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## What Is Man Trying To Do Anyway?

By Mike Pace

After God had designed and ordained His plan for man's redemption, man began tampering with that which God had fixed. It is now the year 1983, and just about every doctrine of God has in some way been revised, altered or perverted by men down through time. It is a shame to mankind, as man should be willing to humbly accept what God has ordained in religion, and quit trying to improvise or improve God's Word. It is a sin for man to alter God's Word in any way. There are some areas of scripture in which man has only slightly changed God's Word to suit his own personal feelings. This is still a sin regardless of how slight the alteration might be. In the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 4:2, this instruction was given, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it . . ." Also Proverbs 30:6, "Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Even in the New Testament, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18, 19).

But there are not only ways in which man has only slightly changed the Word of God, there are some ways that man has altered the Word that are easily recognizable. Notice with me, if you will, just a few of the most obvious revisions by man.

1. FAITH HAS BEEN PLACED BEFORE HEARING. Even though this is an impossibility, from an intellectual point of view, the attempt is still made by man. Some men today teach the direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon an individual, which they say brings faith to the

affected person so that he/she can then hear and receive the Word of God. But I want you to notice what God has to say about this, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10:17). The obvious question that comes to mind is, how could a person believe when he has never been taught the Word of God? The Apostle Paul asked, "How shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). Man in his ignorance has changed God's Word, and it is not acceptable to God!

2. MEN SOMETIMES PLACE SALVATION BEFORE BAPTISM. Some teach as doctrine that a person is saved and then at some later time may as an outward expression of the salvation that has already taken place, may be baptized. One of the things, however, that Jesus taught us is that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). One of the interesting characteristics of the teachings of the New Testament pertaining to the relationship of one's belief to salvation is that baptism always precedes salvation. (Compare Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16 and I Peter 3:21.) Man in his negligence to follow closely the Bible's teaching in this matter, has erred in changing the Word of God!

3. SOME MEN TEACH TODAY THAT MAN IS SAVED BY FAITH ONLY. There are some teaching in the religious world today, that all one must do in order to be saved is have "faith". Sometimes they say it this way, "just accept Jesus into your heart as your personal savior". Let's notice what the Bible has to say about this. To begin with, let's observe that the Bible stresses the importance of faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6). But James the 2nd chapter elaborates of this

matter of faith, not only to show how integral faith is to one's salvation, but James says there is another dimension of faith which we must observe. He states it this way, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." (James 2:14, 17). What works is James referring to in this passage? Well, it is obedience to the Word of God. Notice what Paul said in Ephesians 2:8, 9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Now let's combine these scriptures to see what God is teaching us. First of all, we must have the kind of faith that God wants us to have, i.e. complete faith in God and His Word; secondly, it is by the grace of God through our faith, that we will be saved; and thirdly, the kind of faith that will save us is then "working" faith demonstrated by our obedience to God's Holy Word.

4. SOME TODAY TEACH THAT ONCE SAVED A PERSON IS SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED. We who are religiously minded in the world today long for eternal security. It surely is in the mind of every believer to reach the point in one's spiritual life to realize mentally, emotionally and spiritually that a home with God will be ours forever. I John 5:13 reads, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life." It IS God's will for us to have this assurance. But we must also recognize and understand that God warns us of the possibility of apostasy. Hebrews 6:1-6 very plainly informs us of the warning given to Christians that we might "fall away" from that eternal security. In Galatians 5:4 Paul addresses his attention to some who fall in this category as he says, "Ye are fallen from grace". Even Paul himself was aware of the danger of his falling away from the truth. Paul realized that once a person is in a saved condition, he may fall away from the truth. In

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 EDITOR . . . . . Mike Pace  
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**WHAT IS MAN TRYING TO DO ANYWAY?**

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I Corinthians 9:27, Paul says, *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."* We should never listen to those who teach that a person could never fall away from the truth and be lost. God teaches in His Word that it is possible if we let Satan have his way. We should always search the scriptures to see if what we are taught is the truth, (Acts 17:11). We should always prove the spirits, test every teacher in light of God's Word, (I John 4:1).

To be well-pleasing to God, we must accept all of God's Word, and only God's Word as the rule of our life. We must never try to revise it, alter it, change it, add to or subtract from it in any way. Following this pattern, will lead us in the paths that God desires that we live. God forbid that we should ever change God's Word in any manner.

