



**Should Bible-Believing
Christians Intermarry
With Roman Catholics?**



Tom Craggs, Jr.

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All Scripture quotations are from the
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What is Apologetics?

Apologetics is the defense of biblical faith “*once delivered unto the saints*” (Jude 3). The word apologetics is derived from the Greek “*apologia*” which means a reasoned defense. As such, it involves providing an answer, not an apology. It is like a good attorney who defends their clients in a court of law by presenting sound reason, evidence and a thorough knowledge of the law. Likewise, Christians are called to be apologists to defend biblical Christianity through reason, evidence and a thorough knowledge of the Word of God.

Why is Apologetics Important to Christians?

The Bible informs us that apologetics is not just a nicety, it is a necessity for every Bible-believing Christian. Writing in a world steeped in mystery cults, the apostle Peter admonished Christians to “*be ready always to give an answer (apologia) to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*” (I Peter 3:15). Further, the apostle Paul vigorously defended the biblical Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9; Acts 17:15-34; 18:4) and charged young Timothy and Titus to do the same (II Timothy 2:23-26; 4:2-5; Titus 1:9-14).

Furthermore, apologetics is pre-evangelism. As such, apologetics is “the handmaiden” to evangelism. It is using our well-reasoned biblical answers as springboards or opportunities to share the Good News of the biblical Gospel.

Finally, apologetics is post-evangelism. In the massive sea of religions and belief systems, all of which are vying for unsuspecting Christians’ affections, it is crucial to be familiar with the foundational and essential teachings of the Bible upon which our faith is established. Namely, that God created the universe, that Jesus Christ demonstrated He is God through the immutable fact of His one-time never to be repeated Work of redemption on the cross and His resurrection; and that the Bible is divinely inspired rather than human in origin (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21).

Introduction

With the advent of the Ecumenical Movement some years ago, followed by the Evangelicals and Catholics Together Agreement, coupled with the fact during the last 40 plus years many Bible-believing Christians and Roman Catholics have been working together to combat social-ills like abortion (which has plagued our society), many of them now embrace different opinions and beliefs regarding the important subject of whether they should date and intermarry. Many presume it is now acceptable, both spiritually and socially, to do so. The result has been many have married over the years and many of these marriages have ended in divorce.

In light of this, an important question emerges which every Bible-believing Christian must evaluate regardless of Age. “Do I have God’s approval to date and marry a Roman Catholic?” Let us turn to the Word to help answer this important question. In Ephesians 5:21-33 we find the following passage of Scripture:

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He (Christ) might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the Word, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

The most important decision one will ever make, apart from receiving Jesus Christ as Savior, is to marry. The Bible places marriage on a very high plane. Here in Ephesians chapter five, God has chosen the marriage relationship to be the picture and pattern of the relation of Christ to His Church. The apostle Paul is teaching that the love of married Christians should be generous and sacrificial, much like the love Christ had when He gave Himself for the Church. How close is the marriage bond? In verse thirty-one, Paul described the husband and wife as being “one flesh.” God is saying in His Word that the husband and wife are to be completely united together, spiritually, emotionally and physically.

One may ask, “What does this teaching from God’s Word have to do with dating and marrying a Catholic?” First of all, did you know that to marry a Catholic, one must agree to or sign the Catholic Marriage Agreement,¹ and it is required that the Bible-believer must adhere to this agreement for life? Let us carefully consider what is stated and required in this agreement.

The Bible-believing Christian used to sign a statement, now in many cases they simply agree to a statement which reads like this:

I am clearly aware of the obligation of a Catholic spouse to preserve and profess his or her faith and do all possible to baptize and educate the children of our marriage in the faith.

The Catholic signs or agrees to a statement which reads like this:

Affirming my faith in Jesus Christ, I intend with God's help to continue living the faith in the Catholic Church. I respect the conscience of my partner in marriage. I sincerely promise to do all I can to share my faith with our children by having them baptized and raised Catholic.

What do you think? Are these the kind of promises likely to produce a harmonious marriage? Beloved, when two people marry, God expects both to give one hundred percent to the marriage so that two lives blend biblically into one. Biblical giving and taking can only occur when there is a sharing of convictions and viewpoints. But in the Catholic Marriage Agreement, the Bible-believing Christian gives up the right to share biblical teachings and convictions with their spouse and possibly their children.

Is merely agreeing or signing an agreement likely to end spiritual conflict between two people? No. In fact, it makes that conflict even more obvious. "*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*" (Amos 3:3).

The Catholic Marriage Agreement reaches even beyond the lives of the husband and wife into the lives of the children yet to be born. The Catholic must say, "I sincerely promise to do all I can to share my faith with our children by having them baptized and raised Catholic."

