

## What Sets Your Norms?

I am by nature a very private person. Consequently, when things began to go very wrong with one of our daughters we tried to deal with it as best we could. We talked with her, reasoned with her, there were even times when I had given up all hope and wanted nothing more to do with her. Through it all we have always been there for her, yet sticking to our guns, and never stopping trying to get her to change her life. To straighten her life out.

**Proverbs 22:6** *Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* KJV

We've all read that verse. We apply it to our families. As parents we take it very personally. Consequently, when you see one of your own children destroying their life, you naturally wonder... "Where did I fail?" "I should have done better!" "Why am I such a screw up as a parent?" Somehow I didn't train that child like I should have.

And when I say "You take it personally", believe me, it destroys you inside. It eats you alive. I wish I could have had my father close by to give me advise. I'm sure there were times he felt the same about one of his own children. I once heard Charles Groce refer to the "tragedy in the church" that we seem to be unable to keep not only **ALL** our children involved in the church, but looking back over the last fifty years, the record states that not even the majority stayed. My parents had 7 children, 5 came to this movement, 2 stayed. By the way, the two that stayed were the youngest of the five. I guess he had more time to 'train' them. Still, seeing this 'tragedy' in no way makes it easier for you.

Now one day God sent me an unexpected angle to answer my prayers. I was in the basement sending my younger, 'prodigal' daughter an e-mail and quite broken up at some of the things happening in her life, when my older daughter came down to see me. And she opened my eyes to this very verse. It was like I had been completely blind to what it was really saying.

**First**, she pointed out that I had two children. Both raised the same and given the same opportunities. Both loved the same.

Both attended the same schools and same college. Both had the same extended family, same church, yet both became **very different people**. One is very organized, mature, goal oriented, logical, and for you guys out there – she’s great with a map - and we have always enjoyed all of her friends. Both our girls are a lot of fun to be around, although our younger daughter has more similar interests to my wife and myself. Our other daughter is quite funny, loves to party and play games. She loves just about everyone. Gets along so easily with others that I wonder how she came from me. But, she applies herself differently. She would rather play the piano than study. We have to force her to organize any part of her life. She wants to go back to college yet never finds the time to apply. When I finally forced her to sit down and apply she had missed the cut-off date. She’s actually quite smart – well, I’m her Dad so of course I’m going to say that, but for sure she is at least average if not better - yet she thinks she’s dumb. She never sets goals with specific dates for things she wants to achieve. She hangs around with a lot of creepy people. From grade seven on, her friends were people I did not like nor care to be around. Kids you did not want in your home. Any we may have liked wouldn’t stay friends, because they weren’t the ‘cool’ kids. To her, life is a party. So that was the first point she made. Two very different people.

**Second**, she pointed out something I want to talk about today... the point I want to make today... she pointed out that I was not the only one raising this child. The school spent way more time with her than we did. How she handled that influence affected who she was. Her friends spent way more time with her than we did. Try to control who your daughters hang out with and see who really picks their friends.

There is an old proverb that says “ It takes a village to raise a child.” It’s true. So many people have an influence on your child. Every one of you have an influence on every child here. And, I wouldn’t stop there. Every ‘older’ person has an influence on every ‘younger’ person whether they are an adult or not.

You know the strange thing is..., **I knew, EXACTLY**, everything my older daughter was telling me; yet it wasn't until that moment when she said it, that it sunk in. And I'm very grateful to her for that. It changed my life. I could look at the whole situation more objectively. More realistically.

### **What determines our Norms?**

The more time we spend on things, the bigger a place they take in our lives. If you only watch junk on TV, guess what? It becomes part of you. If you only like to watch movies with violence and murder and play video games that key into that... guess what? It becomes part of you. More and more TV shows and movies involve homosexuality, or a gay character somehow. More and more that becomes the '**NORM**'. And once something becomes the norm it is very hard to change the way we think of it.

So... how does this relate to religion? Just like I '**knew**' what my daughter was saying already, I still needed to hear it. Church had always referred to this verse as our obligation as parents. Well it is our obligation as parents, but it is also ALL of our obligation. It is the whole village's obligation.

