages.

From a strictly grammatical point of view, it is probably true that apart from those special combinations, there is no automatic implication of non-fulfilment in the grammatical form of a *should*-utterance, though the context may give rise to such an implication. But we are sensitive to the clearly expressed concern among our membership. It’s possible that Americans in different geographical areas and with different traditional ways of speaking of their faith may be more or less sensitive to these issues. But they have certainly been expressed among us, and not just in regard to the HCSB. The concern was raised as early as 1983 in regard to the NIV.

We are not criticizing every choice of *should* or *must*, even of an imperative. But we did compare how often the HCSB chose to use each of these words in the New Testament with the choices made by the 1984 and the 2011 editions of the NIV and by the ESV. While statistics all by themselves do not come close to telling the full story, we did find the results illuminating:

Comparison of uses of should, must and ought in NT (using a Logos Bible Software search)								
	<i>should</i>		<i>must</i>		<i>ought</i>		Totals	
	occurrences	verses	occurrences	verses	occurrences	verses	occurrences	verses
NIV 84	155	143	159	148	38	37	352	328
NIV 2011	152	141	153	141	35	34	340	316
ESV	141	133	118	114	44	44	303	291
<i>HCSB</i>	225	197	196	180	10	10	431	387

We have examined all the New Testament passages in which the HCSB used *should*, *must* or *ought* to. There are a great many times when these passages do not present any difficulty for us, such as:

- translating the Greek word δεῖ or an equivalent verb (“These things you should have done” Luke 11:42);
- deliberative questions (“What should I do?” Luke 12:17);
- conditional sentences (“if the salt should lose its saltiness” Matthew 5:13);
- purpose or result clauses where *may* or *might* would be confusing, especially in a secondary sequence of tenses (“that we should be called God’s children” 1 John 3:1);

- translations of Old Testament citations in which a Greek simple present or future has been used to represent a Hebrew imperfect used as an imperative (Acts 23:5 “For it is written, **You must not speak evil of a ruler of your people.**”);²
- indirect commands and similar expressions (Luke 2:1 “a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered.”).

In general, we are concerned about passages where

- a third person imperative could be just as well translated as *let* or using an expression like *is to*;
- a first person imperative/cohortative subjunctive could be translated with *let me* or *let us*;
- a simple second person imperative fits well, or a second person indicative that has an imperative or a modal sense;
- third person indicatives have a modal sense;
- other constructions are used which are equivalent to an imperative in the context (principally infinitives, nominal sentences and participles).

A list of specific verses that we would like to see reviewed follows in the Appendix. A quick scan of the material there will show that most of the instances we are concerned with occur in the epistles or in contexts where Jesus is giving instructions to his disciples that apply to all Christians. This is not surprising. Our concern is how the Scriptures encourage the Christian life. We do not want to see translations adopted that would mitigate the nature of these passages as commands. Christ and the New Testament do preach the law as a guide to what the Christian life is and how it reflects the glory of God. But it shouldn't sound like a guilt trip or wheedling. Wherever possible, let God's commands have the same tone in English as they do in Greek.

1) Third Person Imperatives. We recommend that third person imperatives often be translated with a construction like *is to/are to* or with a *let* construction.

In his book *Navigating the Horizons in Bible Translation*, Dr. E. Ray Clendenen argues for translating the Greek third person imperative with a construction like *must*, *should*, or *ought to* (pp. 143-145). He argues, “The problem with using ‘let him’ is that this English construction is grammatically not a command directed to a third person. Rather, it is a command to the addressee that he *permit* the third person to do something” (emphasis in the original). He goes on to argue that *must/should/ought to* are simply more accurate translations of the third person imperative form.

We respectfully disagree with this analysis. Using *let him* as an imperative is well established in English grammar. Of course, the permissive sense of *let* does exist. But despite the similar appearance of the permissive and the imperative *let*, most English speakers can tell the difference without serious difficulty. The distinct differences become apparent when the negative is added: “Don't let him go” features the permissive *let* whereas “Let him not go” features the imperative *let*. In point of fact, the HCSB occasionally uses *let* in an imperative sense—for example, 1 Timothy 4:12 begins “Let no one despise your youth.” Mark 13:14 says, “Let the reader understand.”

Even the idea that *should* and *must* are simply more natural ways of rendering imperatives seems to us to be a questionable proposition. One study³ found that most native speakers of American English

² Strictly speaking, even here *must* is not a literal translation. But we can see why the HCSB might choose to represent Old Testament commands with a more forceful tone than the evangelical admonitions of the New Testament.

reserve *must* for expressing inference (“You must have the wrong number” or “John must have been joking when he said that!”)—the epistemic use. It does not seem at all clear to us that 21st century American English usage would find *should* or especially *must* to be a more clear way of rendering an imperative.