In light of all this, there are at least four vital questions to be answered by every Bible-believing Christian before marrying a Catholic.

I. Am I Willing to Have My Spouse and Children Under the Authority of the Roman Catholic Church?

In our “Upon This Rock” Bible Class we teach the meaning of Catholic authority. The authority for all of its rules and regulations come from the belief that the Bible, tradition and the Magisterium (teaching authority of the Church) are equally inspired by God. So what some pope said officially (ex cathedra) two hundred years ago is considered infallible and is Catholic law today. By signing the Catholic Marriage Agreement, the Bible-believer agrees to submit everyone in his family other than himself to this Roman Catholic teaching. He agrees to let the Catholic Church teach his children that the Bible is not the sole authority of faith.

The Catholic Church rules that, “The task of authentically interpreting the Word of God, whether written or handed on (tradition), has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Rome’s Gospel Denies the Sole Authority of Scripture –

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) decreed: “The Church does not draw her certainty about all revealed truth from the Holy Scriptures alone. Hence both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal feelings of devotion and reverence” (Vatican II, Dei Verbum II.9).

The Bible teaches, *“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them”* (Isaiah 8:20). The reason for this is simple – only in Scripture do we have God’s inspired authoritative Word: *“All Scripture is given by inspiration (God-breathed) of God, and is profitable (to be used) for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect (spiritually mature) thoroughly furnished (fully and completely equipped) unto all good works (II Timothy 3:16-17).* To be adequately equipped, we need nothing more than Scripture.

Rome appeals to tradition because her belief system cannot be established from Scripture. By making tradition of equal authority with Scripture and by insisting that Scripture must be interpreted so that it agrees with their tradition (Profession of the Tridentine Faith, Article III), Rome does the very thing for which Christ condemned the Pharisees: *“Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition”* (Mark 7:9). Paul’s warning to the Colossian Christians should alert all of us to the danger of Rome’s devices: *“Beware lest any man spoil you...after the tradition of men”* (Colossians 2:8).

Beloved, there are more than one hundred laws, relative to marriage, bishops of the Church of Rome have legislated for all Catholic people around the world. The Bible-believer, in the marriage union with a Catholic, is directly and adversely affected by the Catholic Code of Canon Law.

II. Do I Consider the Bible the Sole Authority for My Life? Would it Really Matter to Me to Accept Another Authority?

Every born-again Bible-believing Christian should regard the Bible as God's Word, the supreme authority, the sole authority, the all-sufficient guide for life!

In Catholicism, the Bible-believer would have to embrace Catholic tradition as another source of authority which is considered by Rome as inspired by God and has the same authority as Scripture. However, there is no biblical basis for claiming inspiration for Catholic tradition. To the contrary, the Bible teaches only Scripture is inspired and authoritative, not tradition, (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21; Matthew 21:42; Matthew 22:29; John 5:39, 46; John 10:35; I Corinthians 4:6; I Timothy 5:18; II Peter 3:16).

When we look into the Word of God, we see how the Lord Jesus and the apostles responded to those embracing tradition rather than the Scripture.

In the Gospel of Mark, chapter 7:1-9 and verse 13 we find the classic passage of Scripture where the Lord warns against men's tradition:

Then came together unto Him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they came from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as they washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Notice some very specific things the Lord reveals about those embracing tradition over Scripture:

- V.6: He calls them hypocrites.
- V.7: Their attempt to worship God is done in vain.
- V.7b: He calls traditions the commandments of men.
- VV.8-9: He says, they reject the commandments of God.
- V.13: The Lord Jesus says, teaching traditions makes the Word of God of no effect.

In this passage from the Word of God, the Lord identifies how embracing traditions violates the Scriptures and dispels any notion that tradition could ever be on the same authority level as Scripture. Throughout the New Testament the Lord Jesus used Scripture alone, as the final court of appeal in every matter under dispute. To the Sadducees He said, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29).

The apostle Peter also did not think very highly of tradition. In I Peter 1:18-19, he states:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

The Bible teaches that Scripture alone, is the sole authority for the Church and the individual believer (I Corinthians 2:13; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21). Scripture has sole authority because it is a direct revelation from God and carries the very authority of God Himself. The apostle Paul said, “*For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it (how then) but by the revelation of Jesus Christ*” (Galatians 1:12).