We use the Word of God as our basis for life. We build our lives around principals we find in this manual. It is our '**Book of Norms**'. So when society changes those norms we need to resist that pressure. When the rest of Christianity tries to change those norms we have to be **VERY CAREFUL**, not to let that influence slowly seep into our thought process. Especially, when those changes creep up in our own congregations. No congregation is immune. Organized or not – I guess the opposite of organized would be 'Chaotic'.

**Romans 16:17** *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

**18** *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* KJV

The reason we search the scriptures is so our minds are influence by God and not slowly tainted by others. The Catholic Church promotes itself as 'The Church'. The one and only. It's teachings affect all Christianity as they slowly permeate into other churches doctrines. A perfect example would be... The Worldwide Church of God. What happened? Did they not follow the example we see here?

**Acts 17:10** *That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. When they arrived there, they went to the Jewish synagogue.*  
**11** *And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. **They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth.*** NLT

World Wide is not the only Church of God affected. Look at the primacy of Peter doctrine and then look around the Churches to see where else that teaching has permeated.

My goal here is not to attack 'Catholics', as I'm sure there are many parishioners that strive to follow the bible as best they can; but my goal is rather to bring to light how so many of their doctrines directly contradict the bible, and how those doctrines are to be avoided.

### **Primacy of Peter**

James Cardinal Gibbons, a Catholic Archbishop wrote ...

"Jesus our Lord, founded but one Church, which He was pleased to build on Peter. Therefore, any church that does not recognize Peter as its foundation stone is not the Church of Christ, and therefore cannot stand, for it is not the work of God."

*(The Faith of Our Fathers, p. 82)*

## Pg 5

Yet what does the bible say...

Paul says in **1 Corinthians 3:11** *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ.* NLT

There is no other foundation but **Christ!** Therefore, **any church** which does **not recognize Christ alone** as the foundation stone cannot be the church of God. They cannot be part of God's true church.

The Catholic Church says that the apostle Peter was the first pope; yet Popes didn't exist until **232 AD**. First to carry the title of Pope was the Patriarch of Alexandria, Pope Heracleus (232–49AD)

Pope means 'papa' or abba... a child's reference to 'father'. Of course the Catholic church says Peter, being the first Pope, wasn't married. Yet we know, Peter had a wife. Let's look.

**Matthew 8:14** *When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever.* NLT

This same story is told in Mark 1:30 and Luke 4:38.

**1Corinthians 9:5** *Don't we have the right to bring a Christian wife with us as the other apostles and the Lord's brothers do, and as Peter does?* NLT

So here we have 4 references to his wife. Why would they deny it? We'll get to that.

In regards to his primacy, now, because of this 'Catholic doctrine', we have many churches saying Peter was first in rank and authority, but **Jesus** said he wasn't.

**Luke 22:24** *Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them.*

**25** *Jesus told them, "In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called 'friends of the people.'*

**26** *But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant.* NLT

This same instruction is reiterated in **Mark 10:44** and **Matthew 20:27**. Generally when something is in the bible over and over. It means something. When we still don't get it I can only imagine God looking down on us and saying...

**“How many times do I have to tell you? What’s wrong with you people?”**

The Catholic Church says Jesus supposedly commissioned Peter to build a church – a gentile church - upon a "rock" **Peter**.

**Matthew 16:18** *Now I say to you that you are Peter (**which means 'rock'**), and upon this rock I will build My church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.*

**19** *And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven." NLT*

Argument sounds foolproof doesn't it? Not only is the church built on Peter but he can do what he wants, when he wants, and heaven will back him up. Well maybe not.

To start with, although this is my personal favorite translation of the bible, we see a major flaw in this particular translation. First, that part in brackets should not be in the bible. **It was added by the NLT**. Secondly, Peter would be more accurately translated 'Stone'. There are many authorities and translators that would verify that. And thirdly, let's read it in context.

**Matthew 16:13** *When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"*

**14** "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."

**15** Then He asked them, "*But who do you say I am?*"

**16** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

**17** Jesus replied, "*You are blessed, Simon son of John, because My Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.*

**18** *Now I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.*

**19** *And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.*" NLT

First let me show you how a doctrine should not be based on something so ambiguous as the word 'you' in verse 19. First he is talking to a group of people, then Peter directly. After his assertion on verse 18 my question is; is he still talking directly to Peter or is he now talking to the whole group again? Who can say with 100% certainty? No one. If we go to Matthew 18, we see here that he is telling the whole church this.