While *should*- and *must*-phrases have something in common with English imperatives, they are not simply interchangeable. They *do* usually communicate the speaker’s will that the grammatical subject do something (active voice) or receive/experience/undergo some action (passive voice). But expressions with *should* and *must* include an explicit subject. Even more significantly, the simple imperative in English (“Go to the store”) focuses attention on the desired action; but deontic *should* and *must* normally straddle a fence between communicating a desired action and stating the fact of obligation, with (we suspect) an emphasis on the latter. Notice that *should*- and *must*-sentences can appear after *because* to give a reason, but if we try to substitute an imperative it results in a sentence that most English speakers would consider to be unacceptably disjointed:

“I keep telling you to get more sleep because you should take better care of your health.”
“I keep telling you to get more sleep because take better care of your health.”

“You won’t tell that story on the witness stand because you must not perjure yourself.”
“You won’t tell that story on the witness stand because do not perjure yourself.”

Does that semantic difference make *should* and *must* less suited than simple imperatives and *let*-imperatives for the translation of Greek imperatives in the NT? The apostles sometimes express obligation directly using forms of δεῖ and ὀφείλω and similar language. The fact that we are obligated is undeniable, but the apostles *don’t* constantly bring up that obligation when they are encouraging sanctified living. Where Christians have reached a mature recognition of their status before God, it may be counterproductive to harp on the fact of obligation. (Similarly, it is true that Christians do not achieve perfection in their efforts to live God-pleasing lives, but the apostles normally do not include in their preaching of evangelical admonition an explicit reminder that Christians are unable to achieve perfection; doing so would tend to throw cold water on hearts that have been warmed by the gospel and are eager to serve God.)

The apostles at times also refer explicitly to God’s will for our sanctified lives, but the point is not to coerce the new man; depending on the context, the will of God could be mentioned either as a club for the old Adam or as a purely attractive reminder. Like children who want to know what Dad wants for Christmas, Christians, with their inner being reborn and renewed, are delighted to hear what God wants. The father of a family is in fact the head of the family, and the family members are in fact obligated to obey him. But it would be a strange father who would constantly remind his maturing children, “You are obligated to obey me when I tell you to help your mother with the laundry” instead of simply saying, “Help your mother with the laundry.” The use of *should* and *must* is not as odd as that scenario, but it seems to be a step in that direction. We fear that a constant harping on the fact of obligation—you must, you must, you should, you should—strikes a different, less attractive note than simple imperatives (to say nothing of the participles Paul sometimes strings together instead of even using imperatives).

We tend to agree with those scholars who classify *must* and *is to* as strong deontic modals and *should* as a medium level one. A test case is the Ten Commandments. At Bible Gateway a number of English versions say, “You must not kill” and at least one says, “You are not to kill.” Many versions say, “Thou

³ Cited in *The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher’s Course*, Marianne Celce-Murcia and Diane Larsen-Freeman, Heinle & Heinle, 1999, p. 150.

shalt not kill” or “You shall not kill” or “Do not kill” or “Never kill.” But not a single version has “You should not kill.” *Should* is simply too weak for that kind of moral necessity. By the same token, one can encourage a friend by saying, “You should try this dessert!” but we wouldn't regard “You are to try this dessert” as an equivalent expression. It is too strong for that.

We think *is to/are to* is well suited to a number of deontic contexts in the NT. Granted, it is not an exact equivalent of an imperative; like *should* and *must*, it expresses the fact of obligation and can be used after *because* to give a reason. But it does not assert the fact of obligation as glaringly as *should* or *must*. And yet it is not weak like a merely suggestive or preferential *should*, nor overbearing the way *must* can seem to be overbearing in some contexts. No doubt *is to* and *are to* are more likely to become wearisome and artificial-sounding through repetition than a string of simple imperative forms would be, but *should* and *must* can wear out their welcome, too.

We would share a concern for mechanically translating all third person imperatives in such a way that the text becomes tedious or unreadable. But we believe that in general, constructions using *let* or *is to* come closer to the meaning of the Greek third person imperative. We are concerned that translating verses like Matthew 11:15, “Anyone who has ears should listen,” changes the impact of the grammatical construction so that it takes on an air of legalism.

2) First Person Imperatives. We recommend that first person imperatives generally be translated with a hortatory/cohortative construction like *let me/let us*.