The Catholic Church Disregards the Fact That Tradition Adds to and Often Alters God’s Word Which is Forbidden in Scripture –

Bible-believing Christians understand that the divine command throughout the Bible is not to add, delete or alter the Word of God. The Bible sets boundaries which we are not at liberty to go beyond. The apostle Paul for example exhorted the Corinthian believers “*not to exceed what is written*” (I Corinthians 4:6). In Deuteronomy 4:2 we are commanded: “*Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.*” Proverbs 30:5-6 instructs us: “*Every Word of God is pure: add thou not unto His Words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*” Revelation 22:18-19, likewise tells us: “*For I testify unto every man that heareth the Words of the prophecy of this Book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book: And if any man shall take away from the Words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of life.*”

Beloved, the Bible teaches us everything we need to know relative to our spiritual life. We do not have to go outside the Bible for anything relative to salvation and living the Christian life.

III. Am I Willing to Have My Spouse and Children Depend on the Roman Catholic Way of Salvation?

To be sure, the above is a compelling question every Bible-believer must grapple with before dating and marrying a Catholic. To respond to this question in a way that is pleasing to God we first need an understanding of the fundamental differences between biblical Christianity and Roman Catholicism.

After the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the leadership of Rome began a concerted effort to portray the Catholic Church as a changing Church. A Church more biblical; a Church more in line with Bible Churches. A Church which no longer seemingly looked upon Bible-believers as “heretics” but instead now referenced them as “separated-brethren.” Certainly, there were cosmetic changes, however, their foundational tenets and dogmas that have guided this Church some 1,600 years, remained intact. Moreover, this Council reaffirmed all the doctrinal deviations from Scripture such as the primacy of Peter, the Roman priesthood, the Mass as a re-sacrifice of Christ, a sacramental system of salvation; Catholic tradition on equal par with Scripture and Mary as the Queen of Heaven and co-redemptress with Christ, to name just a few.

The following contrasts between biblical Christianity and Roman Catholicism highlight the monumental and irreconcilable differences between Bible-believers and Roman Catholics. The glaring differences Rome embraces regarding authority, salvation and doctrine, are clearly deviations from God’s inspired Scripture.

Rome’s Gospel Denies the One Time Never to be Repeated Sacrifice of Jesus Christ –

“The mystery of the Eucharist is the true center of the sacred liturgy and indeed of the whole Christian Life” (Vatican II, Eucharisticum Mysterium, Introduction A.) In this central act of worship Rome claims that the Mass is “a sacrifice in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated.” Again: “In the sacrifice of the Mass our Lord is immolated” (i.e., killed as a sacrifice). According to Rome, “In it (the Mass) Christ perpetuates in an unbloody manner the sacrifice offered on the cross, offering Himself to the Father for the world’s salvation through the ministry of the priests” (Vatican II, Euch. Myst. Intro. C).

Against all this the Bible teaches, “*This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God*” (Hebrews 10:12). The Lord Jesus exclaimed on the cross, “It is Finished” (John 19:30), the meaning of which is fully explained in Hebrews 9:24-26: “*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands...but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that He should offer Himself often...For then must He often have suffered...but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*” Rome’s Gospel is a blasphemous denial of the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Rome's Gospel Denies Salvation and Justification by God's Grace Through Faith in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ –

“If anyone shall say that it is by the righteousness of Christ itself that men are formally justified – let him be accursed” (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 10). Further, “If anyone shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than trust in the Divine mercy pardoning sins for Christ's sake; or that it is that trust alone by which we are justified-let him be accursed” (Canon 12). Here Rome places her curse on the very Word of God!

The Bible teaches, “*By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight..But now the righteousness of God...which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe*” (Romans 3:20-22). Again it states, “*A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law*” (Romans 3:28), and “*God imputeth (credits) righteousness without works*” (apart from works) (Romans 4:6). And the apostle Paul states in Romans 4:5 “*To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*” Further, in Acts 13:38-39, we read about Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia concerning the all-important subject of how one is justified before God and receives forgiveness of sin. “*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Jesus Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*”

Rome's Gospel is a Gospel of human works and merits. “Sins must be expiated. This may be done on this earth through sorrows, miseries and trials of this life and, above all, through death. Otherwise, the expiation must be made in the next life through fire and torments or purifying punishment” (Purgatory) (Vatican II, *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, I.2).

In total contrast, the Bible teaches, “*Being now justified by His (Christ's) blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him*” (Romans 5:9). Again: “*Therefore being (i.e., having been) justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1). “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 8:1). The apostle John gives the reason for this freedom from condemnation: “*Your sins are forgiven you for His (Christ's) name's sake*” (1 John 2:12). The Gospel is “*Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin*” (Romans 4:7-8). This is the Gospel that Rome rejects.

Rome's Gospel Denies the Exclusive Mediation of Jesus Christ –

“The blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix” (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, VIII, Paragraph 62). Paragraph 61 of the same document says Mary “shared her Son's sufferings as He died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated...in the work of the Saviour in restoring supernatural life to souls.”