**Matthew 18:15** *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

**16** *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

**17** *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*

**18** *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* KJV

And secondly, no matter what is 'forbidden' or 'permitted' on earth, it had better be within the confines of God's law because we all know that God 'changes not'.

Some arguments are deceptive. For example, the Catholic church agrees that Christ is the 'Head' of the Church, but the 'invisible' Head. The Pope is the 'visible representation of Christ', the 'visible head of the church'. This concept is not found in scripture. Let's read what Jesus says...

**Matthew 28:18** *Jesus came and told His disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.* NLT

Also...

**Ephesians 5:23** *For a husband is the head of His wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of His body, the church.*  
**24** *As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.* NLT

How many of you husbands leave a substitute to rule over your wives while you're at work? Christ nowhere in the bible mentions a substitute to rule over his bride, the church.

The highest office in the Catholic church is 'Pope', and that church considers him 'God in the flesh'. This concept... found nowhere in scripture.

**2 Thesalonians 2:3** *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

**4** *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.* KJV

The Pope is called "Holy Father." This title occurs only one time in the entire scripture and was used by Jesus when he was praying to God the Father.

**John 17:11** *Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to You. Holy Father, You have given Me Your name; now protect them by the power of Your name so that they will be united just as We are.* NLT



For the Pope to demand his followers to call him by this title is blasphemy! But they don't stop there. They insist that their priests be called 'Father' too! Not just the official organization, but each of its members are taught to insist on it!

Many cities police and fire departments have a priest that is called the 'Padre' - another word for 'father' - over their department. He conducts the funerals and mentors and cajoles those who have experienced traumatic events. The problem is... very few firefighters or police go to church any more. Even fewer consider themselves 'Catholic'. So, when one of our members arranged for a priest to become our 'Padre' most of the guys would disappear when he came to visit. It finally got to the point where I was the only one at my hall who would sit and visit with the guy. I actually grew to like him. He was well spoken, smart, full of interesting stories. Fun to be around. However... I wouldn't call him 'Padre'. I always called him by his name. He, amazingly enough, was never offended by that. Conversely, my co-workers who couldn't pass the time of day with him, were very offended. Even after explaining why, they still insisted that I was rude and offensive. Let's look at what Christ said...

**Matthew 23:9** *And don't address anyone here on earth as 'Father,' for only God in heaven is your spiritual Father.* NLT

Now notice it says "spiritual Father", your earthly father is still your father and it is okay to refer to him as such. The whole family make-up with mother and father was constructed so that we could more easily connect with our spiritual Father.

Oh, and before we go any further, let's go back to the marriage question. Priests don't marry. Cardinals don't marry. Bishops don't marry. Yet the bible actually shows something quite different...

**1 Timothy 3:2** *So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach.*

## Pg 10

**3** *He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money.*

**4** *He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him.* NLT

**Titus 1:5** *I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you.*

**1:6** *An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious.* NLT

Many churches use the expression “One fold and one shepherd”, The Church of Jesus Christ of The Latter Day Saints to name one, which are an offshoot of the Mormons to name another. Catholics do the same, to name a third. And there are many, many more. They get this saying from John 10:16. They use it to claim that they are the ‘**only**’ church of God. That their leader is the ‘**only**’ leader that their congregation should listen to. Here is that scripture starting in verse 11...

**John 10:11** *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* KJV

**John 10:14** *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*

**10:15** *As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

**10:16** *And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.* KJV

One day there will be “one fold and one shepherd”. Not today. Today, there are many folds. Also, if Christ is our shepherd, and the Pope, or any other ‘chosen apostle’, is also our shepherd, wouldn’t that make it ‘one **plus** one’. Two. Christ **and** the ‘Pope’. **Two**. Christ and ‘His Chosen Apostle’. **Two**. No, there is **ONE** ‘Shepherd’.

So I've already covered how the Catholic church, being lead by Peter, is free to bind whatever it wills on earth. That makes it free from being encumbered by the bible. From being encumbered by the **Word of God**. It can do as it wishes. The Catholic Church will not personally defend their faith from the scriptures but will instead refer to what the **priest teaches**. Yet every Christian should be able to defend their beliefs from the word of God.

