

HOW TO CONFUSE THE GOSPEL IN SIX EASY CLICHES

adapted from the book *Grace Intervention*, by Bill Giovannetti

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Cliché	What's wrong with it.	Comment	Scripture
<p>1</p> <p>Ask Jesus into your heart or life.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's not in the Bible. 2. Where's the Cross? This language bypasses the true saving work of Christ at Calvary. 3. A person can ask Jesus into their heart without trusting in him as their only hope. 4. What's a heart? Is it the literal organ that pumps blood? Kids, especially, take this concretely and picture a little G.I. Jesus doll inside their chest. 5. In the end, it's meaningless. Plus it feeds our innate narcissism by pointing to self instead of Christ. 	<p>A preacher once told the story of a Buddhist who asked Jesus into his heart. He later told the preacher, "I now have Jesus in my heart AND Buddha in my heart." That's the problem with this cliché. It fails to bring a person to faith alone in Christ alone.</p> <p>The indwelling of Christ & the Holy Spirit is a <i>consequence</i> of faith, but this cliché says nothing about faith in Christ and him crucified.</p>	<p>"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise..." Ephesians 1:13, NKJV.</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Give your life (or your heart) to Christ.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's not in the Bible. 2. You don't have a life to give; you're dead. 3. In the great plan of salvation, who's the giver and who's the receiver? This cliché inverts the gospel arrows. 4. Where's the Cross? 5. It makes the price of salvation rest on our shoulders instead of God's. 	<p>Let's turn this cliché on its head, and watch what happens:</p> <p><i>Christ gave his life FOR you that he might save you, thus giving his life TO you, that for the rest of your days he might live his life THROUGH you.</i></p>	<p>I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Galatians 2:20, NKJV.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Commit your life to Christ.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You can't even commit to a diet. If salvation depends to even a tiny fraction on your own commitment, you're doomed. 2. The one commitment that counts is the commitment to you displayed by Jesus Christ when he poured out his life on Calvary's cross. 3. If salvation is by commitment, then salvation is by works. Once again, this cliché inverts the gospel arrows. 4. Commitment is bad news. 	<p>There is a sense in which you commit <i>your hopes</i> to one way of salvation: faith alone in Christ alone. You commit your safekeeping for time and eternity into the hands of God, banking yourself on his commitment to you. But you have to define it. The commitment burden, however – in the sense of pledging yourself to a course of action – always rests on God's shoulders alone.</p>	<p>...nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. 2 Timothy 1:12, NKJV.</p>

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<p>4</p> <p>Make Jesus your Lord and/or Master.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It works salvation. 2. Where's the cross? 3. To acknowledge Jesus as Lord is to confess his deity. But this cliché, as it's used, makes Lord mean Master. That makes salvation dependent on OBEDIENCE to a Master. 4. Hearers think <i>obedience</i>, not <i>faith</i> in a crucified/divine Savior, when they hear this cliché. 5. How is salvation a <i>gift</i> if you have to perform for it? 	<p>This is the core problem with Lordship Salvation: its inescapable conclusion is salvation by obedience. This is works, and it is NOT good news. It is the bad news of human performance.</p> <p>There's a painful cliché that kicks it up a notch: "<i>If he isn't Lord of all, he isn't Lord at all.</i>" If that's true, we're all doomed.</p>	<p>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2:8, 9, NKJV.</p>
<p>5</p> <p>Surrender your life to Christ or God. or... Give God anything.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where's the Cross? 2. Once again, we've reversed the gospel flow, and made it from us to God (false) instead of from God to us (true). 3. In the gospel message, it's our surrender that counts but Christ's on Calvary's hill. 4. Who's the giver and who's the receiver in the great equation of salvation? 5. If you have to give God everything, you'll never be finished. There's no assurance, and no salvation. 	<p>The correct sense of surrender is this: we surrender up any notion of self-salvation that we might rest all the weight of our hopes in Christ alone.</p>	<p>Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father... Galatians 1:3, 4, NKJV.</p>
<p>6</p> <p>Follow Jesus.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yet another performance-based gospel. 2. If following means behaving in a certain way, or imitating Christ, then this is salvation by behavior. 3. It confuses sanctification with justification. 4. There's no end to it; no definitive time at which we can say we've been saved and sealed by the Holy Spirit. 	<p>Following Jesus is the way of sanctification, not justification. It is a lifestyle. It is the post-salvation Christian life. You can't follow if you're not saved first. We love him because he first loved us.</p>	<p>Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. Ephesians 5:1, 2, NKJV.</p>

*God saves people who come to Christ no matter what language they use!
Even so, let's keep the gospel of grace crystal clear and all of grace.*

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