

## **Do Not Be Deceived**

**written by Tricia Berg**

*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Galatians 6:7-8*

I have grave concerns about how doctrine has been changed in The Message paraphrase of the Bible. Here is a summary of my observations on the problems with certain passages in The Message. My comments will be limited to the changes in the translation of passages related to sexual immorality. Those changes result in altering the meaning of the original texts, which I believe is evil and heretical. If anyone tries to get a true picture of God's design and His will for male and female relationships from The Message, they will not be able to do so.

*her·e·sy (noun)*

*belief or opinion **contrary to** orthodox religious (especially **Christian**) **doctrine**; opinion **profoundly at odds** with what is generally accepted.*

Since the LGBTQ movement is an orchestrated attack by Satan against God as our sovereign Creator, then whoever blurs or denies the truth according to God is working against Him, not with Him. (Matt. 12:30) It goes right back to the Garden of Eden when the serpent said "Did God really say?" (Gen. 3:1) It is deceitful, whereas God wants us to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:14-15)—to care more about Him than the world, more about souls entering heaven than worldly men's opinions. (John 15:19, 1John 2:15-17, 4:5-6)

We can verify the correct translation of these passages and their interpretation by looking at the same Greek that Peterson used. In fact, the Greek makes it even more clear that homosexuality is condemned by God by using different words for both the dominant and passive partner (as offensive to our sensibilities as that may be), by sometimes listing it separately in addition to other sexual immorality, and by referring to "practicing" it, which is different than "being." (I will use this font for the ESV, and this one for The Message.)

Notes about the version from BibleGateway.com (my emphasis added):

*Peterson's parishioners simply weren't connecting with the real meaning of the words and the relevance of the New Testament for their own lives. So he began to bring into English the rhythms and idioms of the original ancient Greek—writing straight out of the Greek text without looking at other English*

*translations. The goal of The Message is to engage people in the reading process and help them understand what they read. This is not a study Bible, but rather "a reading Bible."*

When I hear someone offer to explain to me what the Bible "really" says, a red flag goes up immediately. Also, the issue of "relevancy" has been used by the seeker-friendly churches to water down the Gospel in order to make sinners more comfortable. They say the church is a "hospital for sinners," but if that's the case then what kind of hospital offers no treatment? Sinners in, sinners out? If there is no visible change to be expected, then why does the Bible teach those with the Spirit produce good fruit? (Gal. 5:19-25, Matt. 13:23, 7:15-27, Luke 6:43-49, John 15:1-20, Rom. 6:20-23, 7:4-6, Col. 1:10) And am I to understand that the accountability for accuracy and faithfulness to God's word is relaxed if the Bible is only intended for "reading" and not "studying"? That is a new concept for me!

Here is some insight from a series on apostasy in the church that I found at [teachingtheword.org](http://teachingtheword.org):

*First, the pre-Reformation position was built on Biblical illiteracy. Before the Protestant Reformation, the Bible was un-translated. The Bible was literally chained to the pulpit. People couldn't read the actual Word of God in their own language. The modern movements among Evangelicals today are also built on Biblical illiteracy. And it happens in two ways. The first way is through the deception of the Bible paraphrase. **The modern church makeover movements encourage Biblical illiteracy by using and promoting so-called Bible versions that are not faithful translations of the Word of God, but man-centered paraphrases.** One that has become quite popular through the modern church makeover movements is called *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*. Tens of millions of copies of *The Message* have been sold. But it's actually not a Bible at all. It's a paraphrase. And **the author of this Bible paraphrase is Eugene Peterson, a man who for thirty years was a pastor in the liberal Presbyterian Church, USA.** He founded and pastored a church just a few miles from here, in Bel Air, Maryland. That's the first way that the modern church makeover movements are encouraging Biblical illiteracy, a return to the pre-Reformation position. They give people something to read that says "Bible" on the cover, but it's not the authentic Bible inside. (My note: The Presbyterian Church was the first to ordain a gay pastor in October, 2011. In March, 2015, they affirmed same-sex "marriage." Also, Eugene Peterson endorsed the book "The Shack," which denies that Jesus is the only Way, among other lies—ironically, comparing it to Pilgrim's Progress.)*

Now let's begin the comparison of some of the passages relevant to this article.

## Romans 1

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For **their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.** 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a **debased mind to do what ought not to be done.** Romans 1:26-28 (ESV)

26-28 Worse followed. Refusing to know God, they soon didn't know how to be human either—women didn't know how to be women, men didn't know how to be men. Sexually confused, they abused and defiled one another, women with women, men with men—all lust, no love. And then they paid for it, oh, how they paid for it—emptied of God and love, godless and loveless wretches. Since they didn't bother to acknowledge God, God quit bothering them and let them run loose. Romans 1:26-28 (MSG)

My comments:

They didn't know how to be human? Peterson makes no mention of it being *against nature* to have intimate relations with the same gender—he says that God was displeased with them “*because they were abusive and there was too much lust and not enough love.*” In the next verse, The Message leaves out that it was due to the aberrant behavior that God “let them run loose.” He makes no mention of their *debased minds* and that it was related to the homosexuality just described in the previous two verses. I think we've all heard these arguments that it's not about the homosexuality itself, but about a loving, committed, “non-abusive” relationship—and here is apparently where they got it from! In fact, not even the “Queen James” version of the Bible has not taken this many creative liberties with the interpretation of God's word.