Navigating the Horizons focuses primarily on the third person imperative for this discussion. However, our concern is broader. First person imperatives also tend to be translated in the HCSB with *should* or especially *must*. Presumably, the translators of the HCSB took a similar position that *let us* or *let me* conveys primarily a permissive meaning. We would argue again that this construction can have a permissive or an imperative meaning. The permissive is especially true with a first person singular (“let me do that” “let me go”). But the plural functions differently in English, especially when it is used in the contracted form: “Since we know what God wants, let's do it!” Would anyone see that as asking permission to do it? Or would we understand that it is a command or an exhortation? We would argue that the average English speaker would see this as a command or an exhortation.

In the first person, the change in tone is particularly clear and we find the use of *must* in these contexts to be particularly disturbing. The HCSB translates Hebrew 10:23-25 as “Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, ... And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works, not staying away from our worship meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” We heartily approve of this translation. It is a wonderful exhortation to faithful participation in the life of the church. But we would contrast Philippians 3:15, which reads in the HCSB “Therefore, all who are mature should think this way.” The Greek is, however, a first person subjunctive Ὅσοι οὖν τέλειοι, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν. In addition to better preserving the first person in the finite verb, doesn't a translation like “Therefore, let all of us who are mature think this way” better reflect the fact that this verse is an exhortation rather than a guilt trip or a subtle form of coercion?

Even if *let*-imperatives strike some people as somewhat archaic and elevated, we would encourage the Oversight Committee to consider using them more often. We see some evidence that you see our point. At first, it seemed that instances of hortatory *let us* instead of *let's* in the HCSB were simply evidence of inattention and inconsistency since elsewhere the HCSB uses contractions where they sound natural. But now we suspect that translators may have steered away from expressing moral exhortations

with *let's* because it is often used in current English for suggesting courses of action of no consequence (“Let’s order a pizza”). *Let us* is more formal, but it has the advantage of connoting seriousness of purpose, too: “Let us go to the house of the Lord.” We hope that a translation team that sees value in preserving older, elevated sentence structure in the Lord’s Prayer and the construction *let us* in a number of exhortations could be persuaded that *let*-imperatives are not too archaic and elevated for recurring use in a Bible translation and that they may have some value where there is no danger of confusion with *let* as a request for permission.

3) Second Person Imperatives. We recommend that the primary way of translating second person Greek imperatives be with a simple second person English imperative.

The HCSB has a tendency to translate second person imperatives with a *should/must* construction. We find this to be particularly difficult to understand, since it does not reflect the concern of optimal equivalency that “form cannot always be neatly separated from meaning and *should not be changed* ... unless comprehension demands it” (*Introduction* – emphasis ours). In addition, we feel that a simple imperative is less likely to be interpreted in a guilt laden or legalistically motivated manner. Colossians 3:8 reads “but now you must put away all the following” instead of simply “put away the following.” That seems to add a measure of “pressure.” 1 Corinthians 16:1 reads “you should do the same as I instructed the Galatian churches” instead of “do the same as I instructed the Galatian churches.” The addition of “should” sounds like Paul could be berating them for failing to fulfill a known command, rather than giving instructions on living a joyful Christian life.

A related issue is second person indicatives that have a modal sense, functioning as an imperative. These are relatively few in number, yet they echo the concern above. Luke 17:4 reads “you must forgive him” (ἀφήσεις αὐτόν) when something like “you are to forgive him” would probably convey a command with less of an implied rebuke.

4) Third Person indicatives. When third person indicatives are used in a deontic construction, we recommend that the HCSB generally use a construction like *is to/are to*.

The HCSB translates a number of third person indicatives with a *should/must* construction. In most cases, this seems to be when the verb has a clear modal idea. Quite often, the original Greek is a future tense (Matthew 20:26,27 ἔσται is translated as “must be” three times). We don’t disagree with every instance, (for instance, 1 John 5:16) but many of the concerns we raised before do come into play here.

5) Other Imperative Equivalent Constructions. In general, we would prefer to see the HCSB stick closer to more natural imperative constructions when Greek uses alternate grammatical constructions in a clear imperative sense.

The Greek New Testament uses a variety of other grammatical constructions to convey an imperative idea. In many cases, the HCSB seems to default to a *should/must* construction instead of a simple imperative. Rather than attempt to list every infinitive, participle or nominal sentence construction, we would acknowledge that many of them are intended to be imperative in nature. But we again question whether a consistent *should* or *must* approach best conveys that idea.

