

NUMBERS & COMPASSION

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | NOVEMBER 8, 2020



The State of Theology on Roman Catholicism

PURPOSE: To see how we can relate to -and even evangelize- others according to biblical wisdom.

I. Recap & Review



The State of Theology

Please see the previous November 1st Equipping Hour handout. Same rule applies here about “Numbers” -being not infallible but not ignorable, and “Compassion” –needing to consider a possible lack of knowledge in a church situation.

II. Understanding Roman Catholicism

A. Amalgamation. Unlike Reformed Protestants who stake 100 percent of their salvation on Christ’s atonement, Catholics look to the Cross too, but they mix it with the adjacent activities of Mary (Co-Redemptrix), the prayers of Saints, and the noble acts of the Catholic believer himself. In the event there remains something wanting at the time of a Catholic’s death, time in Purgatory (in the afterlife) can make amends so that one can finally make it to Heaven. Overall compared to Protestantism, Roman Catholicism is a heavily layered system of belief.

B. Ambiguity. Unlike Reformed Protestants who look to the Bible for answers, Catholics utilize Bible verses too –but they first have to pass through several sieves of statements coming from the Magisterium which has existed for two thousand years. Whichever Pope is currently in office actually has the power to make radical departures from Scripture. Catholics also understand “righteousness” to be “infused” progressively into one’s obedient life rather than “imputed” from Christ immediately to the believer. Thus, a Catholic’s justification is constantly in process.

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III. **Biblical Wisdom on Approaching Catholics**

A. Find Out the Portion of the Glass that is Partially Full

1. John 4:25-26. The woman said to him, “**I know that Messiah is coming** (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.”²⁶ Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”
2. Catholics already understand that sin is a problem, Jesus is God’s Son, and our need for salvation is real. These make a great springboard for helping him or her to come to the point of confessing Jesus Christ as *sole Savior* and Lord.

B. Then Address the Portion of the Glass that is Empty

1. John 4:23-24. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the **true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth**, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.²⁴ God is spirit, and **those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.**”
2. Catholics need to understand their doctrinal error runs the same course as the detractors in the church of Galatia in Paul’s day. The Apostle Paul equated the Judiazers’ actions of making Jesus Christ compete with Moses for the throne as a damnable offense (see Galatians 1:6-10; 2:16).

C. More Resources for Understanding Roman Catholicism

- [*Roman Catholics and Protestants: Commonalities and Differences*](#), by Gregg Allison (*The Gospel Coalition*, 2017 podcast).
- [*Thursday, October 22, 2020*](#) podcast by Albert Mohler’s *The Briefing* on Pope Francis.