The Bible says repeatedly that those who make a practice of sexual immorality will not enter the kingdom of God and that includes homosexuality. Sexual immorality is one of the primary reasons why the promised land (which is a foreshadow of the kingdom of God) was taken from its depraved inhabitants and given to His people. (Lev. 18) ALL sexual immorality by believers violates the very temple of God, who resides in the bodies of those who are born again. (1Cor. 3:16, 6:19-20, 2Cor. 6:16, Eph. 2:21-22, 1Pet. 2:5) Sexual immorality, like ALL sin, involves a personal choice to serve what was meant for believers to have been the OLD selfish, sinful flesh rather than the NEW creation serving God in faithfulness, purity, holiness, priorities, etc. (Rom. 6:1-23, 13, 2Cor. 5:17) This is a very serious issue that anyone would make a version of the Bible leaving out so much truth and glossing over the real problem.

People who are fornicating are also deceived by society's acceptance of it, and that it makes it harder to explain the sin of homosexuality when so many members of the church are doing the same thing (except in the normal order of nature—male/female). The Bible has a VERY stern warning about this subject, which is CLEARLY directed to believers, not unbelievers.

*For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you **abstain from sexual immorality**; that each one of you know how to **control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God**; that **no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter**, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and **solemnly warned you**. For **God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness**. Therefore **whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you**. 1 Thessalonians 4:2-8*

We aren't able to police the world on these matters, but Paul said that professing "Christians" who were sexually immoral should be thrown out of the congregation, and not to even eat with them (if they would not repent when shown the errors of their ways—bear in mind that the Lord's Supper in the early church was taken as part of a meal which included supporting the poor). (1Cor. 5:1-13, 11:20-22) Paul scolded the Corinthians for being proud of their acceptance of unrepentant sexual sin by a man in their congregation. So much for gay "pride" parades, but then anyone who actually reads the Bible knows that God detests pride in any form, let alone for sin. (Job 35:12, Psa. 31:18, 23)

### 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you **not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one**. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? **Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?** 13 God judges those outside. "**Purge the evil person from among you.**" 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 (ESV)

9-13 I wrote you in my earlier letter that you shouldn't make yourselves at home among the sexually promiscuous. I didn't mean that you should have nothing at all to do with outsiders of that sort. Or with crooks, whether blue- or white-collar. Or with spiritual phonies, for that matter. You'd have to leave the world entirely to do that! But I am saying that you shouldn't act as if everything is just fine when

a friend who claims to be a Christian is promiscuous or crooked, is flip with God or rude to friends, gets drunk or becomes greedy and predatory. You can't just go along with this, treating it as acceptable behavior. I'm not responsible for what the outsiders do, but don't we have some responsibility for those within our community of believers? God decides on the outsiders, but we need to decide when our brothers and sisters are out of line and, if necessary, clean house.

My comments:

Interestingly, this passage goes directly against the apostate church's favorite out-of-context quote of "Judge not." But of course, we know that they like to leave off "go and sin no more" from "neither do I condemn you," and "for doing the same sins as you do" from "judge not," and "take the log out of your own eye BEFORE trying to remove your brother's splinter," and "judge with right judgment" (not by appearances). The Message weakens the term judgment to have "some responsibility" and "clean house." (?) (Matt. 7:1-5, John 5:14, 8:11, Rom. 2:1) By the way, the apostate church likes to leave off parts of verses that limit to whom promises of reward are made as well. They want those to apply to everyone, not just to whom they were actually made. For example, "those who love Him," (Rom. 8:28, 1Cor. 2:9, Jam. 1:12, 2:5); or "to the one who overcomes (conquers)." (Rev. 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:26-29, 3:5-6, 3:12-13, 3:21-22)

*apostate (adjective): abandoning a religious or political belief or principle*

The Message has reduced the concept of moral right and wrong in sexual relations to a prohibition only against "promiscuity," which again, is advancing the lie that God is pleased with any "loving, committed" relationship—marriage not required, heterosexuality not required—only consensuality is required. However, God's desire was for marriage to be between a man and woman. He illustrated this for us in Genesis when He created the first man and woman, to be "made one flesh" in the very first marriage, as well as in countless other male/female examples throughout nature—each reproducing after their own kind. (Gen. 1:24-28) Jesus reiterated that marriage is between a male and female. (Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:5-6, Mark 10:8, 1Cor. 6:16-20, Eph. 5:31-32)

Jesus also reaffirmed that God wants everlasting faithfulness in that relationship that He ordained. This is to demonstrate how we are to be faithful to Him in the same way that we are to be faithful to our spouse and God is faithful to us. (Isa. 54:5-6, Mal. 2:14-16) If we can just go from one "loving, committed" relationship to another, it destroys the entire lesson God is teaching us through relationships. He also teaches us through parent/child relationships, but much

of the benefit of those lessons have also been destroyed in a large portion of modern society as obedience to parents becomes less common. (Titus 1:6, Eph. 6:1, 2Tim. 3:1-5)

### 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: **neither** the **sexually immoral**, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**, nor **men who practice homosexuality\***, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will **inherit the kingdom of God**. 11 And such **were** some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (ESV)

\*There are two Greek terms, one meaning effeminate (submitting to being used by another male) and the other indicating males who pursue sex with other males. It's not something you "are," but rather "do"—this is why it is referred to as "practicing" in the Bible (as with other sins.) These are specifically listed in addition to the general topic of sexually immoral, and for anyone who claims ignorance and says that lets lesbians off the hook, we have Rom. 1:26 to clarify that God's designs and purposes apply to BOTH men and women (even though it should be very obvious to all but the most stubborn and rebellious).

