

*Encounter: Experiencing God in the Everyday is a Catholic Bible study designed specifically for middle school kids. This captivating program guides students toward a powerful Encounter with God. This captivating program guides students toward a powerful Encounter with God.*

The Samaritan woman immediately believes in Jesus as Messiah. She leaves her water jar and heads toward the village to give witness to this great revelation. Significance can be attached to the woman leaving her water jar when one considers the call of other disciples which involved leaving fishing boats and tax booths. Jesus uses the apostolic language of sending apostles, as he invites the disciples to join the Samaritan woman in the missionary process she has already initiated. Thus, the Samaritan woman is portrayed as a model for apostolic activity. The fact that Jesus revealed himself to the Samaritan woman is remarkable when one considers that she led a highly irregular life, that she was from a rejected minority group, and that she was in fact a woman. Jesus revealed the truth about himself to a person considered unworthy of hearing such truths and incapable of understanding them. He was not limited by the customs of his day but addressed her as an equal with men and a potential sharer in the kingdom. He gave the Samaritan woman important theological teaching, treated her seriously and responded to her comments. The Johannine Jesus did not require her to cease being a woman or a Samaritan but viewed her primarily as a person in need of the revelatory truth of Jesus as Messiah. Culpepper believes that the Evangelist uses the Samaritan woman as a model of female discipleship, serving to modify the thesis that only male disciples were important figures in the founding of the church. He has a noble heritage, she a shameful past. Unlike Nicodemus, she makes no effort to keep her relationship with Jesus secret but announces it to all: John has chosen to illustrate the full revelatory process with a simple Samaritan woman rather than a male teacher of orthodox Judaism. While the climactic miracle in this story is the raising of Lazarus, John gives great prominence to Mary and Martha throughout the narrative. Rather than attempt a detailed examination of the entire passage, this study will focus on the way the author portrays Martha. John introduces the three characters involved in the narrative in verse 1. It is of note that he portrays Lazarus in terms of his relationship to Mary and Martha. It seems likely that in the eyes of the Evangelist, both Martha and Mary were more prominent than Lazarus. The only other individual in John of whom this is said is the Beloved Disciple. Witherington feels that this implies that Mary and Martha as well as Lazarus were disciples of Jesus. Already in verse 3 the narrator encourages us to see Mary and Martha as persons of faith. This impression is strengthened when Martha tells Jesus that if he had been there her brother would not have died. It is at this point that Jesus attempts to move Martha from her affirmation of traditional eschatological expectations to a realization that he is the one who fulfills Jewish expectations. John presents Martha as the ideal of discerning faith. It is Martha rather than Peter who serves as the Johannine model of discerning and steadfast faith. Within a culture which placed little value on the word and witness of women, John portrays Martha as an exemplary model of what it means to confess the truth about Jesus. Jesus transcends the typecasting of his day and views Martha as a person capable of a perceptive and discerning faith. In short, they are capable of being full-fledged disciples of Jesus. Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb of Jesus in the early morning hours. Having discovered the empty tomb, she runs to tell Peter and the Beloved Disciple. This is difficult to reconcile with verse nine: While Paul has nothing to say regarding the witness of women to the empty tomb and the resurrection, the Gospels make their witness prominent. Frank and Evelyn Stagg state: The most significant affirmation of women in the New Testament may well be found in the tradition made prominent in all four Gospels that women were the one to find the tomb of Jesus empty. The resurrection is foundational to New Testament faith 1 Cor. Thus it is significant that Jesus entrusts a woman with the most crucial message of his earthly mission—the message of his triumph over death. Rather, Jesus chooses to appoint a woman as his witness despite the fact that the testimony of a woman was of no account to those within Jewish culture. It is possible to ascribe to Mary Magdalene a quasi-apostolic role. The narrative in John 20 clearly qualifies Mary on both accounts. Whereas within Jewish culture women were not qualified or authorized to teach, the Gospel of John pictures the risen Christ commissioning a woman to teach his male