Appendix – Passages Using Should or Must in an Imperative Sense

It is not our intention to say that every single passage in these charts must be changed. But we would like to see them all reviewed. We would like to see the HCSB avoid *should* and especially *must* as its default translation for imperative constructions. In our view, they should be relegated to the category of legitimate choices to preserve variety and for specific contexts where they seem to work better. In the charts that follow, the italicized entries are passages that strike us as especially in need of changing.

1) Third Person Imperatives

Reference	Greek phrase	HCSB translation	Suggested Revision (context provided in parentheses)
Matthew 11:15; 13:9; 13:43	ὁ ἔχων ὄτα ἀκουέτω	Anyone who has ears should listen!	Let anyone who has ears to hear listen!
Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34	ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι	he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.	let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me
Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9	ἄνθρωπος μὴ χωριζέτω	man must not separate.	man is not to separate
Mark 4:9	Ὃς ἔχει ὄτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω	Anyone who has ears to hear should listen!	Let anyone who has ears to hear listen!
Mark 4:23	εἴ τις ἔχει ὄτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω	If anyone has ears to hear, he should listen!	If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen!
Luke 3:11	Ὁ ἔχων δύο χιτῶνας μεταδότω	The one who has two shirts must share	The one who has two shirts is to share
Luke 3:11	ὁ ἔχων βρώματα ὁμοίως ποιεῖτω	the one who has food must do the same	the one who has food is to do the same
Luke 9:23	ἀρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι	he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.	let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me
Luke 14:35	ὁ ἔχων ὄτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω	Anyone who has ears to hear should listen!	Let anyone who has ears to hear listen!
Luke 16:29	ἀκουσάτωσαν αὐτῶν	they should listen to them	(They have Moses and the prophets;) let them listen to them
John 7:37	ἐρχέσθω πρὸς με καὶ πινέτω	he should come to Me and drink	let him come to me and drink
John 12:26	ἐμοὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω	<i>he must follow Me</i>	<i>let him follow me</i>
John 14:1	Μὴ ταρασσέσθω ὑμῶν ἡ καρδία	<i>Your heart must not be troubled</i>	<i>Let your heart not be troubled</i>
John 14:27	μὴ ταρασσέσθω ὑμῶν ἡ καρδία μηδὲ δειλιάτω	<i>Your heart must not be troubled or fearful</i>	<i>Let your heart not be troubled or fearful</i>

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From the WELS Translation Liaison Committee
May 2014*

Romans 3:4	γινέσθω δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἀληθής	God must be true	Let God be true
Romans 13:1	Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω	Everyone must submit to the governing authorities	Everyone is to submit himself to the governing authorities
Romans 14:3	ὁ ἐσθίων τὸν μὴ ἐσθίοντα μὴ ἐξουθενεῖτω	One who eats must not look down on one who does not eat	One who eats is not to look down on one who does not eat
Romans 14:3	ὁ δὲ μὴ ἐσθίων τὸν ἐσθίοντα μὴ κρινέτω	and one who does not eat must not criticize one who does	and one who does not eat is not to criticize one who does
Romans 14:5	ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ νοῦ πληροφορεῖσθω	Each one must be fully convinced in his own mind.	Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind
Romans 15:2	ἕκαστος ἡμῶν τῷ πλησίον ἀρεσκέτω	Each one of us must please his neighbor	Each one of us is to please his neighbor (for his good, to build him up.)
<i>Romans 15:11</i>	<i>καὶ ἐπαινεσάτωσαν αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ λαοί</i>	<i>all the peoples should praise Him!</i>	<i>let all the people praise Him!</i>
1 Corinthians 1:31	Ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω	The one who boasts must boast in the Lord.	Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord
1 Corinthians 3:10	ἕκαστος δὲ βλέπετω πῶς ἐποικοδομεῖ.	But each one must be careful how he builds on it	But each one is to be careful how he builds on it
1 Corinthians 3:18	Μηδεὶς ἑαυτὸν ἐξαπατάτω	No one should deceive himself	Let no one deceive himself
1 Corinthians 4:1	Οὕτως ἡμᾶς λογιζέσθω ἄνθρωπος	A person should consider us	Let a person consider us
1 Corinthians 3:18	μωρὸς γενέσθω	he must become foolish	let him become a fool
1 Corinthians 3:21	ὥστε μηδεὶς καυχάσθω	So no one should boast	So let no one boast
1 Corinthians 7:3	τῇ γυναικὶ ὁ ἀνὴρ τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἀποδιδότω	A husband should fulfill his marital responsibility to his wife,	A husband is to fulfill his marital duty to his wife
1 Corinthians 7:11	μενέτω ἄγαμος ἢ τῷ ἀνδρὶ καταλλαγῆτω	she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband	she is to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband
1 Corinthians 7:12	μὴ ἀφίετω αὐτήν	he must not leave her	he is not to leave her
1 Corinthians 7:13	μὴ ἀφίετω τὸν ἄνδρα	she must not leave her husband.	she is not to leave her husband
1 Corinthians 7:17	οὕτως περιπατεῖτω	each one must live his life	let each one live his life (in the situation the Lord assigned)