**2 Timothy 3:16** *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

**17** *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* NLT

### **Why don't they want you to refer to the bible?**

First they taught that only the priest could understand the bible, that the common lay person was not endowed by God to understand this document without the interpretation of a priest. But then the church became much more bold in what it actually had to say about the Word of God. Here are some quotations from Catholic sources stating that the bible should not be considered as more authoritative than the church.

"If Christ Himself had written the book and set it forth as a text-book, so to speak, of His religion, we would rest securely in it, and have no need to inquire farther. That the Bible is not a book, like the Koran for instance, set forth by the founder of the religion as its authoritative exposition, is in fact the fundamental weakness of Bible **Protestantism**. If Christ had intended His religion to be propagated and preserved by means of a book, can any conceivable reason be urged why He should not have written one? Of His ability to do so there can, for the Christian, be no question."

(Plain Facts for Fair Minds, p. 26)

## Pg 12

"Is it not strange that if Christianity were to be learned from the Bible only, that Christ himself never wrote a line or commanded his apostles to write; **for their divine commission was not to write but to preach the gospel.**"

(Question Box, p. 70)

"For their divine commission was **not to write** but to preach the gospel." Is that true? Let's see what the Catholic Encyclopedia has to say...

"Christ gave his disciples no command to write, but only to teach."

(Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 5, p. 767)

Did he command them to write? You decide...

**Rev 1:17** *When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if I were dead. But He laid His right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last.*

**1:18** *I am the living One. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.*

**1:19** *"Write down what you have seen—both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen.* NLT

Okay we know he told John **specifically** to write, but what about the others?

Catholic officials have assumed that the command to the apostles to teach, excluded written instruction. However, writing the inspired scriptures was part of the work of not only the apostles but also the prophets in delivering God's message to man. Jesus said, ...

**Matthew 24:35** *..."Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."* NLT

How could they not pass away if they weren't recorded somehow?

**John 12:48** *But all who reject Me and My message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken.* NLT

## Pg 13

Jesus taught that His word would be the standard of judgment in the last day. He spoke them but expected us to be able to read and study them. He himself went into the synagogue to 'read'.

**Luke 4:16** *When He came to the village of Nazareth, His boyhood home, He went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures.*

**17** *The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to Him.* NLT

The prophet's words were meant to be written; recorded for a later date, and then **READ by Christ.**

Unfortunately for them, the Catholic Church has a lot to fear about it's members reading the bible. When their members study the scriptures they learn that in order to please God, they have to throw away the many false doctrines that their church has accumulated over the centuries. This fear was huge when the printing press was invented. Here is an excerpt from an address given by the Cardinals to Pope Pius III in 1503 A.D., and is preserved in the National Library of Paris, Folio No. 1068, Vol. 2, pp. 650, 651:

"Of all the advice that we can offer your holiness we must open your eyes well and use all possible force in the matter, namely to permit the reading of the gospel as little as possible in all the countries under your jurisdiction. Let the very little part of the gospel suffice which is usually read in mass, and let no one be permitted to read more. So long as people will be content with the small amount, your interest will prosper; but as soon as the people want to read more, your interest will fail. The scripture is a book, which more than any other, has raised against us the tumults and tempests by which we have almost perished. In fact, if one compares the teaching of the scripture with what takes place in our churches, he will soon find discord, and will realize that our teachings are often different from the scripture, and oftener still, contrary to it."

Folio No. 1068, Vol. 2, pp. 650, 651

## Pg 14

Oh how I wanted to go through that and highlight and underline so much of it. That is an amazing admission.

Mass is often conducted in Latin, in an unknown tongue, in North America, but the scriptures forbids this.

**1Corinthians 14:8** *And if the bugler doesn't sound a clear call, how will the soldiers know they are being called to battle?*

**9** *It's the same for you. If you speak to people in words they don't understand, how will they know what you are saying? You might as well be talking into empty space.*

**10** *There are many different languages in the world, and every language has meaning.*

**11** *But if I don't understand a language, I will be a foreigner to someone who speaks it, and the one who speaks it will be a foreigner to me.*

**12** *And the same is true for you. Since you are so eager to have the special abilities the Spirit gives, seek those that will strengthen the whole church.* NLT

Let's skip down to vs. 19

**1Corinthians 14:19** *But in a church meeting I would rather speak five understandable words to help others than ten thousand words in an unknown language.*

**14:20** *Dear brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your understanding of these things. Be innocent as babies when it comes to evil, but **be mature in understanding matters of this kind.***

NLT

Why don't they want you to read the bible?

