

# What Protestants and Catholics Can Learn from Each Other

“What About Purgatory, the Rosary, and Confession?”

Hebrews 10:1-17 – June 15, 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 the Apocrypha 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? <span style="background-color: yellow;">[PG-13 sermon]</span>	1 Corinthians 7

## CONFESSION

- From Catholics, we can learn the habit of confession.
- From Protestants, we can learn the proper Biblical avenue of our confessions: We confess to **God** for cleansing in our fellowship with God. We confess to a trusted **friend** for healing.
- Catholic teachings on confession** (from Catechism):
  - Confession to a priest is an essential part of the sacrament of Penance: All mortal sins of which penitents after a diligent self-examination are conscious must be recounted by them in confession to a priest (1456).
  - One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church, must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave (mortal) sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience. The confession of venial faults, without being necessary in itself, is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church (1493).
  - Saint Boniface: Mortal sins are grave offenses that sever our relationship with God and, consequently, cause a loss of grace. Anyone dying in a state of mortal sin would suffer eternal separation from God in Hell. Venial sins are lesser offenses that injure but do not destroy one's relationship with God.
- What the Bible says about sin and confession:**

**BAD NEWS:** All sins are “mortal” sins.

- **James 2:10** – For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.
- **Romans 3:23; 6:23** – For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death.
- **Isaiah 59:2** – Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you.

**GOOD NEWS:** Christ died for **all** of your “mortal” sins and **all** of your “venial” sins and **all** your sins (period). Faith in Christ forgives you of **all** your sins forever.

- **Romans 5:8** – But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- **John 3:16** – For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.
- **Ephesians 1:7** – In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.
- **Colossians 2:13-14** – And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Christ, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross.

**FOREVER RELATIONSHIP:** Faith in Christ causes you to be born again as a son or daughter of God. You now have a forever relationship with God that will never be taken away from you.

- **John 1:12** – But to all who did receive Jesus, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.
- **John 10:27-29** – My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (see also Romans 8:31-39)
- **QUESTION:** Have you been born again into God's family? Have you placed your faith and trust in Jesus for your salvation?

God, I repent of my sins, and I turn to You. Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for my sins and rising from the dead. Jesus, I place my trust in You to save and forgive me from all my sins and to give me the free gift of eternal life. Thank You! Now, I choose to walk with You in fellowship.

**WHAT CONFESSION DOES:** Confession of sin to God restores broken **fellowship** to God after we have sinned again. Once we are adopted into God's family, we have a permanent **relationship** with God that will not be revoked. However, we can break the fellowship of that relationship as we sin again. Confession restores that fellowship.

- **1 John 1:9** – If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- **John 13:10** – Jesus said to Peter, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean.”

**CONFESSING TO A HUMAN:** When we confess our sins to a trusted friend, the Bible promises a healing effect.

- **James 5:16** – Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

## Two Practical Application Tips for Confession:

- ❑ Keep “short accounts” with God. Practice confession directly to God whenever that you realize that you have sinned. [at least daily]
- ❑ Ask someone to be your accountability partner (Proverbs 27:17). Get together regularly and (among other things) confess your sins to that person for accountability and healing.

**YouTube Video:** “5 Accountability Questions for Christian Men” [4:35]

## PRAYER

- From Catholics, we can learn the habit and discipline of prayer. Many Catholics pray the rosary every single day.
- From Protestants, we can learn the Biblical motive & approach to prayer.
- **Catholic teachings on the rosary:**
  - The Catholic church offers a partial indulgence (the removal of the temporary punishment of sin) to Catholics who pray the rosary (1471-1479, 1498).
  - The rosary involves saying a series of prayers counted on a string of beads: praying the *Our Father* five times (big beads), praying *Hail Mary* fifty times (small beads), praying *Glory Be* five times.
- **What the Bible teaches about prayer:**
  - Jesus exhorted us to not pray in “vain” (meaningless) repetitions (Matthew 6:7), but rather He instructed us to pray **personally** to God as we would a good Parent (Matthew 7:7-11) or as we would to a good Friend (John 15:12-17). Prayer is not a work that earns forgiveness (Ephesians 2:8-9) but rather is a part of a relationship. When we pray, we have direct access to God Himself (Ephesians 2:18; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19). We should not pray to the dead or to anyone besides God Himself (Lev 20:27; Deut. 18:10-13; 1 Samuel 28:7-19).
  - **Matthew 6:7** (NLT) – *When you pray, don’t babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again.*
  - **Hebrews 4:16** (NLT) – *So let us come boldly to the Throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.*

### Two Practical Application Tips for Prayer:

- ❑ Practice God’s Presence as a lifestyle (1 Thess. 5:17). Talk to God conversationally throughout your day as you would to a close friend or family member.
- ❑ Pray with other people just every chance you get. There is something powerful about praying aloud with another person (Matt 18:18-20).

## PURGATORY

- From Catholics, we can learn that there are consequences for our sins.
- From Protestants, we can learn the Bible’s solution for our sins.
- **Catholic teachings on Purgatory:**
  - Purgatory is a state of final purification after death and before entrance into heaven for those who died in God’s friendship but were only imperfectly purified. It is a final cleansing of human imperfection before one is able to enter the joy of heaven (1030-1031).
  - There are certain acts that a person can do to help a dead loved one get out of Purgatory sooner including praying for them, taking the Eucharist on their behalf, almsgiving on their behalf, works of penance on their behalf, and indulgences on their behalf. Indulgences include doing the sign of the cross, reciting the rosary, visiting a Catholic shrine, and praying for the pope (1032, 1471-1472)

- **What the Bible teaches about salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life:**
  - Purgatory is **nowhere** mentioned in the Bible.
  - The Bible is very clear that, once a person puts their trust in Jesus Christ, they circumvent all judgment and pass into eternal life.
  - **John 5:24** – *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*
  - Jesus’ work on the cross is **finished** (John 19:30) and is completely sufficient to forgive all sins (Colossians 2:13) and to purify a believer from all sin (1 John 1:7; Hebrews 10:14).
  - **John 19:30** – *Jesus said, “It is finished,” and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.*
  - “It is finished” = *telestai* = “paid in full” – Our sin debt has been paid in full. Our only responsibility is to receive (by faith) that debt payment on our behalf (John 1:12; Romans 10:9).
  - There are no more works or suffering to be done. Everything that needs to be done for you to be completely accepted by God HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE BY JESUS. Nothing you can say or do will cause God to love or accept you more than He already does in Christ. It is finished!!!!
  - **Ephesians 2:8-9** – *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
  - **Colossians 2:10** (NLT) – *You are complete through your union with Christ.*
  - **Hebrews 10:1-18**
  - The Bible is clear that when a believer dies, she goes straight to be with the Lord (Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinth 5:6-8).
  - **2 Corinthians 5:8** (KJV) – *To be absent from the body (is) to be present with the Lord.*
- **Three Practical Applications for Forgiveness and Salvation:**
  - ❑ If you have any doubt about your salvation, then clear that up today! Right now: Repent of your sins, believe in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and receive Jesus into your life to follow Him.
  - ❑ If you have not done so, go public with your faith in Christ through water baptism. Our next baptism is Sunday, June 22, at 12:45pm. Sign up at [WhatIsGrace.org/Baptisms](http://WhatIsGrace.org/Baptisms)
  - ❑ Because you have been forgiven by God for all of your sins, therefore God expects you to forgive those who have hurt you. To not forgive others invites a purgatory-type misery here on earth (Matthew 18:21-35).