9-11 Don't you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don't care about God will not be joining in his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don't qualify as citizens in God's kingdom. A number of you know from experience what I'm talking about, for not so long ago you were on that list. Since then, you've been cleaned up and given a fresh start by Jesus, our Master, our Messiah, and by our God present in us, the Spirit. (MSG)

My comments:

So here again according to The Message, the problem is not homosexuality, but "abuse," including of the earth, which was not in the original AT ALL. However, people disrespecting the earth WAS portrayed by the atheist producer of the Noah movie as one of the reasons for the flood... So according to Eugene Peterson (NOT God), homosexuals are "cleaned up" if they stop *abusing* people, because homosexuality is not a sin—God "made them that way" in which He has said from the beginning that He detests. Wouldn't that be placing a stumbling block before them and tempting them, as well as changing, which He does not do? (Jam. 1:13-17, Luke 17:1) The Message would have done better to explain to readers that to "care about God" so that we can enter the kingdom includes

caring enough to find out what pleases Him according to HIM, not the world, but that would involve using a reliable translation, not The Message. (Eph. 5:5-12, 15-17)

I have some SHOCKING news for any confessing “believer” who is practicing sexual immorality of any kind without feeling convicted of and grieved by their sin. (Eph. 4:30, Heb. 3:12-15, 1Thess. 5:19) The Scriptures say that whoever KNOWS God (is indwelt by the Holy Spirit/born again) will NOT keep sinning deliberately. (1John 2:4, 3:9, 5:18) Jesus said that the Spirit goes where He will just as the wind does, which cannot be observed (EXCEPT by the effects seen by it)—and we must be born again by the Spirit to see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3-8, Titus 1:16, Luke 17:20-21) He also said that those who make a practice of sexual immorality will be thrown in the lake of fire. (Rev. 21:8, 22:15)

Now to be fair (even though our topic for this article is sexual immorality), this does apply for everyone who is on that list, no matter which sin they are PRACTICING without repentance, without receiving FORGIVENESS. (1John 1:5-10) But let’s be honest with ourselves—it is NOT possible to repent and receive forgiveness for ANY sin that we are deliberately LIVING IN and have NO intention of truly repenting of. God knows. Let’s not play games with Him. Don’t let Satan win—God wants everyone to be saved, but He gave us free will. (1Tim. 2:4)

Jesus said it was harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. However, He told His disciples that “with God all things are possible,” when they said it sounded like NO ONE could be saved. (Mark 10:17-27) So there is hope, but NOT that we can BRING our sin with us, but that if we truly desire to be delivered, then He is merciful and can free us from our love of sin the same way that the rich man needs to be freed from his love of money. (2Tim. 2:24-26) But we need to sincerely seek God and His honor. (Jer. 29:13, Psa. 50:16-23) We can’t love both God and money, nor can we love both the world and God (Matt. 6:24, 1John 2:15)—God demands and deserves to be loved with our WHOLE heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30, Jam. 4:8). Claiming that we were born to sin in a certain way is not the way to receive God’s mercy—that’s blaming Him for our sin. (Jam. 1:13-15) If repentance and holiness don’t matter, then why are we told:

***Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. Hebrews 12:14-17***

**Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.** Hebrews 13:4

**But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints.** Ephesians 5:3

### 1 Corinthians 6:13

13 “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. **The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.** 1 Corinthians 6:13 (ESV)

13 You know the old saying, “First you eat to live, and then you live to eat”? Well, it may be true that the body is only a temporary thing, but that’s no excuse for stuffing your body with food, or indulging it with sex. Since the Master honors you with a body, honor him with your body! (MSG)

My comments:

Here, The Message has entirely lost the profound POINT of our bodies, the male and female union, marriage, etc. being physical foreshadows of spiritual truths for born-again believers. The body is the temple of the Lord because He indwells believers. It is not just that He gave us “a” body and we should be thankful for it. Believers in the Old Testament were not indwelt by the Holy Spirit as we are. This is our unimaginably great privilege in the Church Age to have God’s Spirit come INTO us and KNOW us (the spiritual truth comparable to the physical foreshadow of union in marriage.) Our bodies literally belong to Him, purchased with His blood. (1Cor. 6:19-20) He has redeemed us, and we are to honor Him in ALL we do. (Col. 3:23-25)

Jesus tells us in Matt. 25:1-13 about those who are READY and go with Him before He shuts the door—all are waiting with lamps, but some run out of oil to see by. (Psa. 119:105) He also said in Matt. 7:21-27 that not everyone who says “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom of God. This at first appears to be in sharp contrast to “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” in Rom. 10:13, (quoting Acts 2:21, and both quote Joel 2:32). However, the next verses, 14 and on, talk about believing, and previously in verses 8-11, we see that we are to believe in our hearts and confess Jesus as LORD with our mouths. (This does not mean we “claim” to believe, but that we mean it; nor that He is just “a” Lord, but that He is OUR Lord as well.)