disciples the most basic tenet of the Christian faith. Brown believes Mary Magdalene is portrayed as holding a place within the tradition about women disciples analogous to that of Peter among the male disciples. She, like them, saw the risen Lord and received from him the commission to go and preach the news of his resurrection. Rather than assuming that women have similar characteristics and tendencies, and formulating rules designed for women only, Jesus treats them as unique and valuable individuals. Nowhere does he condescend to flatter women, but rather he demands as much from them as from men. None of the women in John except Mary the Mother of Jesus and Mary the wife of Cleopas are described in relationship to men. In fact, John does just the opposite as he defines Lazarus by his relationship to Martha and Mary! Rather than viewing women in terms of their roles of wife, mother and housekeeper as was common within Jewish culture, the Johannine Jesus views them as individuals capable of making important decisions and commitments. Instead of seeing women primarily in terms of their sex or marital status, Jesus views them in terms of their relationship to God. He has close friendships with women not related to him, like Mary and Martha, and even holds an extended private conversation with a Samaritan woman of ill repute. While rabbinical thought considered it inappropriate to involve women in intellectual instruction, Jesus teaches women personally. He assumes that women are capable of learning and understanding the theological truths that he presents to them, and able to engage in theological debate. Jesus is willing to risk public scandal in order to instruct women. John further affirms women in their intellectual capacity as he presents them as valid witnesses of the truth about Jesus. It is through the witness of the Samaritan woman that the people of Sychar are introduced to Jesus. In summary, we observe that women in the Fourth Gospel are presented positively and in intimate relation with Jesus. Women are portrayed as comprehending the teaching of Jesus and responding enthusiastically and appropriately. They are women who are not afraid to take initiative in their relationship with Jesus, and the Evangelist presents Jesus as affirming these women in their unconventional roles. Jesus pays no heed to the views of women common in his time. Rather, he enters into theological discussion with women, affirms them in their public proclamation of his revelation, values them as close friends and chooses them to be witnesses to the truth of his resurrection. While the Johannine Jesus does not give us explicit teaching on the subject, his words and actions imply several principles that governed his relations to women: He did not view women in terms of sexual temptation or sexual gratification. He neither avoided nor catered to them. He did not create new categories or rules for them as women but approached them as responsible and capable individuals. He did not assess their value according to their role of wife or mother but viewed them in relationship with himself. He did not specify areas of ministry for women and other areas of ministry for men. Rather, he affirmed women as they took initiative in the exercise of their particular ministry gifts. He was willing to challenge cultural norms in order to remain true to the higher kingdom vision. How do we live out the principles Jesus models for us in the Gospel of John? We live in a society which is much different from that of Jesus. Or is it really that different? Do we avoid hiring women as part of pastoral teams because of the sexual temptation they may represent to the male members of the staff? Should we not rather call men to be responsible for their own sexual desires? This fourth question requires further explanation before we can begin to answer it. Jesus was not afraid to defy cultural prohibitions when it came to relating to women. However, neither did Jesus fully implement his kingdom vision. While the Gospel writers present evidence of Jesus having followers who were women, the fact remains that Jesus did not choose to have women as part of his special group of twelve disciples. Does this then imply that women are forever barred from leadership roles within the church? Rather, I believe Geddert is correct when he states: Jesus also lived in the real world, and though he prepared the soil for the full implementation of his kingdom vision, he did not himself institute all the radical changes that the implementation of that vision would entail Geddert, Paul summarizes the kingdom vision of Jesus in Galatians 3: We cannot beg to refrain due to cultural considerations, for women in leadership has become acceptable in almost every sphere of our society except the church. Can it be that we have created our own church subculture that renders us incapable of implementing this part of the kingdom vision? Has not the time come to free ourselves from our self-imposed bondage and to allow the vision of Jesus to break through to our reality in all its fullness? The University of Chicago Press, The Community of the Beloved Disciple. Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel. The Genius of John: The Liturgical Press, A New

Vision for Humanity. Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective.

**Chapter 2 : Spiritual Maturity: Steps to Growing as a Disciple of Christ**

*Since in neoorthodoxy the encounter is primary, the encounter actually becomes the authority and anyone can have his or her own encounter and come up with totally different conclusions. (5) Cultism. Many of the cults teach that the Bible along with some other writing is supreme and authoritative.*

Rachel Cabose is the consulting editor of The Compass Magazine and a freelance writer. She previously worked as associate editor of Guide magazine at the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Rachel and her husband, Greg, live in Michigan. Andrea Jacobsons, Encounters Pilot Teacher is quoted as saying: It may not be perfect, but I believe that anyone who fights against it may find themselves fighting against God. As a teacher, I know that curriculum is a powerful tool for real education or to use for cultural change. SoCalJody In my opinion afterreading the curriculum guidelines, no finer curriculum could have been written by the Pentecostal Church defined: Most pilot curriculums allow comparison of the new curriculum with the old, side by side. In my opinion ,again, I do not think that Encounters: Texas revolted and wrote its own curriculum for its students with both creation and evolution. That battle is still going on. Curriculum is a powerful tool for education or for brain washing. Exactly which is Encounters? I have deleted some of your comments from other articles for this reason. Please keep this in mind when posting in the future. The Secondary part of this curriculum has been piloted over a two year period, gleaning feedback from teachers across the division. The data received has enabled the Encounter Bible Series Steering Committee to make necessary adjustments and changes to the curriculum. This new Bible curriculum has also been heavily scrutinized by Bible scholars, the General Conference Biblical Research BRI , and scores of Bible teachers, to ensure its theological alignment with the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and practices. So far, this curriculum has gained widespread accolades from teachers and students alike. Teachers tell us that it has improved their own spiritual life as well as that of their students. The goal is to ensure that students have a strong knowledge of the content, both Scripture and Ellen White, while developing a personal relationship with the source and focus of Scripture, Jesus Christ. The actual names I see on Encounters list are connected with spiritual formation. All I want is names. We all know that the NAD opposes the GC on issues " is the worth of spiritual formation in the classroom another? Were all SDA invited to participate? Ed Zinke is our theological review person as well as many academy Bible teachers. We strong consider this curriculum a conservative curriculum the author we have writing the USA side is a long term, valued friend of Ted and Nancy Wilson. Zinke if he reviewed the curriculum and approved it. The only names given that wrote the Encounters curriculum are spiritual formation leaning. Can you please get Ted and Nancy Wilson to write an endorsement of this Encounters Bible curriculum for the elementary through high school SDA school children? Ted and Nancy Wilson have many long term valued friends, some of which are not SDA, some of which may be Catholic, and some of which may be spiritual formation cheerleaders. It is an easy task to get endorsements for curriculum if the curriculum is worthy. I can assure you that we are faithful to the church and this curriculum has been carefully vetted and is a real blessing. Thank you for your concern, but we will not reply again. I am a newer SDA, coming from 31 years teaching in the public schools. Yes, I am distrustful of what I have witnessed. Sorry that you do not wish to engage my questions with answers. Brenda Bible is clear that we should not trust man, but only God. I would think that our leadership would commend us for that. However, NAD has not proven to be trustworthy in past couple of years, at least in the opinion of its more conservative members. This new episode with the curriculum will not improve NAD ratings. This should have raised red flags. How can we feel safe sending our children to be influenced by these teachings? Please revisit this issue. Lowell Why is the new curriculum being rolled out over four years. Is the new curriculum incompatible with the old curriculum? The 9th-grade curriculum was completed first and is being used this year. By next school year, when these students are in 10th grade, the 10th grade curriculum will be ready for them, and so on. So the students will not have to switch back and forth from the new to the old. Brenda Thank you Compass Magazine for this article. How else would we learn about the new curriculum? Spiritual Formation is written all over these documents.

