

# What Protestants and Catholics Can Learn from Each Other

“What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-21 – May 18, 2025

WHAT PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER		
Civil Conversations About Beliefs and Traditions		
Date	Message Title	Bible Text
May 18	What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics	1 Thess 5:16-21
May 25	What Catholics Can Learn from Protestants	Mark 7:1-13
June 1	What About Mother Mary and the Saints?	Luke 1-2
June 8	What About Communion, Mass, and the Eucharist?	1 Corinthians 10-11
June 15	What About Purgatory, the Rosary, and Confession?	Hebrews 10:1-17
June 22	What About Celibacy and Sexual Abuse? [PG-13 sermon]	1 Corinthians 7

## Five Biblical Principles to Live Out as We Discuss Beliefs and Traditions Different From Your Own

1. You have something to learn from everyone you meet. Don't treat other people's beliefs with contempt but rather listen and seek to discern what is true (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21).
2. Seek first to understand then to be understood. Listen first (James 1:19).
3. Be a **Berean**. Always check everything against the Bible for its truth content (Acts 17:11).
4. Always handle others with love and grace (John 13:34-35; Colossians 4:5-6).
5. Always seek to take the log out of your own eye before attempting to take the saw dust out of someone else's eye (Matthew 7:1-5).

## Who Are Protestants? Who Are Catholics?

	CATHOLICISM	PROTESTANTISM
In Common	Believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world	Believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of the world
Distinctions	Authority of the Pope Importance of Tradition 7 Sacraments Veneration of Mary and Saints Salvation through faith and good works	Authority of the Bible Emphasis on God's glory 2 Sacraments Christ is the only mediator between God and humans Salvation is by grace thru faith alone

## What Protestants Can Learn From Catholics

### 1. The depth and importance of **tradition**

- **1 Corinthians 15:3** – For what I received I passed on to you....
- **2 Timothy 2:2** – And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

- **2 Timothy 1:5** – I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.
- **Hebrews 12:1** – Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.
- Pause to get a sense of history
  - How long Christianity has been around: **1995 years** (30AD)
  - How long Catholicism has been around: **1462 years** (590AD)
  - How long Protestantism has been around: **508 years** (1517AD)
  - How long Methodism has been around: **287 years** (1738AD)
  - How long Grace Fellowship has been around: **29 yrs** (1996)
- The difference between tradition and traditionalism
  - Tradition = the living faith of dead people
  - Traditionalism = the dead faith of living people
- Tony Campolo: “Part of our faith is a set of rituals that keep us from forgetting what must not be forgotten and keep us rooted in a past from which we must not be disconnected.”
- Examples of meaningful traditions: Wedding vows, the Lord's Prayer, Communion, the Apostles' Creed, Doxology.
- Some of Grace Fellowship's rich traditions

Jesus in the driver's seat	Turn with me in your Bible to...
Can I pray with you right now?	Circles are better than rows
Double Dog Dare	Unreached People Groups
What is your next step?	Not a family killing church
ICNU	Prayer Altar (cupped hands)
Studying books of the Bible	Mission trips
Prayer Room (Community Prayer Room)	Children and Students
Come as you are, but don't stay as you are.	
Care classes, Alpha, Women and Men's Bible Study, iBloom, EHS	

### 2. A high view of the **sacraments**

- Sacrament = “a thing set apart as sacred”
- Protestants and Catholics differ in the number of sacraments

Protestant Sacraments	Catholic Sacraments
1. Baptism	1. Baptism
2. Communion	2. Confirmation
	3. The Eucharist
	4. Penance and Reconciliation (Confession)
	5. The Anointing of the Sick
	6. Holy Orders
	7. Matrimony

### What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics about Communion

- The importance and seriousness of Communion
- **1 Corinthians 11:23-29**

- **What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics about Confession**
  - The cleansing nature of confession to God
  - **1 John 1:9** – *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
  - The healing nature of confession to God in the presence of another trusted human being
  - **James 5:16** – *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*
  - **Psalms 32:3-5** – *When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord” – and You forgave the guilt of my sin.*
  - The spiritual protection of confession
  - **Ephesians 6:14** – *Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist....*
  - Maybe you don't believe in confessing your sins to a priest in a booth, but when is the last time you confessed your sins to God? To another human being?
- **What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics about Anointing the Sick**
  - The power of praying for the sick with the anointing of oil
  - **James 5:14-15** – *Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.*
  - Available every Sunday at the prayer altar. Cup hands. Ask.
  - Healing prayer every 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in prayer room 10:45am-Noon
- **What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics about Marriage**
  - The seriousness and permanence of marriage
  - **Malachi 2:14-16** – *The Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are His. And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. “I hate divorce,” says the Lord.*
  - Marriage Matters starts Sept 8: [WhatIsGrace.org/Care](http://WhatIsGrace.org/Care)
  - Financial Peace starts Sept 8: [WhatIsGrace.org/Care](http://WhatIsGrace.org/Care)
  - Divorce Care starts Aug 18: [WhatIsGrace.org/Care](http://WhatIsGrace.org/Care)

- **What Protestants Can Learn from Catholics about Singlemindedness**
  - The high commitment of singleness and celibacy of the Catholic priest
  - **1 Corinthians 7:35** – *I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.*

### 3. Some notable Catholic authors and leaders

- **Henri Nouwen** (1932-1996) – Dutch Catholic priest, professor, writer, and theologian who is best known for his books *The Return of the Prodigal*, *The Wounded Healer*, *In the Name of Jesus*, and *The Way of the Heart*.
- **St John of the Cross** (1542-1591) – Spanish Catholic priest best known for his book *Dark Night of the Soul*.
- **St Teresa of Avila** (1515-1582) – Spanish Catholic nun who disciples St John of the Cross and is best known for her book *The Interior Castle*.
- **Thomas Aquinas** (1225-1274) – Italian Catholic Dominican Friar and priest who is known as an influential philosopher and theologian.
- **Thomas Merton** (1915-1968) – American Catholic Trappist monk who is best known for his autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain*.
- **Mother Teresa** (1910-1997) – Albanian-Indian Catholic nun who founded the Missionaries of Charity dedicated to serving the “poorest of the poor” in the slums of Calcutta, India.

### What Are Your Applications This Morning?

- ☐ I am going to confess my sins this morning and make it a lifestyle to confess my sins daily to God and regularly to a trusted accountability partner.
- ☐ I am going to teach my children one of the long-held Christian traditions such as the Lord's Prayer or the Apostles' Creed.
- ☐ I am going to take Communion this morning.
- ☐ I am going to stay in my marriage.
- ☐ I am going to come to the prayer altar this morning, cup my hands, and ask for prayer for healing with the anointing of oil.
- ☐ I am going to do something for “one of the least of these” in the name of Jesus. I am going to seek to be more like Mother Teresa in the ways that she was like Jesus.
- ☐ I am going to pursue the Lord in undivided devotion.