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1 Corinthians 7:20	ἐν ταύτῃ μενέτω	Each person should remain	Each person is to remain
1 Corinthians 7:21	μή σοι μελέτω	It should not be a concern to you	Don't let it concern you
1 Corinthians 7:24	ἕκαστος ... ἐν τούτῳ μενέτω παρὰ θεῶ	each person should remain	Each person is to remain
1 Corinthians 10:12	ὥστε ὁ δοκῶν ἐστάναι βλεπέτω μὴ πέση	So, whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to fall	So, whoever thinks he stands, let him be careful not to fall
1 Corinthians 10:24	μηδεὶς τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ζητεῖτω	No one should seek his own good	No one is to seek his own good
1 Corinthians 11:6	καὶ κειράσθω	her hair should be cut off.	she is to cut her hair <i>or</i> she is to have her hair cut off [middle voice imperative]
1 Corinthians 11:6	κατακαλυπτέσθω	she should be covered	let her be covered
1 Corinthians 11:28	δοκιμαζέτω δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἑαυτὸν	So a man should examine himself	Let a man examine himself or A man is to examine himself
1 Corinthians 11:28	οὕτως ἐκ τοῦ ἄρτου ἐσθιέτω καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου πινέτω	in this way he should eat the bread and drink from the cup	in this way let him eat the bread and drink from the cup
1 Corinthians 14:13	ὁ λαλῶν γλώσσει προσευχέσθω	the person who speaks in another language should pray	let the person who speaks in another language pray (that he can interpret)
1 Corinthians 14:26	πάντα πρὸς οἰκοδομὴν γινέσθω	<i>All things must be done for edification.</i>	<i>Everything is to be done for edification</i>
1 Corinthians 14:27	καὶ εἷς διερμηνεύετω	and someone must interpret.	and let someone interpret
1 Corinthians 14:28	σιγάτω ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἑαυτῷ δὲ λαλεῖτω καὶ τῷ θεῷ	that person should keep silent in the church and speak to himself and to God	that person is to keep silent in the church and to speak to himself and God
1 Corinthians 14:34	αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις σιγάτωσαν.	<i>the women should be silent in the churches</i>	<i>the women are to be silent in the churches</i>
1 Corinthians 14:34	ἀλλὰ ὑποτασσέσθωσαν	<i>but should be submissive</i>	<i>but they are to be submissive</i>
1 Corinthians 14:35	τοὺς ἰδίους ἄνδρας ἐπερωτάτωσαν	<i>they should ask their own husbands</i>	<i>let them ask their own husbands</i>
1 Corinthians 14:40	πάντα δὲ εὐσημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω	<i>But everything must be done decently and in order</i>	<i>But everything is to be done decently and in order</i>

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1 Corinthians 16:14	πάντα ὑμῶν ἐν ἀγάπῃ γινέσθω	Your every action must be done with love.	Let your every action be done with love
2 Corinthians 10:11	τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος	Such a person should consider this	Let such a person consider this
2 Corinthians 10:17	Ὁ δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω	So the one who boasts must boast in the Lord	Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord
Galatians 6:4	τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμαζέτω ἕκαστος	But each person should examine his own work	But let each person examine his own work
Galatians 6:6	Κοινωνεῖτω δὲ ὁ κατηχούμενος τὸν λόγον τῷ κατηχοῦντι ἐν πᾶσιν ἀγαθοῖς.	The one who is taught the message must share all his good things with the teacher.	Let the one who is taught the message share all his good things with the teacher
Ephesians 4:28	μᾶλλον δὲ κοπιάτω ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς [ιδίας] χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν	Instead, he must do honest work with his own hands,	Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands
Ephesians 4:28	ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω	The thief must no longer steal	Let the thief no longer steal
Ephesians 4:31	πᾶσα πικρία καὶ θυμὸς καὶ ὀργὴ καὶ κραυγὴ καὶ βλασφημία ἀρθήτω ἀφ' ὑμῶν	All bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander must be removed from you	Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you
1 Timothy 2:11	γυνὴ ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ μανθανέτω	A woman should learn in silence	A woman is to learn in silence
1 Timothy 3:12	διάκονοι ἔστωσαν μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρες	Deacons must be husbands of one wife	Deacons are to be husbands of one wife
1 Timothy 5:4	μανθανέτωσαν πρῶτον τὸν ἴδιον οἶκον εὐσεβεῖν	they must learn to practice godliness toward their own family first	let them learn to practice godliness toward their own family first
1 Timothy 5:9	Χήρα καταλεγέσθω μὴ	No widow should be placed	No widow is to be placed
1 Timothy 5:16	ἐπαρκεῖτω αὐταῖς	she should help them	let her help them
1 Timothy 5:16	καὶ μὴ βαρεῖσθω ἡ ἐκκλησία	and the church should not be burdened	and the church is not to be burdened
1 Timothy 5:17	Οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι διπλῆς τιμῆς ἀξιούσθωσαν	The elders who are good leaders should be considered worthy of an ample honorarium	The elders who are good leaders are to be considered worthy of an ample honorarium