What is man trying to do any way? God has not in any way given any man, regardless of his prominence, the right to change the Word of God. To assume this role, will only lead to one's eternal destruction.

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**LET THE BODY BE THE BODY**

By David Riley

In I Corinthians 12, Paul helps us to understand the church. He describes the church, the body of Christ, to our physical body and thereby shows the unity that must exist in the church. Unity and cooperation among members of the church is much more than a request. It is a command. Sinful, ungodly, and immoral can only begin to describe the condition that exists when members forget this command.

There is a need in the church today to let the body be the body. By this I mean let the body be the body by cooperating as the body should. But, even more, we need to let the body (church) heal the body (church). When our physical body is injured the other members of the body minister to the injured member until it is healed. The other members never do anything that would bring additional hurt to the injured member.

Too often in the church more harm is inflicted upon the injured member by other members who gossip or show a lack of compassion for the injured member. When a member of the body of Christ has sinned and that sin has become public knowledge that member needs the help of caring and understanding members (Gal. 6:1). That member needs Jesus and His body then more than at any other time. Let us determine that we will not pour salt into the wounds of our fellow members but that we will let the body heal the body.

**HOME GROWN**

By Bill Graddy

Society is suffering today because of people problems. We are all products of our environment until we are old enough and wise enough to change ourselves. Sometimes this is almost impossible because as "the twig is bent so grows the tree." The cause and effect of our troubles are home grown! *"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?"* (Ez. 18:3) Some of the "sour grapes" that are producing seeds for the future are sprouting into fruition every day when we practice by precept

and example such thing as, the police driving drunks home, unwed mothers being told that they should not keep their children but give them up for adoption, people in private schools telling their students that they are morally better than those students in public schools, the belief that capital punishment is not a deterrent to crime, that abortion is not murder, and alcoholism is a disease, just to mention a few. The lack of teaching and self-discipline in these have led us to the time that a man and his wife might be eating a hamburger in their favorite restaurant and be gunned down by a person who grew up with this philosophy of easy divorce and a lack of parental supervision in a society who instills freedom without restraint. When we hold to these immoral beliefs and fail to instruct our children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord", how can we expect anything different in the future from what we have sown and practiced in the past? *"For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind."* (Hosea 8:7).

With our heartaches and ills, we are following in the footsteps of Eli, *"because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."* (I Samuel 3:13). The answer lies not in legislation but in the execution in the home by fathers and mothers who teach their children, because our problems are HOME GROWN.

**Do You Have Problems?**

By Harold Turner

Most people readily admit that they have some problem or problems with which they need help. Human problems fall into numerous categories. There are financial problems that plague many people. Hundreds of thousands are burdened with some type of health problem. Our nation seems rightly alarmed about the problems that are tearing at the home. Nearly one-half of marriages are ending in divorce, while many others are only tolerated without love. Many people in our nation are battling against the problem of alcohol, which has gotten a death grip on their life. Numerous others are wrestling with a problem of hate, or worry, resentment, depression, pride, selfishness, envy, etc. The list of problems that trouble us physically, mentally and spiritually, seems to be unending.

Problems are an undeniable fact of life. Job truly described all generations, when he said, *"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble."* (Job 14:1) All people of all nations have to learn to live with and amid problems.

How many times have we asked, "Why?" "Why do we have to have problems in life?" "Why do we have to suffer so much?" We may not be able within our lifetime to find the answer to why we have certain problems. Certain problems may arise from certain situations in life, but it is difficult to provide the answer to why some problems exist. However, it is only natural for us to question why our particular problems came about. It may or it may not actually matter why they exist. If they happen because of some mistake we have made, then it may be important to know why in order that we not make the same mistake again. Really, the important thing about problems is how we deal with them.

Sometimes people ask, "Do Christians have problems?" Certainly, Christians have problems. The presence or absence of problems has nothing to do with whether or not one is a Christian. So, we might ask, what is the advantage of being a Christian if one has problems the same as those who are not Christians? There are many problems that the Christian is exempt from because of the life he lives. Too, the Christian has help and instruction from God to deal with his problems. The Christian has something to hold on to when the sea of life churns with problems. And, the Christian learns that problems and trials can be helpful to him in many ways. If trials are faced with the proper attitude, they can help to build strong character, and they can help us understand and help others when they are suffering from difficult problems.