**The Catholic Catechism For Adults** says...

"Can you learn to save your soul just by reading the Bible? No, because certain things in the Bible can be misunderstood, and because the Bible does not have everything God taught." (page 52)

Well, the bible **can be** misunderstood, look at how many different views we have in every single congregation, and certainly **does not have** everything God taught.

**John 21:25** *Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written.* NLT

But do either of those points condemn us? Let's read more...

"How can you get the true meaning of the Bible? You can get it *only* from *God's official interpreter, the Catholic Church.*"

(same book, page 10, emphasis mine.)

Unfortunately, they don't use scriptures that mention this "official interpreter" to back this claim up. There are none. Instead they use human reasoning, human logic, religious philosophy. Ah, now the bible does say something about that...

**Colosians 2:8** *Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.* NLT

And where do we find simple instructions from God? In his word. The doctrine of the 'official interpreter' implies God is powerless to reach you except through the Catholic Priest. That God's revelation, still needs more revealing. It needs mans traditions added to it. **THEN** we can be saved. Poppycock.

You know what other doctrine I find very spooky? Confession. Yet James 5:16 says...

**James 5:16** *Confess your sins to each other...* NLT

So, that changes everything doesn't it? No.... You see the Catholic church states that you **must** go to confessional and tell a Priest your sins at least once a year.

## **The Catechism of the Catholic Church**

The following excerpts you are going to see are from the document “***The Catechism of the Catholic Church***” The numbers that precede each statement are the locating numbers within the document. The highlights and underlining are mine.

**1457** According to the Church's command, “after having attained the age of discretion, each of the faithful is **bound** by an obligation **faithfully to confess serious sins at least once a year.**” [56] Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion, even if he experiences deep contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession. [57] Children must go to the sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion for the first time.

Notice the word “***bound***”. The Church Fathers created another **tradition** which keeps people in **bondage** to the Catholic church. What a powerful weapon to use against Catholics around the world. Basically this doctrine says “If you leave the Catholic church, you will not be able to obtain forgiveness for your sins, which means you won't go to heaven”. Millions of faithful Catholics blindly file into confessional booths, believing that the priest has the power to **absolve** their sins. Where do they find this in scripture? ...

Maybe here...

**Leviticus 5:1** *If anyone sins because they do not speak up when they hear a public charge to testify regarding something they have seen or learned about, they will be held responsible.*

Skipping down to verse 6...

**5:6** *As a penalty for the sin they have committed, they must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering; **and the priest shall make atonement for them for their sin.***



The priest performs the sacrifice to symbolically atone for their sins, remember that sacrifices were only symbolic of the ultimate sacrifice later given by our Lord and Saviour - but were the priests the ones who “forgave” sins. No.

**1495** Only priests who have received the faculty of **absolving** from the authority of the Church can forgive sins in the name of Christ.

At the end of your confession the Priest is to say this....

**1449** God, the Father of mercies, through the death and the resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, **and I** absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**And “ I ”.....** Can a priest absolve your sins? The Pharisees didn't think so. They thought only the Father could.

**Mark 2:4** *They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above His head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus.*

**5** *Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."*

**6** *But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves,*

**7** *"What is He saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!"* NLT

They thought only God could forgive sins and they were experts in religious law. This is what the scriptures taught. **Only God could forgive sins.** Let's read on...

**Mark 2:8** *Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so He asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts?"*

**9** *Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk'?*

**10** *So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said,*

**11** *"Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"*

**12** *And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, "We've never seen anything like this before!"* NLT

Christ had been given the authority to forgive sins **by the Father**. Christ had been part of the God Head. He paid the penalty for our sins and made it possible for God the Father to strike them from our record. Only God the Father can erase your sins from the record, and then, He will only do that **if** you forgive others for sinning against you.

**Matthew 6:14** *"If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you.*

**15** *But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.* NLT

You want your sins absolved, you better go to **God the Father**. Actually, many of the priestly traditions of the Catholic church have ties into the Levitical Priesthood. The garments they wear for one – remember the garments made for Aaron and passed down to each successive High Priest.

**Exodus 29:29** *"Aaron's sacred garments must be preserved for his descendants who succeed him, and they will wear them when they are anointed and ordained.* NLT

And, how the High Priest went into the most holy place once a year to make **atonement** for the congregation.