Pope John Paul II, the former pope, has stated emphatically that in Mary “is effected the reconciliation of God with humanity...is accomplished the work of reconciliation” (Pope John Paul II, *On Reconciliation and Penance*, St. Paul Editions, P. 139).

It is vain for Rome to claim that all this does not violate the Scriptures, which teaches, *“There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”* (I Timothy 2:5). Also, the Bible teaches, *“God was in Christ (not Mary), reconciling the world unto Himself”* (II Corinthians 5:19). Again, the Bible says, *“God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son”* (I John 5:11). Contrast the slogan adopted by the Second Vatican Council, *“Death through Eve, life through Mary”* (Lum. Gent. VIII, Paragraph 56). This is Rome’s Gospel. Rome’s Gospel pronounces a curse on any man who comes to believe that he is assured of salvation and Heaven in this life: *“If any says that he will for certain...have that great gift of perseverance unto the end-let him be accursed”* (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon 16).

The apostle Paul opposed those whom preached a Gospel like Rome’s. He said, *“Though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed”* (Galatians 1:8). Paul curses Rome’s Gospel, but many Catholics boast that their Gospel is the same as the one Paul preaches.

Rome’s Gospel Bans Those Seeking Salvation from Going Directly to Christ for Forgiveness –

Confession to a priest to obtain absolution (forgiveness) from him “constitutes the only ordinary way in which the faithful who are conscious of serious sin are reconciled with God...every serious sin must always be stated, with its determining circumstances, in an individual confession” (John Paul II, On Reconciliation and Penance, P. 132).

Rome allows no access to Christ for forgiveness, except through a human priest. Is this pointing men to Christ? Nowhere in the New Testament is any man placed between a penitent sinner and Christ. The Lord Jesus said: *“Come unto Me...and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28).

The Bible teaches, *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an higher priest (Christ)...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith”* (Hebrews 10:19-22). Rome’s teachings utterly contradict this. Far from pointing people to Christ, Rome places a barrier in their way to keep them from Christ.

Rome’s Gospel Invites People to Turn to the Heart of Mary –

The Church of Rome invites people “to turn with them to the immaculate heart of Mary, mother of Jesus, in whom is effected the reconciliation of God with humanity” (Reconciliation and Penance, pp. 139-140). However, the Bible knows nothing of such language. The apostle Paul said, *“I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace,”* not to Mary (Acts 20:32).

Rome’s Gospel Portrays Mary as the Sinless Mother of God, Perpetual Virgin and Bodily Assumed into Heaven as Queen Over All –

“Joined to Christ the head and in communion with all his saints, the faithful must in the first place reverence the memory of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ...Because of the gift of sublime grace she far surpasses all creatures, both in heaven

and on earth...The Immaculate Virgin preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when her earthly life was over, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things.”

The Catholic Church has elevated Mary to a position of sinlessness. They teach that her life was lived in flawless purity. The biblical basis for this position is non-existent. Yet Roman Catholic tradition, made church law in 1854 by Pope Pius IX, declares that “the Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception...was preserved free from all stain of original sin.” In this unwarranted statement, Mary is set up as a rival to the exclusive status of Jesus Christ. Only He was sinless.

Rome also contends Mary was a perpetual virgin. They teach that at no time did Mary ever have sexual relations with Joseph nor did she have other children. However, it seems clear enough from Scripture that Mary had normal marital relations with Joseph after the birth of the Lord. In Matthew 1:18 and verse 25 we read: “*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. And (he) knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn Son.*” In Matthew 12:46-47, we read: “*While He yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him. Then one said unto Him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee.*” And again in 13:55-56, the Lord’s brothers are mentioned by name. “*Is not this the carpenter’s Son? is not His mother called Mary? and His brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?*”

Rome also teaches Mary was “assumed” or transferred to Heaven without decay or corruption. The New Testament tells us of only one person, Jesus Christ, Who was assumed to Heaven after death. Following His death, burial and resurrection, Christ was assumed into Heaven. Mark 16:19 and Luke 24:51 record this event, as does Acts 1:9, which states, “*And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.*”

We conclude with the convincing statement of Christ on this subject matter found in John 3:13: “*And no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of man which is in Heaven.*”

Another step to deification is Rome’s teaching that once Mary was assumed into Heaven she was crowned queen of Heaven. However, this component of Mariolatry is offensive to God and deemed an abomination unto the Lord when Israel or any other nation resorted to female goddess worship (Jeremiah 44:15-27; Acts 19:23-28; 34-35).²

As mentioned earlier, the above contrasts between biblical Christianity and Roman Catholicism highlight the monumental and irreconcilable differences between Bible-believers and Roman Catholics. The glaring differences Rome embraces regarding authority, salvation and doctrine, are clearly deviations from God’s inspired Word. To be sure, this is more than a matter of semantics.