We each have to be born again (John 3:3-8), which means that His Spirit lives within us and He KNOWS us. He says He does NOT know the people He turns away in Matt. 7:23, 25:12 and Luke 13:25-27, so we know they are not His. (Rom. 8:9) They claim to believe (which has to be in spirit and truth—not only with empty words), but they are lying, and Jesus cannot be fooled. He was their “Lord” in name only—His Spirit was NOT in them, filling them and helping them to desire to know and to do His will. (Phil. 2:12-16, Titus 2:11-15) He told us in John 14:15-26 that those who love Him will be loved by the Father and that He will love that person and manifest/reveal Himself to them in the form of the Helper/Holy Spirit. He and the Father will come and make their home with them (changed to “move right into the *neighborhood*” in The Message—not the same thing at all!)

“No one comes to the Father except through the Son” (John 14:6) goes along with the Father drawing people to the Son (John 6:44). These are the people who are KNOWN by Jesus, the “last Adam,” *spiritually*, as Adam *physically* “knew” Eve. These are the people for whom He has gone to prepare a place (John 14:2-3), for whom no eye has seen what has been prepared—the ones who LOVE Jesus (1Cor. 2:9, Jam. 1:12) and SHOW it by obeying His commands (John 14:21). “Be doers not only hearers” (James 1:22); “faith without works is dead.” (Jam. 2:14-26) “Works” is not only “good deeds,” but living in a way that pleases our Savior—if He is not our Savior, then we can in NO WAY please Him. (Rom. 8:7-8, Heb. 11:6) These works are BECAUSE we are saved, not in order to be saved—not out of fear of losing our salvation, but out of love and gratitude.

His Spirit making Himself at home with (in) us, (just as Rev. 3:19-20 says those He loves, He will rebuke and chasten—whoever answers the door when He knocks, He will come in and dine with them) IS being born again—regenerated in our spirit (Titus 3:3-8), a new creation in Christ (2Cor. 5:17), part of His body (as Eve was part of Adam’s body and the two became one in marriage - Gen. 2:21-25). (Rom. 12:1-8, 1Cor. 12:12, 27, 2Cor. 11:2-4, Gal. 3:27, Eph. 5:22-33) This is why it is so crucial for believers to understand and accept God’s design for marriage. He is using earthly, physical marriage to teach us about His spiritual, heavenly relationship with us. We entirely miss the point if we modify it in any way. He knows what He is doing!

### 1 Corinthians 6:15-20

15 Do you not know that **your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!** 16 Or do you not know that **he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her?** For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” 17 But **he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit**

**with Him. 18 Flee from sexual immorality.** Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you**, whom you have from God? **You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.** 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 (ESV)

16-20 There's more to sex than mere skin on skin. Sex is as much spiritual mystery as physical fact. As written in Scripture, "The two become one." Since we want to become spiritually one with the Master, we must not pursue the kind of sex that avoids commitment and intimacy, leaving us more lonely than ever—the kind of sex that can never "become one." There is a sense in which sexual sins are different from all others. In sexual sin we violate the sacredness of our own bodies, these bodies that were made for God-given and God-modeled love, for "becoming one" with another. Or didn't you realize that your body is a sacred place, the place of the Holy Spirit? Don't you see that you can't live however you please, squandering what God paid such a high price for? The physical part of you is not some piece of property belonging to the spiritual part of you. God owns the whole works. So let people see God in and through your body. (MSG)

My comments:

According to The Message, so much for our bodies being members of Christ's body, and if we are already saved, then we are *already* one with Him—they say that is what we WANT to be. But this is NOT about our being lonely from not having commitment and intimacy in our sexual relations with others. We were only meant to "become one" with ONE other person (of the opposite sex, until death parts the couple). **It's about refraining from having sex outside of marriage or against God's design for physical unions between a male and female—which was not conveyed at all by The Message.** It's about honoring the temple of the Lord, where He dwells if we are born-again believers (and all true believers are born again and indwelt).

Paul compares the idea of the Holy Spirit coming to live inside someone who is sexually immoral to **joining Christ to a prostitute!** That is not a pretty picture. Isn't it enough that He carried the crushing weight of our filthy sin though He was perfect, without blemish or spot? (2Cor. 5:21) Do we also want to invite Him in His holiness to dwell in our bodies and then proceed to do unspeakable things that He hates? (Eph. 5:12, 2Pet. 2:14, 17-19) It's a sickening thought for everyone who actually loves God more than themselves, but make no mistake—only the indwelling Holy Spirit can give new life to us who are dead in our sins so that we can actually do that. (1John 4:8-10)

Please also realize that it's important not to profane the holy spiritual union in our mind by combining it with the carnal earthly foreshadow as Ann Voskamp did in her book One Thousand Gifts when she not only described "spiritual skin on skin" (with God), but did so in close context with a bed. She also claimed that "naturally" you can feel the presence of God more at Notre Dame than elsewhere. (??) Her writings also embrace a "God is in everything" theology, which is false, just as the concept that God "is" everything. God is above and in control of everything He made—His creation is not Him. (Heb. 11:3, John 1:1-3, Col. 1:15-20) Adam and Eve were kicked out of the garden for disobedience, not ungratefulness. (Gen. 3)

### Ephesians 5:3-16

3 But **sexual immorality and all impurity** or covetousness **must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints**. 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. 5 For you may be sure of this, that **everyone who is sexually immoral or impure**, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), **has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God**. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to **discern what is pleasing to the Lord**. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead **expose them**. 12 For it is **shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret**. 13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." 15 **Look carefully then how you walk**, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Ephesians 5:3-16 (ESV)

