

Bible Bloopers



If, like me, you are pretty average at typing, you'll be pleased to know that there's nothing new about typos. Like most folks, I was never taught to type, and so my first draft of an 1,800-word sermon is riddled with errors - usually over 100 of them (and that is with 'autocorrect' on!)

It's one thing for a rank amateur like me to make typos, but it is quite another for someone whose job is publishing. **Enter the unfortunate printer of a 1716 edition of the King James Version of the Bible. In that famous story of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery, (you know, "let he who is without sin cast the first stone") the printer made a grave and far-reaching typo.**

You'll find it in John 6:11, right at the end of the story. Jesus instructs the woman "to go and sin no more." But in the 1716 version, he didn't. The dozy printer accidentally reversed the two letters of the word 'no' with dramatic and nearly, for him, fatal consequences. **The printed edition read, "Go and sin *on* more."** The version quickly became known as the 'Sin On Bible'. Now people everywhere had the Bible's permission to sin in whatever way they wanted and to whatever degree they wished. Jesus said so. "Go and sin *on* more."

Regrettably, the 400-year-old translators of the King James' Version did not do a perfect job. They have given us many misleading messages. One of my least favorite is the terrifying phrase: 'Filthy Lucre' (1 Timothy 3:3). I grew up in morbid fear of a man named Luca who rarely washed. (We Londoners have no use for the letter 'r' at the end of words. Try saying 'Lucre' in my accent and you'll get 'Luca'.)

Needless to say, in the original Greek text, the 'lucre' is not 'filthy'. A more accurate translation of 1 Timothy 3:3 is 'lover of money'. This is an important distinction, because scripture is not saying that money is 'filthy' – but the way people use it can be.

It raises the whole disturbing question of our relationship with money. Yes, I mean **relationship**. But wait, how can you have a relationship with something that is merely

an object and not a person? Well, money has power, just like a living organism. It has, if you like, a spirit. In a dynamic book, a Harvard-trained financial planner named George Kinder, describes the relationships between human beings and money.

Kinder says there are seven stages to becoming mature in our relationship with money. Here they are:

1. Innocence: At this stage we are not aware of the concept of money. Stuff we need will simply be provided, even though we don't really know or care how.
2. Pain: This stage is when we realize that some have more money than us. We learn that if we want more money, we will need to work harder.
3. Knowledge: This is the stage associated with the intellect, when we learn about budgeting, saving, goal-setting, and investing.
4. Understanding: Feelings such as greed, envy, inequality and resentment are always associated with money. This stage is when we begin to understand these feelings and come to terms with them.
5. Vigor: In this stage, we grasp how much energy we must invest to reach our financial goals. When we discover the purpose for our lives and direct our energies towards achieving this purpose, we begin to experience freedom.
6. Vision: In this stage, the vigor is directed outwards. This involves achieving the welfare of a community, either with or without a profit motive. **We understand that money is a channel through which our souls are directed.** We believe that nothing belongs to us in particular and consider community as the true owner.
7. Aloha (By the way, Kinder lives in Hawaii. Can you tell?): This is the final stage of money maturity, where we do good without expecting anything in return. We understand the benefits and dangers of money; but those truths do not overwhelm us. We connect with the world from our spiritual selves and believe in compassionately reaching out, without getting anything back. This is altruism.

What a challenge. **According to Kinder, money maturity means holding onto things lightly, placing community needs ahead of our own, and giving with no expectation of getting anything in return.** I think Jesus would agree. How about you?