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1 Timothy 6:1	Ὅσοι εἰσὶν ὑπὸ ζυγὸν δοῦλοι, τοὺς ἰδίους δεσπότης πάσης τιμῆς ἀξίους ἠγείσθωσαν	All who are under the yoke as slaves must regard their own masters to be worthy of all respect	All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all respect
1 Timothy 6:2	μὴ καταφρονεῖτωσαν	should not be disrespectful	Let (those who have believing masters) not be disrespectful (to them)
1 Timothy 6:2	ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον δουλευέτωσαν	but should serve them better	but let them serve them better
2 Timothy 2:19	Ἀποστήτω ἀπὸ ἀδικίας πᾶς ὁ ὀνομάζων τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου	Everyone who names the name of the Lord must turn away from unrighteousness	Let everyone who names the name of the Lord turn away from unrighteousness
Titus 3:14	μανθανέτωσαν δὲ καὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι	And our people must also learn	And let our people learn (to devote themselves to good works)
<i>Hebrews 1:6</i>	<i>προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ</i>	<i>And all God's angels must worship Him.</i>	<i>And let all God's angels worship Him</i>
James 1:4	ἢ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον τέλειον ἐχέτω	But endurance must do its complete work	Let endurance do its complete work (so that you may be mature)
James 1:5	αἰτεῖτω παρὰ τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ	he should ask God, who gives	(if any of you lacks wisdom) let him ask God, who gives
James 1:9	Καυχάσθω δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινὸς	The brother of humble circumstances should boast	Let the brother of humble circumstances boast
James 1:19	ἔστω δὲ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ταχύς εἰς τὸ ἀκοῦσαι	Everyone must be quick to hear,	Let everyone be quick to hear
James 3:13	δειξάτω ἐκ τῆς καλῆς ἀναστροφῆς τὰ ἔργα	He should show his works by good conduct	Let him show his works by good conduct
James 4:9	ὁ γέλως ὑμῶν εἰς πένθος μετατραπήτω	Your laughter must change to mourning	Let your laughter change to mourning
James 5:12	ἦτω δὲ ὑμῶν τὸ Ναι ναι καὶ τὸ Οὐ οὐ,	Your “yes” must be “yes,” and your “no” must be “no,”	Let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" be "no"
James 5:13	προσευχέσθω	He should pray	Let him pray
James 5:13	ψαλλέτω	He should sing praises	Let him sing praises
James 5:14	προσκαλεσάσθω τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους	He should call for the elders	Let him call for the elders
James 5:14	καὶ προσευξάσθωσαν	and they should pray	they are to pray (over him)
1 Peter 3:3	ὧν ἔστω οὐχ	your beauty should not consist	your beauty is not to consist in

1 Peter 4:15	μη γάρ τις ὑμῶν πασχέτω	None of you, however, should suffer	Let none of you, however, suffer (as a murderer, thief, an evildoer, or a meddler)
1 Peter 4:16	μη αισχυνέσθω	he should not be ashamed	let him not be ashamed
1 Peter 4:16	δοξαζέτω δὲ τὸν θεὸν	but should glorify God	but let him glorify God
1 Peter 4:19	ὥστε καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ πιστῶ κτίστη παρατιθέσθωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἐν ἀγαθοποιίᾳ	So those who suffer according to God's will should, while doing what is good, entrust themselves to a faithful Creator	Let those who suffer according to God's will, while doing what is good, entrust themselves to a faithful Creator
1 John 2:24	ἐν ὑμῖν μενέτω	must remain in you	(what you have heard from the beginning) is to remain in you
Revelation 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22	ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω	Anyone who has an ear should listen	Let anyone who has ears to hear listen!
<i>Revelation 13:18</i>	<i>ὁ ἔχων νοῦν ψηφισάτω τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ θηρίου</i>	<i>The one who has understanding must calculate the number of the beast,</i>	<i>Let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast</i>
Revelation 13:9	Εἴ τις ἔχει οὖς ἀκουσάτω	If anyone has an ear, he should listen	If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen!
Revelation 22:17	καὶ ὁ ἀκούων εἰπάτω	Anyone who hears should say	Let anyone who hears, say
Revelation 22:17	καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω	and the one who is thirsty should come	let the one who is thirsty come
Revelation 22:17	ὁ θέλων λαβέτω	whoever desires should take	let the one who desires take (the living water as a gift)