3-4 Don't allow love to turn into lust, setting off a downhill slide into sexual promiscuity, filthy practices, or bullying greed. Though some tongues just love the taste of gossip, those who follow Jesus have better uses for language than that. Don't talk dirty or silly. That kind of talk doesn't fit our style. Thanksgiving is our dialect. 5 You can be sure that using people or religion or things just for what you can get out of them—the usual variations on idolatry—will get you nowhere, and certainly nowhere near the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of God. 6-7 Don't let yourselves get taken in by religious smooth talk. God gets furious with people who are full of religious sales talk but want nothing to do with him. Don't even hang around people like that. 8-10 You groped your way through that murk once, but no longer. You're out in the open now. The bright light of Christ makes your way plain. So no more stumbling around. Get on with it! The good, the right, the true—these are the actions appropriate

for daylight hours. Figure out what will please Christ, and then do it. 11-16 Don't waste your time on useless work, mere busywork, the barren pursuits of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are. It's a scandal when people waste their lives on things they must do in the darkness where no one will see. Rip the cover off those frauds and see how attractive they look in the light of Christ. "Wake up from your sleep, Climb out of your coffins; Christ will show you the light!" So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!

My comments:

The Message utterly destroys what God said. What an ironic title for the book. So for them, it's not about immorality, but only about promiscuity and lust. If you sin in "love," with just one person at a time, then that is okay by them because they do not acknowledge God's design for males and females, nor for marriage (not only male/female, but also the permanence that was intended.) They are utterly unaware that we are supposed to be learning physically on earth to practice what will be spiritual realities in heaven. They think that the problem isn't sin at all, but only about "using" people and God.

The deceiving "empty words" that we are warned about are coming FROM The Message by their omission of so much clear truth! "Make the most of chances" to do what? The POINT is to live in a holy, reverent knowledge that Jesus could return at any time (see numerous parables), and we want to be found serving faithfully, obeying Him when that time comes. (2Pet. 3:11-18, 1John 2:26-29, Phil. 3:12-16, 1Cor. 9:24-10:13) Not earning salvation, but because we ARE saved and therefore, we care what He thinks and wants, and we want to reflect well on Him to further His message (not man's "Message.")

### Ephesians 5:22-33

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as **Christ is the head of the church, his body**, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 **This mystery is profound, and I am saying**

**that it refers to Christ and the church.** 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. Ephesians 5:22-33 (ESV)

22-24 Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing. So just as the church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands. 25-28 Husbands, go all out in your love for your wives, exactly as Christ did for the church—a love marked by giving, not getting. Christ’s love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness. And that is how husbands ought to love their wives. They’re really doing themselves a favor—since they’re already “one” in marriage. 29-33 No one abuses his own body, does he? No, he feeds and pampers it. That’s how Christ treats us, the church, since we are part of his body. And this is why a man leaves father and mother and cherishes his wife. No longer two, they become “one flesh.” This is a huge mystery, and I don’t pretend to understand it all. What is clearest to me is the way Christ treats the church. And this provides a good picture of how each husband is to treat his wife, loving himself in loving her, and how each wife is to honor her husband. (MSG; Note: They called the section “Relationships.”)

My comments:

They left out how Christ cleanses the church and added in silk instead of the usual linen (although neither word is even in this passage), making the whole thing sound more like it’s about earthly stuff and experiences. Jesus’ love does more than “make the church whole” and provide leadership. It is HIS church—He builds it. Without Him, there IS NO CHURCH. He is the cornerstone and the capstone. It’s ALL about Him. Paul NEVER said he didn’t understand the mystery, just that it is a mystery (and presumably, it would be too hard to explain to people who haven’t had it revealed directly by Jesus Himself as Paul did.) Our worshipping ONLY the one true God and our faithfulness to our spouse in marriage is meant to be a reflection of God’s faithfulness in keeping His glorious promises to us believers.

### General Discussion

The “modern” language used in many passages is such trendy slang that people not long from now will have to look up what it used to mean when written (e.g. “people who are flip with God”), more so than we do with the versions that the author was “improving on.” Further, it is NOT okay to take out some words, removing information conveyed by them, and add other words that were not

there, putting a new slant into the text. The whole thing is beyond arrogant, in my opinion. Not only has the author rejected the work of every translator who went before him, it's as though he doesn't acknowledge that the original words were inspired by God. Apparently, he thinks that he can just go and do whatever he wants and it will be fine, with his own "artistic license" similar to what they put in the "biblical" movies (which I hate when they do that, and don't get me started on copyrighting and profit-taking on God's word.) (Titus 1:11)

God doesn't change, ever. **He doesn't condemn something in the Old Testament and now approve of it in the New Testament.\*** (Lev. 20:10-23) Our Father does NOT punish His precious, beloved Son, Jesus, for our sin but then turn around and say He now doesn't mind sin at all—too bad He hadn't thought of that before Jesus suffered and died?!! He paid for our sin and we now belong to Him, purchased for a very high price. He is God and we are not—He doesn't take an opinion poll. His commands were directed to believers, not unbelievers (who are not His, but children of the devil - 1John 3:4-10, Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43, 1Pet. 1:14-19), to be obeyed by those *who love Him* because He saved them. Anyone who is truly born again has His Spirit living within them to enable them to overcome temptation to sin. (Rom. 8:7-12, Phil. 2:12-16) We can start by reading [a normal version of] the Bible so that we KNOW who we are worshiping and what He is like, what He expects of us. Then we won't be deceived by the false teachers about whom we were repeatedly warned. (Matt. 7:15-23, 24:11, 24:24, Luke 6:26, 2Cor. 11:13-15, 2Thess. 2:9-12, 2Pet. 2, Jude 1:3-4, Acts 20:26-35, 1Tim. 6:3-21)