We see the Bible-believer and Roman Catholic are up against a real conflict. The Bible-believer wants to hold to his belief that salvation comes through Christ alone. But the rest of the family will believe that salvation comes through the complicated rituals, traditions and unbiblical dogmas of the Catholic Church. How can a conflict like this ever be settled happily and biblically?

IV. Am I Willing to Instruct and Help My Children and Cooperate with My Spouse as They Work For Their Salvation Within the Requirements Established by the Catholic Church?

Well, that's the agreement. The Bible-believer must agree to cooperate as the Catholic partner and their children work to gain salvation by attending Mass, going to confession and meeting the other requirements of the Church.

In a way, all four questions come down to one basic question. Can a person who firmly believes in salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone, have a godly and lasting marriage, with a person who has made a promise, to put the demands of the Catholic Church, in place of a personal relationship with Christ?

The Bible-believing Christian who seriously dates or considers marrying a Catholic must think carefully. He must remember that, if he knows Christ as Saviour, his whole life is built on faith. Romans 1:17 says, "*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just (justified) shall live by faith.*"

Can the born-again believer give up a life of peace with God for a life of tension and frustration in marriage to a person with completely different beliefs and practices? Can such a marriage be happy and pleasing to God? Does it even have a good chance of surviving? ³

In closing this message, we want to make a practical application. Grace does not give a license to disobey God. No matter how sincere we may be, it does not excuse disregard for the clear will of God. And we are no exception. Why should the Lord permit us to disobey His Word after we have received the grace of God? His guidelines for marriage in the Bible are written for admonition (I Cor. 10:11-13). It is a warning that even the godliest of believers are not immune to yielding to the temptation of the flesh, when he takes liberties with the clear and unmistakable warnings of God.

Does our affection for a potential spouse justify our disobedience to God? Is it possible that our motives may be pure and our purposes the highest, and yet be completely out of the will of God? Is your love for this person so blinded you to the clear commands of your Lord? Does your love and sincerity for this person excuse disobedience?

If you will open your heart to the Lord and seek His will and yield yourself to Him and say to Him, "Not my will but Your will be done in my life," He will make it perfectly clear what His good, acceptable and perfect will of God is for your life (Romans 12:1-2).

Finally, I leave you with the Word of God to address this important issue:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (II Corinthians 6:14)

Beloved, my exhortation to every Bible-believing Christian is...never date a Catholic and you'll never marry a Catholic.

V. Are You a Bible-Believing Christian and Married to a Catholic?

If you have been saved recently or for many years, I believe you are in the best position of any to lead your Catholic spouse to faith in Christ alone for their salvation. You are the person that is closest emotionally to them. They trust and respect you. Hopefully, they have observed you living life in faithfulness to Christ. They have observed you reading your Bible, praying for others and seen your love for fellowship with other Christians in a Bible-believing Church. These are powerful attributes of a Christian, which have profound impact on those outside of Christ.

Continue to live faithfully to your spouse. Remember, you were once spiritually lost and alienated from God. Recall God's long-suffering with you. Our charge is to be long-suffering with loved-ones. May your unconditional love, patience and selflessness go a long way in showing your genuine concern for their personal salvation.

Rely upon the Holy Spirit to reveal biblical truths you are sharing with your spouse. Pray without ceasing for them.

Share often what Christ has done in your life – especially regarding the gift of salvation He has given you. Giving your personal testimony is an important aspect of any witnessing opportunity. A pivotal part of your personal testimony to your Catholic spouse must be the fact that you are sure of going to Heaven because you have a personal relationship with Christ. Communicate you have meaning and purpose in your life not because you obey rules and participate in rituals and sacraments, but because you know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of your life.

May the Lord bless and strengthen you as you endeavor to live out the truth before your loved-one the reality that biblical Christianity is neither a creed nor a ceremony, but life vitally connected with the loving Lord Jesus Christ – the One Who willingly left the ivory portal of Heaven to die upon the cross of Calvary so that our sins may be forgiven forever.

Notes

1. This Catholic Marriage Agreement is the modified mixed marriage promise as a result of the Second Vatican Council.
2. Kenneth E. Lawson, *The Mary Movement*, 1995, pp. 74-76
3. Fritz Ridenour, *So What's the Difference?* (Regal Books, A Division of GL Publications, Ventura, California, 1984), pp. 47-51.