**Leviticus 4:19** *Then the priest must remove all the animal's fat and burn it on the altar,*

**4:20** *just as he does with the bull offered as a sin offering for the high priest. Through this process, the priest will purify the people, making them right with the LORD, and they will be forgiven.* NLT

It's these similarities that **SEEM** to give their arguments a rationality and ingenuity. They appear to be following the example given in the bible. But didn't Jesus' death tear that veil in two?

**Matthew 27:51** *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;* KJV

Don't we have direct access to God the Father through Jesus our Lord? There is no Levitical Priesthood now. And, our High Priest **is** Jesus.

Catholicism teaches that there is a mediator between you and God. The priest.

**1456** 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, even if they are most secret and have been committed against the last two precepts of the Decalogue; for these sins sometimes wound the soul more grievously and are more dangerous than those which are committed openly." [54]

When Christ's faithful strive to confess all the sins that they can remember, they undoubtedly place all of them before the divine mercy for pardon. But those who fail to do so and knowingly withhold some, place nothing before the divine goodness for remission **through the mediation of the priest**, "for if the sick person is too ashamed to show his wound to the doctor, the medicine cannot heal what it does not know."

The bible teaches us differently.

**1 Timothy 2:5** *For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus.* NLT

One Mediator. Not a priest – Christ Jesus. One Mediator.

## **Idolatry**

Another very disturbing trend in all of Christianity is a movement toward idolatry. God knew this would happen. He adamantly forbade it. Yet it has existed all throughout the ages. What is wrong with us? Some have gone so far as to rewrite the bible in order to allow it. The second commandment says...

**Exodus 20:4** *"You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea.*

**5** *You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject Me.*

**6** *But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love Me and obey My commands.* NLT

Unfortunately the Catholics didn't like this commandment and removed it. Compare the actual 10 with the Catholic 10.

### **Catholic Version 10 Commandments**

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...
3. Remember the Sabbath...
4. Honor your father and your mother...
5. You shall not murder.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness...
9. You shall not covet your neighbours wife...
10. You shall not covet your neighbours goods...

### **Real 10 Commandments...**

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them....
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...
4. Remember the Sabbath...
5. Honor your father and your mother...
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness...
10. You shall not covet...

They took out one commandment – number two - and bumped all the others up one place. Then they added an extra “covet” commandment in the number 10 slot. Pretty daring consider the bible says...

**Revelation 22:18** *And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of prophecy written in this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book.*

19 *And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.*

But, why did they change this...

**1161** Following the divinely inspired teaching of our holy Fathers and the tradition of the Catholic Church (for we know that this tradition comes from the Holy Spirit who dwells in her) we rightly define with full certainty and correctness that, like the figure of the precious and life-giving cross, venerable and holy images of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, our inviolate Lady, the holy Mother of God, and the venerated angels, all the saints and the just, whether painted or made of mosaic or another suitable material, are to be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on sacred vessels and vestments, walls and panels, in houses and on streets.<sup>31</sup>

Venerable comes from the Latin word ‘*venerare*’ meaning ‘**to worship**’. To designate an image as 'venerable' and 'holy' is **blasphemy**. Jesus, when tempted by the Devil said...

**Matthew 4:10** *"Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only Him.'" NLT*

Moses was commanded by God...

**Leviticus 26:1** *"Do not make idols or set up carved images, or sacred pillars, or sculptured stones in your land so you may worship them. I am the LORD your God.* NLT

No one or thing but God alone, is to be worshipped. To bow down to statues and pray; to 'venerate' the relics of 'saints', to kiss crucifixes and adore 'sacred' images or icons of a Madonna – all that is contrary to the teaching of the Bible; yet even the 'Pope' bows down to images of Mary. No wonder Rome banned and burned the Bible.

And since so much of the bible condemns idolatry, the church tries to distance itself from it by stating this...

**2132** The Christian veneration of images is not contrary to the first commandment which proscribes idols. Indeed, "the honor rendered to an image passes to its prototype," and "whoever venerates an image venerates the person portrayed in it."<sup>70</sup> The honor paid to sacred images is a "respectful veneration," not the adoration due to God alone: Religious worship is not directed to images in themselves, considered as mere things, but under their distinctive aspect as images leading us on to God incarnate. The movement toward the image does not terminate in it as image, but tends toward that whose image it is.<sup>71</sup>

Yet they have statues brought into their home, and prayer meetings where everyone bows around the image and prays to it.