\*There are many practices and observations in the Old Testament that were fulfilled in the New Testament and therefore no longer necessary. People who say that God no longer considers homosexuality and other sexual immorality a sin often point to obscure verses about mixing types of textiles and restrictions on eating and say that we are hypocrites to "point the finger" at them yet not obey those former commands. The purpose for those prohibitions has been fulfilled and does not apply to the Church. (Col. 2:16-17, 23, Gal. 4:10-11, Acts 15:10-11, 19-20, 28-29, 21:25)

Those restrictions had to do with being set apart as God's people—Israel was not to mix with other cultures, but in the Church there is no longer Jew or Gentile, but the two have been made into one new man. We are still to be set apart by our behavior by refraining from sins that were reaffirmed to be abhorrent to God in the New Testament (thus applicable to the Church). Sexual immorality is named repeatedly and the reasons for that have been given above (our bodies are made holy by being temples of the Lord, not to be defiled). This is not in ANY way to say that so long as we are monogamous and heterosexual, that we will go to heaven. The point is that is God's design is as He wished it to be—He is

sovereign. No one is saved apart from repentance and faith in Jesus, and those who are saved are to keep the temples of their bodies pure. He will wash us clean if we slip into the mud, but not while we're still in the mud with every intention of STAYING in the mud—how would that work? Common sense says it wouldn't. We need to get out of the puddle and ask for forgiveness and for help to overcome temptation. (1John 1:6-10, 1Cor. 10:13) If we LIKE the mud, then this passage applies to us and it is not pretty: 2Pet. 2:18-22.

All foods were specifically pronounced clean by Jesus (while teaching that it is what the evil heart within desires that causes sin to work its way out), as well as James (see Acts 15:13, 19-20) and Paul. (Mark 7:18-23, 1Cor. 14:20, Rom. 14:5, 14, 20, 16:19, 1Tim. 4:3) Jesus also reaffirmed marriage between one man and one woman—regardless of what the question was. (Matt. 19:4-6) He often gave an answer that was more complete than just what the asker of the question wanted to know, or the answer to what they should have asked instead. As for the Sabbath, (which was Saturday, the seventh day—by tradition we worship on Sunday, the Lord's Day—the day He rose from the dead—the first day of the week), Jesus Himself is our Sabbath rest. (Heb. 4:9-10, Matt. 12:8) We no longer work to keep the law, but we should be seeking to do His will every day. We're under the "law of liberty," by which we will be judged as to how we used that freedom. (Jam. 1:25, 2:12, Gal. 5:13, Rom. 2:6-11, 13:13-14, 1Pet. 4:17) Remember, not all who are judged are condemned. (Rom. 8:1, 2Thess. 2:12, Heb. 4:12-13, Rev. 22:12)

We honor God by keeping His commands out of love for what Jesus did for us in saving us. I can't say it enough times—if we are not saved by faith, then there is no pleasing God—not by obeying, working or doing anything else. (Heb. 11:6, Eph. 2:8-10 - be sure not to miss verse 10 there.) It all BEGINS with salvation and continues on from there. Once we belong to Him, as His adopted child, then we should behave like it and He will help us to do that. The promises of a glorious inheritance were made to THOSE WHO LOVE HIM. (1Cor. 2:9, Jam. 1:12, 2:5) He defined love as those who obey. (John 14:15-24)

I'm telling you the truth now while there is still time (Eph. 4:14-16) so that if you have believed lies, you are not dumbfounded later to discover that God is not pleased with how you chose to please yourself with your life rather than Him. (2Cor. 5:9-10, 14-15, Rev. 3:4-6) All we have to do is get the greatest command right (which we do by HUMBLING ourselves, admitting we are sinners in need of a Savior so that He will give us the gift of repentance, faith and love for Him), and then God Himself will enable us to keep the second greatest command, which then fulfills the rest when lived out. (Matt. 22:37-38, Rom. 13:9-14, Gal. 5:14 - but "love" doesn't mean telling people the lies they like

hearing, approving of what God says He hates, inventing our own version of God that is soft and fluffy, etc.)

People who claim to know what pleases God, but encourage people to remain in their sins are NOT speaking on behalf of God. He said people will turn from their sin when the message is from Him. (Jer. 23:22-23) Paul said that the doctrine in the Bible conforms with godliness. (1Tim. 6:3) Jesus said that whoever teaches others to disobey His commands will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:19) Since Jesus paid for our sin on the cross, we are no longer enslaved to sin when we accept Him as our Savior. He rescues us not only from the punishment for our sins, but also sets us free from the sin once desired by our old sinful self when He indwells us with His Spirit. We are given a greater desire to please Him than to do what we used to enjoy (sinning). (John 8:31-36, Rom. 6, Gal. 5:13, 2Pet. 2:19, Phil. 2:13, Titus 3:3-8)