2) First Person Imperatives

We are quite concerned with this section and would prefer to see all of these changed.

Reference	Greek phrase	HCSB translation	Suggested Revision (context provided in parentheses)
Romans 14:19	τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης διώκωμεν	we must pursue what promotes peace	(So then) let us pursue what promotes peace
<i>Galatians 5:25</i>	<i>πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν</i>	<i>we must also follow the Spirit</i>	<i>(Since we live by the Spirit) let us also follow the Spirit</i>
Galatians 5:26	μη γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι	We must not become conceited	Let us not become conceited

Galatians 6:9	τὸ δὲ καλὸν ποιῶντες μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν	So we must not get tired of doing good	Let us not get tired of doing good.
Galatians 6:10	ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας	we must work for the good of all	Let us work for the good of all
Philippians 3:15	Ὅσοι οὖν τέλειοι, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν	Therefore, all who are mature should think this way	Therefore, let all of us who are mature think this way
1 Thessalonians 5:6	ἀρα οὖν μὴ καθεύδωμεν	So then, we must not sleep	(so then) let us not sleep, like the rest,
1 Thessalonians 5:6	ἀλλὰ γρηγορῶμεν καὶ νήφωμεν	but we must stay awake and be serious	but let us stay awake and be serious
1 Thessalonians 5:8	νήφωμεν	we must be serious	(But since we belong to the day) let us be serious
1 John 3:18	ἢ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μηδὲ τῆ γλώσση	we must not love with word or speech	let us not love with word or speech

3) Second Person Imperatives/Indicatives/Subjunctives

We are quite concerned with this section and would much prefer to see second person imperatives translated as English second person imperatives. Our concern embraces the second person equivalent constructions listed here as well.

Reference	Greek phrase	HCSB translation	Suggested Revision (context provided in parentheses)
Matthew 5:36	μήτε ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ σου ὀμόσης	Neither should you swear by your head	And do not swear by your head
Matthew 6:5	οὐκ ἔσεσθε ὡς οἱ ὑποκριταί	you must not be like the hypocrites	you are not to be like the hypocrites
Matthew 10:19	πῶς ἢ τί λαλήσητε	how or what you should speak	How or what you are to speak
Matthew 21:3	ἐρεῖτε	you should say	(If anyone says anything to you) say (that the Lord needs them)
Matthew 24:44	ὁμοῖς γίνεσθε ἔτοιμοι	you also must be ready	(for this reason/on account of this) you also, be ready
Mark 13:23	ὁμοῖς δὲ βλέπετε	And you must watch!	And watch! (I have told you everything in advance.)
Luke 17:10	λέγετε	you should say	(when you have done all that you were commanded,) say, (We are good-for-nothing slaves; we've only done our duty)
Acts 10:15	σὺ μὴ κοῖνου	you must not call common.	do not call common
Acts 11:9	σὺ μὴ κοῖνου	you must not call common	do not call common

1 Corinthians 10:10	μηδὲ γογγύζετε	Nor should we complain	And don't complain
1 Corinthians 16:1	οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιήσατε	You should do the same	Do the same (as I instructed the Galatian churches)
2 Corinthians 6:13	πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς	you should also be open to us	open yourselves to us
Galatians 6:1	ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ καταρτίζετε τὸν τοιοῦτον	you who are spiritual should restore such a person	But you who are spiritual, restore such a person (with a gentle spirit)
Ephesians 6:13	διὰ τοῦτο ἀναλάβετε τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ	This is why you must take up the full armor of God	For this reason take up the full armor of God
Colossians 3:8	νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα	but now you must also put away all the following	but now, put away all the following
1 Timothy 4:12	ἀλλὰ τύπος γίνου	instead, you should be an example	(Let no one despise your youth;) instead, be an example (to the believers)
James 5:8	μακροθυμήσατε καὶ ὑμεῖς	You also must be patient.	You also, be patient
2 John 6	ἵνα ἐν αὐτῇ περιπατήτε	you must walk in love.	(And this is love: that we walk according to His commands. This is the command as you have heard it from the beginning:) that you walk in love