**Matthew 15:3** *Jesus replied, "And why do you, by your traditions, violate the direct commandments of God?"* NLT

Speaking of violating direct commandments, here is the whole quotation from the Catechism booklet on the Sabbath question.

### **The Third Commandment**

**Q:** What is the Third Commandment?

**A:** The Third Commandment is: Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

**Q:** Which is the Sabbath day?

**A:** Saturday is the Sabbath day.

**Q:** Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

**A:** We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.

**Q:** Why did the Catholic Church substitute Sunday for Saturday?

**A:** The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday, because Christ rose from the dead on a Sunday, and the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles on a Sunday.

**Q:** By what authority did the Church substitute Sunday for Saturday?

**A:** The Church substituted Sunday for Saturday by the plenitude of that divine power which Jesus Christ bestowed upon her.

**Q:** What does the Third Commandment command?

**A:** The Third Commandment commands us to sanctify Sunday as the Lord's Day.

And of course sanctify at the end there means to 'make holy'.  
( Our article on "The Sabbath" is recommended reading.)

### **Meat**

How many of your friends don't eat 'meat' on Fridays?  
The church forbids it. It is another doctrine of the Catholic Church.  
A Catholic website puts it this way...

"Friday is a day of abstinence from meat for Catholics in order that this little sacrifice will be a work of satisfaction for the sins they have committed...The Church is a mother and knows that unless we are constantly reminded we will not make satisfaction for our sins."

Does that sound like salvation by works? Something the Catholics falsely accuse us of.

**1 Timothy 4:1** *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and **doctrines of devils**;*

**4:2** *Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

**4:3** ***Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats**, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. KJV*

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats. Both call “**doctrines of devils**”. And if you’re in your own bible following along, you’ll notice vs 4 calls all meat... well let’s read it.

**1 Timothy 4:4** *For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:*

So now we can eat **all** kinds of meat. Almost all churches use this verse to prove it. **It must be so if they ALL say it.** There are those in the Churches of God movement that have bought into this, but what creatures are we talking about here? Let’s read the verses together.

🔗 **1 Timothy 4:3** *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, **which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving** of them which believe and know the truth.*

**4:4** *For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: KJV*

If verse 3 is not the qualifier for verse 4 then the bible contradicts itself and can not be trusted. You can’t just follow a verse here and a verse there. It’s all or nothing.



Enough said on that topic.... What about Mary.

### **False view of Mary**

The Catholic Church says Mary was a **perpetual virgin** having no other children after Jesus. She is referred to as the '**Holy Virgin**', prayed to as the '**Holy Mother**'. We've already seen that she should not be prayed to, or venerated, but did she remain a virgin? Or, do they ascribe characteristics to her, to make it easier to worship her. Jesus **had** brothers and sisters...

**Matthew 13:55** *Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?*

**56** *And his sisters, are they not all with us?* KJV

And again in Mark...

**Mark 6:3** *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.* KJV

**Act 1:14** *They all met together and were constantly united in prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus.* NLT

But maybe these are all references to our 'brothers and sisters in Christ'. I personally don't believe that, but let's say I'm wrong. What about this verse? Why is the word 'brother' added here? The other apostles were already his 'spiritual brothers', thus this implies that James was a different type of brother. An actual brother.

**Galatians 1:19** *The only other apostle I met at that time was James, the Lord's **brother**.* NLT

More direct, but could still be argued that it can be used in the general sense. I don't see it, but then I've been wrong before. Let's keep reading.

Here in this next verse we see a very direct implication to Joseph's and Mary's physical relationship. Was she a virgin all her life?

**Matthew 1:25** *And knew her not **till** she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.* KJV

What does 'knew her not' mean? Here is the same verse in the New Living Translation.

**Matthew 1:25** *But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named Him Jesus..* NLT

If she had remained a virgin the first sentence would end right after the first time we read the word 'her'.

**Psalms 69** has many predictions about Christ's earthly life. One verse reads...

**Vs 8** *"I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children"* KJV

Another common belief is that Mary was sinless. Yet scripture says **everyone**, except Christ, has sinned.