God will make His home with those of us who truly love Him, indwelling us and becoming one with us in Spirit. (Try to really understand this, again: John 14:15-26 - we MUST be born again. If not, then we are NOT children of God.) We MUST cleanse our temples—this is more important than many believers seem to realize! (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19) I believe it is appropriate to compare this to the wise virgins who trimmed the wicks of their lamps (and filling them with oil would correspond to remaining filled with the spirit by hearing and reading the Word of God—His Word is a light for our path—thus the lamp analogy. (Matt. 25:1-13) The parable ends with a warning to be ready! If we don't care about this, we should be asking ourselves why not? Not everyone who calls Jesus "Lord" is born again (which requires true faith from the heart, put into action in order to test whether it is genuine - 1 Pet. 1:7-9, 2Cor. 13:5), but we MUST be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 7:21-27, Luke 13:23-28, John 3:3-8) Don't deceive or be deceived. (2Tim. 3:1-5, 12-17, 4:1-5) The scenario described by Paul to Timothy is being played out before our very eyes in this country today.

Let's remember that Paul told us not to judge others for the same sins we do ourselves, but to address our own issues first. (Rom. 2:1-5) That is the same message Jesus gave when He scattered the accusing crowd and then told the adulterous woman to go and sin no more, as well as when He said to remove the log in your own eye BEFORE trying to remove the splinter in your brother's eye. (John 8:11, Matt. 7:5) He never said not to remove it, but just not to be so focused on other people's issues that we never address our own. God does hate hypocrisy, but that doesn't mean that we're all to encourage one another in our favorite sins. It means holding ourselves up to HIS standards, not legalistically (trying to be impossibly strict - Gal. 5:1) or with "cheap grace" (failing to recognize the precious cost of our salvation, looking for ways to get out of

obeying - Gal. 5:13, Rom. 6:1-2), but in order to truly please Him out of love and respect—that is the motivation. We are warned not to get caught up in the sins of others while trying to restore them to fellowship. (Gal. 6:1, Jam. 5:19-20, Jude 1:23, 2Tim. 2:24-26) He loves EVERYONE and will forgive ALL sins for FREE, but when our lives have been ransomed by our Redeemer, then we belong to Him from that time forward. (Rom. 7:4-6, 2Cor. 5:14-15, 2Tim. 2:4)

God cannot be mocked. (Gal. 6:7-8, 2Tim. 2:19-22) He knows our very heart and where our priorities lie. (1 Chron. 28:9) He has done all that is needed for our salvation. (John 19:30, Col. 2:14-15) When we put Him first as He is meant to be and is the only One who deserves to be, we can overcome the world and all of its fallen, sinful lures as well as the snares of our old self, by the power of His Spirit within us—whether God chooses to deliver us instantaneously, or to help us achieve the victory one day at a time. (John 15:18-21, 16:33, 1John 3:13, 4:4-6) He knows who truly loves Him above all and desires to be delivered in order to please and serve Him, and who just wants an easy way out or an excuse as to why they “can’t” change. There are no secrets from Him. (Mark 4:22, Luke 8:17, 12:2-3, Psa. 94:9, 139:23-24, Rev. 3:23, Heb. 4:12-13) He knows how each person came to be where they are in life (Job 31:4), and He is able to rescue those who put their entire trust in Him and believe He is able to do it. (2Pet. 2:9-10)

When the Bible refers to our “former” sins and how we “were” washed clean, it does not mean that we are free to go back to wilfully wallowing in the mud (1Cor. 6:11, 2Pet. 1:9-11, 2:18-22) without any care of pleasing our Savior and honoring His great sacrifice on our behalf whatsoever. (Gal. 2:20, Phil. 1:27-30, 3:17-19, 1Pet. 4:1-2) We are repeatedly warned that if we have no problem deliberately living in sin after claiming to come to salvation, that we are deceiving ourselves about being saved. (1John 1:5-10, 2:3-6, 3:3-10, Rom. 6:1-7, 1Cor. 6:9-11, 2Cor. 13:1-5, Gal. 6:7-8, Eph. 4:17-24, 2Tim. 2:19, 1Pet. 1:14-19, 2Pet. 1:5-11, Rev. 22:10-15) He is able to save us from every temptation. (1Cor. 10:13) He hasn’t tempted anyone ever, in any way, and most certainly He has not made anyone to behave in a way that He despises. (Jam. 1:13-14)

When we are born again, God Himself gives us the desire to please Him and the help we need to understand His will and obey. (Phil. 2:12-13) He is faithful to forgive (1John 1:9). That doesn’t mean that we plan ahead to sin, then ask forgiveness, or that we remain continually in the same sin (not just stumble into it temporarily) for which we asked forgiveness. Repentance by its very definition involves turning from the sin, or it is not repentance at all. If we don’t think God knows the difference, then what hope is there for us? What else “doesn’t He know”? Think about it and get serious as to whether you really believe or not.