4) Third Person Indicatives and Subjunctives

Reference	Greek phrase	HCSB translation	Suggested Revision (context provided in parentheses)
Matthew 4:4	ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος	Man must not live	Man is not to live
Matthew 20:26	οὐχ οὕτως ἔσται ἐν ὑμῖν	It must not be like that among you	It is not to be like that among you
Matthew 20:26	ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος	must be your servant	let him be your servant
Matthew 20:27	ἔσται ὑμῶν δοῦλος	must be your slave	let him be your slave
Mark 10:43	οὐχ οὕτως δὲ ἔστιν ἐν ὑμῖν	But it must not be like that among you	But it is not to be like that among you
Mark 10:43	ὅς ἂν θέλῃ μέγας γενέσθαι ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται ὑμῶν διάκονος	whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant	whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant
Mark 10:44	ἔσται πάντων δοῦλος	must be a slave to all.	he will be a slave to all

1 Corinthians 16:11	μή τις οὖν αὐτὸν ἐξουθενήσῃ	Therefore, no one should look down on him.	Therefore, let no one look down on him
2 Corinthians 9:7	ἕκαστος καθὼς προήρηται	Each person should do	each person is to do (as he has decided in his heart)
2 Corinthians 11:16	μή τις με δόξῃ ἄφρονα εἶναι	No one should consider me a fool	Let no one consider me a fool
2 Corinthians 13:1	σταθήσεται πᾶν ῥῆμα	Every fact must be established	every fact is to be established
Philippians 2:11	καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται	and every tongue should confess	(so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow ...) and every tongue will confess (that Jesus Christ is Lord...)

5) Other Imperative Equivalent Constructions

Reference	Greek phrase	HCSB translation	Suggested Revision (context provided in parentheses)
Luke 12:36	καὶ ὑμεῖς ὅμοιοι ἀνθρώποις προσδεχομένοις τὸν κύριον ἑαυτῶν	<i>You must be like people waiting for their master</i>	<i>You are like people waiting for their master/Be like people waiting for their master</i>
Luke 22:26	ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως,	But it must not be like that among you.	But it is not to be like that among you
Luke 22:26	ἀλλ' ὁ μείζων ἐν ὑμῖν γινέσθω ὡς ὁ νεώτερος	whoever is greatest among you must become like the youngest	let whoever is greatest among you become like the youngest
1 Corinthians 14:27	κατὰ δύο ἢ τὸ πλεῖστον τρεῖς	there should be only two, or at the most three,	there are to be only two, or at the most three
Philippians 2:4	μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες	Everyone should look out not only for his own interests,	Let everyone look out not only for his own interests
Colossians 3:13	καθὼς καὶ ὁ κύριος ἐχαρίσατο ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς	<i>Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive.</i>	<i>Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so also forgive</i>
Colossians 4:6	ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν χάριτι,	Your speech should always be gracious	Let your speech always be gracious
1 Timothy 4:4	καὶ οὐδὲν ἀπόβλητον	and nothing should be rejected	nothing is to be rejected
Hebrews 13:4	τίμιος ὁ γάμος ἐν πᾶσιν καὶ ἡ κοίτη ἀμίαντος,	Marriage must be respected by all, and the marriage bed kept undefiled	marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled

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Hebrews 13:5	Ἀφιλάργυρος ὁ τρόπος	Your life should be free from the love of money	Keep your life free from the love of money
James 1:10	ὁ δὲ πλούσιος ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ	but the one who is rich should boast in his humiliation	but let the one who is rich boast in his humiliation
1 Peter 3:4	ἀλλ' ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας	Instead, it should consist of what is inside the heart	but let it consist of what is inside the heart
1 Peter 3:8	πάντες ὁμόφρονες,	all of you should be like-minded	all of you be like-minded
1 Peter 3:8	φιλάδελφοι	should love believers,	love believers
1 Peter 4:11	ὡς λόγια θεοῦ	it should be as one who speaks God's words	it is to be as one who speaks God's words
1 Peter 4:11	ὡς ἐξ ἰσχύος ἧς χορηγεῖ ὁ θεός	it should be from the strength God provides	it is to be from the strength God provides
2 Peter 1:20	τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες ὅτι	First of all, you should know this:	because first of all you know this: