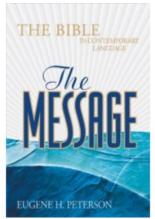


# Justin Peters MINISTRIES

"...for they received the Word with great eagerness, searching the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so..." Acts 17:11

A Brief (and by no means exhaustive) Summary of Passages Contained Within "The Message" by Eugene Peterson Which Directly Compromise Fundamental Tenets of Orthodox Christianity



What follows is a comparison/contrast and analysis of several well – known passages as found in major translations such as the KJV, NASB, and NIV as well as these same passages as found in *The Message* authored by Eugene Peterson. Any intellectually honest assessment of the following notes leads to the inescapable conclusion that *The Message* compromises some of the fundamental doctrines of orthodox Christianity.

I was led to this study when at my home church of FBC Vicksburg, MS all of our high school seniors were given copies of *The Message* as

graduation gifts. I did not at the time own a copy of *The Message* nor had I read it. My exposure to it at that point was limited to seeing it cited in other works. This event, however, led me to read and study this paraphrase more in depth. Let us remember that what we believe about God is derived from what we read in His word. If one reads an erroneous Bible, then it logically follows that what one believes about God will also be in error. This product *is labeled on the front cover* as being "The Bible in Contemporary Language." It is being promoted to teenagers and young adults – the most impressionable of those among us.

# Matthew 6:9

New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update	The King James Version	The New International Version	The Message
•		9 "This, then, is how you should pray: "'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,	9 With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this: Our Father in heaven, <i>Reveal who you</i>
rour name.	name.	name,	are.

This, of course, is a passage from what is commonly referred to as "the Lord's Prayer." There are two problems with Peterson's rendering of this familiar passage. The first is that Peterson includes an imperative from Jesus to the Father that is not in the text. The second, and much more serious, problem is the *nature* of His imperative – *Reveal who you are*. Why would Jesus Christ who *is* the revelation of God (Heb. 1:1-3) ask God to reveal Himself? The Revelation of God is the One Who is standing there praying the prayer! This imperative by Jesus certainly strongly implies that God *has yet* to reveal Himself. I beg to differ. Also, notice the room which is implicitly provided for a later revelation of the antichrist who will, of course, claim to be the revelation of God.

#### John 10:30

New American Standard Bible	The King James	The New International	The Message
: 1995 Update	Version	Version	
30 "I and the Father are one."	30 I and my Father	30 I and the Father are	30 I and the Father are one
	are one.	one."	heart and mind."

Another familiar passage. The NASB, NIV, and KJV are all practically identical, save for the insertion of a personal pronoun found in the latter. Not so *The Message*'s rendering. *The Message* denigrates the uniqueness and deity of Jesus. Let us remember that David was a "man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22) but he was not God.

# 1 Timothy 4:1-5

New American Standard	I The King James Version	The New International	The Message
Bible : 1995 Update		Version	
1 But the Spirit explicitly	1 Now the Spirit speaketh	1 The Spirit clearly says	1 The Spirit makes it clear
says that in later times	expressly, that in the latter	that in later times some will	that as time goes on, some
some will fall away from	times some shall depart	abandon the faith and	are going to give up on the
the faith, paying attention	from the faith, giving heed	follow deceiving spirits and	faith and chase after
to deceitful spirits and	to seducing spirits, and	things taught by demons.	demonic illusions put forth
doctrines of demons,	doctrines of devils;		by professional liars.

Of the passages which I have cited in this letter, this is the least worrisome but is worrisome nonetheless. Paul is clearly referring to demonic powers but note the unmistakable human spin which Peterson employs. He diminishes the demonic powers by referring to them as mere "illusions" which are forwarded not by demons but by "professional liars." Such a reference could encapsulate a carnival barker.

### Matthew 5:5

New American Standard	The King James	The New International	The Message
Bible : 1995 Update	Version	Version	
5 Blessed are the gentle, for	5 Blessed are the	5 Blessed are the meek	,5 You are truly blessed when
they shall inherit the earth	meek, for they shall	for they shall inherit the	you are content with just who
	inherit the earth	earth	you are - no more, no less.

What?!? Not only does this not have anything to do with the passage at hand, it is stunningly un-biblical. What if a homosexual is reading this? Should he be content with "just who he is?" What about an agnostic? A Hindu? What about one who believes himself to be a "Christian" but is living in sin? This is not even true for a Bible-believing, committed Christian! There should *never* be a time when we are "content with just who we are!" This is a *profoundly* unbiblical statement.

#### 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

#### New American Standard The King James Version The New International The Message Bible: 1995 Update Version 9 Or do you not know that 9 Know ye not that the 9 Do you not know that the 9 Don't you realize that this the unrighteous will not unrighteous shall not wicked will not inherit the is not the way to live? Unjust inherit the kingdom of kingdom of God? Do not be people who don't care about inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: God? Be not deceived: deceived: Neither the God will not be joining in his neither fornicators, nor neither fornicators, nor sexually immoral nor kingdom. Those who use idolaters nor adulterers nor and abuse each other, use idolaters, nor adulterers, idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor nor effeminate, nor male prostitutes nor and abuse sex, (Guess what's missing!) homosexuals. abusers of themselves homosexual offenders with mankind, 10 nor thieves, nor the 10 Nor thieves, nor 10 nor thieves nor the 10 use and abuse the earth covetous, nor drunkards, covetous, nor drunkards, greedy nor drunkards nor and everything in it, don't nor revilers, nor swindlers, nor revilers, nor slanderers nor swindlers qualify as citizens in God's will inherit the kingdom of extortioners, shall inherit will inherit the kingdom of kingdom. God. the kingdom of God. God. 11 Such were some of you;11 And such were some of 11 And that is what some of 11 A number of you know but you were washed, but you: but ye are washed, you were. But you were from experience what I'm you were sanctified, but but ye are sanctified, but washed, you were talking about, for not so long you were justified in the ye are justified in the sanctified, you were ago you were on that list. name of the Lord Jesus name of the Lord Jesus, justified in the name of the Since then, you've been Christ and in the Spirit of and by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ and by cleaned up and given a our God. God. the Spirit of our God. fresh start by Jesus, our Master, our Messiah, and by our God present in us, the

This one is serious. One of the sins to which the Apostle Paul is clearly referring is that of homosexuality. Notice that *The Message* completely omits the word. In its stead, Peterson inserts the phrase "those who use and abuse the earth." The *earth?* From where in the world (or the text as the case may be) did he get the *earth?* There seems to be an environmental agenda at work here. One could not read this passage in a real Bible and come away believing that homosexuality was permissible under any circumstances. One would never know from reading *The Message*, however, that it was a problem in any sense.

# Romans 1:26-27

New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update	The King James Version	The New International Version	The Message
26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged	for even their women did	gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations	26 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.
27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the	their lust one toward another; men with men	27 In the same way the menealso abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other menand received in themselves the due penalty for their	they abused and defiled one another, women with women, men with men—

New American Standard	The King James Version	The New International	The Message
Bible : 1995 Update		Version	
due penalty of their error.	recompence of their error	perversion.	godless and loveless
	which was meet.		wretches.

This passage dealing with homosexuality is quite a bit more problematic for Peterson because here he has more with which to contend than a single word. Here, he has two entire verses with which to wrestle. With 1 Cor. 6:9-11, Peterson could simply leave out a word. What to do here? Well, Peterson provides a loophole: *all lust, no love.* The not-so-subtle insinuation is that 'Well, if these people had just done this out of *love*, then it would have been ok.' There is clearly in *The Message* room for a 'committed, loving' homosexual relationship. You see, it is not the nature of homosexuality that is the grievous sin in *The Message*, it is simply the absence of *love*.

# 1 Timothy 1:10

New American Standard Bible : 1995 Update	The King James Version	The New International Version	The Message
10 and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers	10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars	10 for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers	10 but for the irresponsible, who defy all authority, riding roughshod over God, life, sex, truth, whatever!

The Message again simply leaves out the reference to homosexuality and replaces it instead with the generic "sex." Inexplicably, the NIV appears to do the same. There are 3 passages in the N.T. that deal with homosexuality and The Message *utterly fails* on all 3.

Note: The Message does, in fairness, appear to be relatively on track in regards to Leviticus 18:22. This, though, does not excuse its abject failure in the N.T. Let's be honest, how many people (teenagers especially) are realistically going to do devotional reading from Leviticus? Quite more likely, though, they will read Romans and 1 Corinthians.

# **Romans 8:35**

New American Standard Bible : 1995	The King James Version	The New International Version	The Message
Update			
distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or	us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or	hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness	35 Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, <i>not even the</i> worst sins listed in Scripture:

This one really is troublesome. Notice that all of the elements which Paul rightly asserts will never separate us from Christ are very earthly and temporal (tribulation, persecution, famine, etc.). Paul is basically talking about hard times. Look at what Eugene Peterson brazenly inserts into the passage: *not even the worst sins listed in Scripture*. Wow. This should trouble any clear thinking believer. Sin IS what separates us from God! That is why we need a Savior! Sin is not even *remotely* in view in this passage. This is heresy.