How can we learn to adjust to and cope with our problems? There are several principles that can help us in dealing with our problems. In Psalm 42:5 David, who was wrestling with a problem of depression, remembered something to help, saying, *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquited in me? hope thou in God."* In a similar situation David said, *"I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me."* (Psalm 142:2-3.) David learned to rely on God to help him with his problems. And in Psalm 46:1, he said,

*"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

We have the same assurance today as David had. In I Peter 5:7 we are encouraged to *"Cast all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."* In Phillipians 4:6-7 we are told how to overcome worry, *"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."* The Christian has the promise of God's constant help in Romans 8:28, *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* God cares about his people, and provides them help to overcome the problems of life. Though the problems are not always removed, God does provide us strength to cope with what cannot be changed. We must learn to trust in his wisdom, believing that he will help us.

The most serious type of problems we have to deal with are those brought about by sin. These not only disturb us in this life, but will be eternally tragic. The underlying cause of most problems can be traced directly or indirectly to sin. This is not to say that all problems are a result of sin, nor is it to say that the problems related to sin are from sins of immorality. Take for an example the problems of worry and depression. There may be any number of things that bring these problems about, but the major cause for them is a lack of trust. We just fail to trust in God to help us work things out. Jesus specifically tells us not to worry (Matt. 6:25-34). To disobey is sin. When we follow closely to Christ and his teachings, most of life's problems are removed. As we have seen above, Christ has promised to help us with our problems. Through Him we can overcome. We should learn to accept and trust the statement of Phillipians 4:13, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* Christ can help us through every difficult situation in life. Learn to trust Him.

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*" . . . ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."*

— John 16:20

## What Is Your Relationship To Christ Now?

By Glynn V. Purdy

**Where we spend eternity depends on our relationship with Christ when we die!**

When a baby comes into this world, he is innocent. Sin is the "transgression" of God's law (I John 3:4) and the baby has not sinned! Jesus says that we must be *"converted and become as little children"* in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18:3). He further states that a little child *"is such as the kingdom of heaven"* (Luke 18:16). Therefore if a little child dies, such a one is already ready for heaven, for he has not sinned against God's law. He is not saved, but is safe with God.

**If the child grows into the age of responsibility to God, he can do one of two things.**

He may die in his sins and be lost, or he can obey God, have his sins forgiven, be added to the church, live faithfully and go to heaven. If he lives, he lives in the world and will sin. ALL SIN, (Rom. 6:23). The WAGES of sin is spiritual DEATH, (Romans 6:23). NO ONE can go to heaven directly from the world; it must be THROUGH the church! Paul told the Ephesians that **before** they obeyed God and became members of the Lord's church, *"That at that time ye were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."* (Ephesians 2:12-13). ALL that is in the world is foreign to God, (I John 2:15-17). One can escape this by being delivered from this "power of darkness and delivered into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. 1:13). Are you in the world or have you obeyed Christ, become saved from your past sins and been added to the saved, the church? (Acts 2:47; Mark 16:15-16).

**After a person is delivered from the world into the church, he can do one of two things.**

He may remain faithful to his vows to Christ and die "in Christ" and be saved, or he may go back into the world and be

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## WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST NOW?

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lost. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord (to die in the Lord is to die in the church, Col. 1:18, GVP) from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them", (Rev. 14:13). When Christ returns at the end of this earth, "The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord", (I Thess. 1:16-17.) But some will fall away from Christ and be lost: who were once saved!

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them". (II Peter 2:20-21.)

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins", (James 5:19-20).

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall", (I Cor. 10:12).

Paul said of himself, "But I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage; lest by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected", (I Cor. 9:27). We are to "give diligence to make our calling and election sure", (II Peter 1:10).

We again ask, "What is your relationship to Christ now?" If it is right will you keep it that way? If it is wrong do you plan to make it right? When? The Bible tells us that "now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). We may have a tomorrow, but it is not promised and we should not depend on it! It is not safe to put off salvation until tomorrow! There may not be such a time for us! Obey God now and remain faithful unto death!

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"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Galatians 5:26

# How to Become a Christian

The most important question ever asked is: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Then, the **HOW** becomes equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2). This faith comes by the hearing of the word of God. (Rom. 10:17). "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6). With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30). In repentance, we turn from sin, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord. (Matt. 3:8,

Luke 13:3). With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10). Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27). Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

**BECOME A CHRISTIAN**