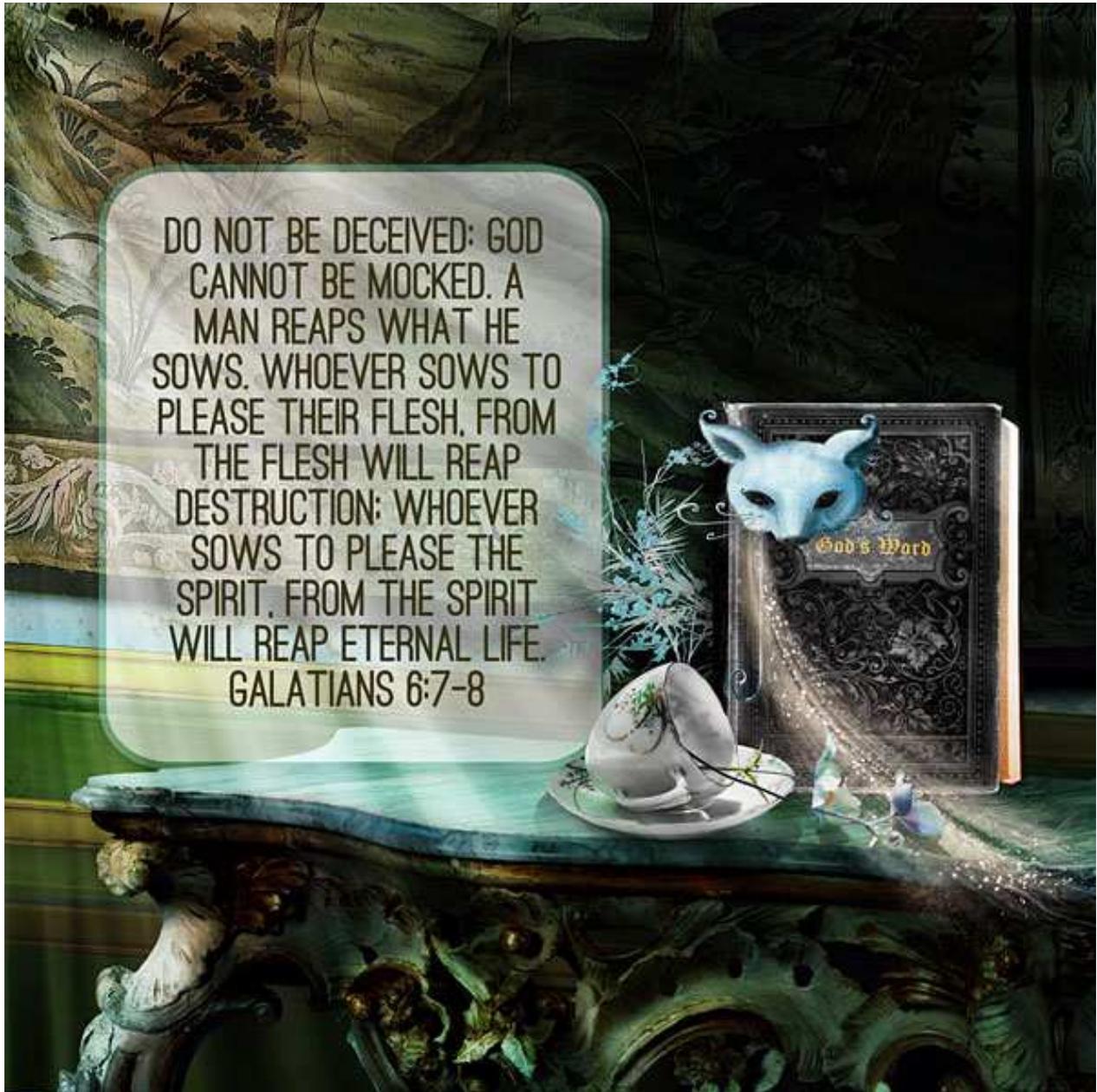
Confessing and receiving forgiveness also doesn't mean we should flaunt sin in a parade. God hates pride to begin with (Prov. 8:13)—how much more so when we are proud *of sin*? (Rom. 1:32, 1Cor. 5:2) He certainly never told us to be proud of supporting unrepentant sinners in our congregations—on the contrary. (1Cor. 5) Shall we have a parade to celebrate adulterers, liars and thieves, too? Don't we tell them that if they are believers, they are freely forgiven *when they repent and refrain from intentionally repeating those sins*? (1Pet. 4:3-5)

This is not too hard to understand if we actually WANT to discover the truth, but The Message is deceiving people. Sadly, but most assuredly, I believe that the author will have to give an answer for leading people astray. For myself, I am sounding the alarm. (Ezek. 33:1-20) Homosexuality is sin and God still hates it the same as He always did. He detests ALL sexual immorality, never "changing with the times." I have tried to explain as best as I could why, although we don't really need to know why in order to obey. I think it helps people understand why purity is important when they realize that these truths are timeless and still in effect regardless of what century or what the culture is currently like. (Remember, God will forgive any sin, but He can't be lied to—repentance/turning from the sin is necessary.)

God is sovereign, and He is good. Praise Him for who He is, what He is like, everything He has done and continually does, and for what He is going to do! If we truly seek Him and not just what He can give us or do for us, and desire to please Him and not only ourselves, He will empower us to desire His ways rather than our sinful ways and help us overcome this fallen world so that we can walk in a manner worthy of Him. (Eph. 4:1, Phil. 1:27, Col. 1:10, 1Thess. 2:12)

I want to end, once again, with this: God LOVES you! He does NOT love sin, though—not before or after salvation. Whoever rejects Jesus will pay the penalty for their own sins. (John 8:24) There is no way to be saved without believing in Him. (John 3:36) God never will approve of sin, but He has made a way to free us from both our past sins AND the desire to continue sinning. When we are truly born again, we WILL be changed. If not instantly, then day by day there will be victories and improvement, so long as we abide in Him (Jesus). Isn't it better to know this now than after it's too late? I want to see everyone I've ever had any sort of contact with praising God in His courts forever. Hallelujah!

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