**Romans 3:23** *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* KJV

Even Mary herself knew she needed a Saviour .

**Luke 1:46** *And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,*  
**47** *And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.* KJV

Why would she need a savior if she never sinned? Though the Catholic Mary and the Jewish Mary in no way resemble each other, even in the days of Jesus, people tried to elevate Mary in a position that was not hers.

**Luke 11:27** *As He was speaking, a woman in the crowd called out, "God bless Your mother—the womb from which You came, and the breasts that nursed You!"*

**28** *Jesus replied, "But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice."* NLT

More blessed are those that “hear the word of God and put it into practice”. They don’t follow someone else’s traditions. They don’t make excuses, or look to human leaders. They look to God and his word.

### **Infant Baptism**

How many people here have been invited to an infant baptism? It’s a very awkward position to be in if the invitee is a family member and you have pressure on you to attend this ‘family’ event. Why? Because it is not a true Christian practice. It certainly is not a teaching of the bible.

**1252** The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial **tradition of the Church**. There is explicit testimony to this practice from **the second century on,...**

The document admits that this doctrine is **not based on scripture!** It is only a tradition of the church. Traditions can sometimes be good, but are never good when they run contrary to God’s Word. What did Paul say about this?

**Colosians 2:8** *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, **after the tradition of men**, after the rudiments of the world, **and not after Christ**.* KJV

Nowhere in the bible is there a single record of an infant being baptized. The opposite is true. Every occurrence involves someone old enough to understand and receive the Gospel.

Jesus died at approx. 33 yrs old. His ministry lasted approx. 3 yrs. He was baptized right before his ministry which made him approx. 30 yrs old. That would be old by our standards wouldn't it? Christ's baptism and ministry can be found in Matthew 3 and 4.

The Ethiopian eunuch was led to salvation – he understood God's calling to him – and THEN was baptized by Philip. Found in Acts 8:38. First you believe, then you are baptized. Not the other way around like we see with infant baptism. Look at the order here.

**Acts 18:8** *Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, and everyone in his household believed in the Lord. Many others in Corinth also heard Paul, became believers, and were baptized.* NLT

First John the Baptist preached the message to "repent", and then they were baptized by him.

**Matthew 3:5** *People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John.*

**6** *And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.* NLT

A newborn doesn't even understand sin, can't repent, and is not qualified to be baptized. Here the process is repeated again.

**Acts 16:27** *The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself.*

**28** *But Paul shouted to him, "Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!"*

**29** *The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.*

**30** *Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*

**31** *They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household."*

**32** *And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household.*

**33** *Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized.* NLT

Can we say that included his children? Well we know one thing, that he shared the word of the Lord with everyone in his household. So they were all at least old enough to understand the word. Still, let's look at a few other examples and see the 'norm'.

**Acts 2:41** ***Those who believed** what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.* NLT

**Acts 8:12** *But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, **many men and women were baptized.*** NLT

No children or infants listed.

Another point... the word baptism comes from the Greek word 'baptizo' meaning to 'immerse' or submerge. Children are not immersed in water. It is sprinkled on them, or gently poured over their foreheads. Yet you should be fully immersed when baptized. How do we know this?

Well baptism is symbolic of the burial of the 'old' person and being resurrected a 'new' person.

Rom 6:4 *For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.* NLT

Wouldn't it be a little odd to bury someone who had died and leave an arm out, or a knee sticking up above the ground. Something for the birds to perch on. No, as we join him in death, we join him in our old life's symbolic burial.

Now I'll ask you a question. What common Catholic practice do we see today that is condemned by Jesus in this verse...

**Matthew 6:7** *"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."* NLT

As you can see by this splattering of topics covered here, the majority of main stream Christianity has been, and still is, greatly influenced by a church that refuses to hold to the word of God as it's source of truth. It clings to 'tradition' to retain power and influence. The inherent power of it's approx. 750 million to 1.1 billion members ( depending on if you go strictly by 'Roman Catholic' or those who generally call themselves part of the "Catholic Church", which would include groups like 'Eastern Catholic'), more than all other Christian groups combined; their sheer numbers influence how the rest of Christianity views these topics – AND MANY MORE. Our goal should be to question what we – and those around us - take for granted and ...

1 Thessalonians 5:21...

**Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.** (KJV)