**Chapter 3 : What does the Bible say about rape?**

*The New Testament is clear that if we believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, it is not because we were so brilliant as to make that decision. It is because God graciously opened our hearts to respond.*

How Does God Guide Us? Divine Guidance from a Christian Perspective by Rev. You may download this resource at no cost, for personal use or for use in a Christian ministry, as long as you are not publishing it for sale. All I ask is that you acknowledge the source of this material: For all other uses, please contact me at markmarkdroberts. Is God leading me to take this new job? Does God want me to marry this person? Could God be pointing me in a new direction for my life? I think back to the summer of my sixteenth year. But my parents were persistent, reminding me of the exceptional beauty of Malibu, which stands guard over a salt-water inlet on the Canadian coast a few hours north of Vancouver. As a lover of natural beauty, especially mountains, I must admit I was tempted. So I decided to do the only sensible thing. I told the Lord that I would go to camp if he wanted me to go, and that I would let the Bible give me his answer. Picking up my Bible and closing my eyes, I let the Scripture fall open, and then put my finger on a passage. By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas. By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might. You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples. So I went to camp, and, to this day, my experience at Malibu remains as one of the highlights of my life. In his grace, he went along with my immature discernment scheme. Yet this still leaves us with the question: How does God guide us? I believe, above all, that God has given us the Bible as our supreme guide in matters theological and practical. Spirit Guide Silliness Spiritual guidance is a marketable commodity these days. Others have turned to the Internet. Yes, you can visit websites where, for a fee, you will receive personalized guidance that purportedly comes from some immaterial being. Anyone looking for spiritual guidance? Plenty of Barbies here. Your spirit guide could even be the spirit of a plastic doll! Some years ago, Barbara Bell, an architectural illustrator from northern California where else? So Barbie must be one of my distant cousins. All of this talk about spiritual guidance from angels, dead people, and even dolls ought to give us pause as we consider the topic of spiritual guidance. Just because somebody claims to be guided by some supernatural being, even if this being is God, we ought not instantly to believe the claim. Sadly, however, some Christians have been caught in the current of spiritual silliness, claiming to be led by the Holy Spirit into all sorts of nonsense. I know a man who once claimed that God told him to have an adulterous affair with the wife of one of his best friends. They ended up acting on their convictions, breaking up a marriage and messing up many lives in the process. Over thirty years ago, for example, I found myself in Mrs. She was a fine teacher, well-prepared, biblically-literate, and interesting even to a sixth-grade boy. Almost always, I say, because every now and then Mrs. Poole would claim that the Holy Spirit led her to depart from her notes and launch into the stratosphere of more direct revelation. As she spoke under the impetus of the Spirit, I was struck by how hard she was to follow and, frankly, how boring. If I took Mrs. Poole at her word, then I could only conclude that she was a much better a teacher than the Holy Spirit! Whereas she was succinct, the Spirit was long-winded. Poole had a way of speaking right to the hearts of sixth-graders, the Holy Spirit could hardly keep our attention. Even then I suspected what I now believe to be the truth: Her ramblings may have contained grains of genuine inspiration, but they issued more from her exuberant imagination than from the Spirit of God. These days religious people are claiming divine inspiration for all sorts of behaviors that are, not only nonsensical, but downright horrible. The most obvious case is that of Muslim extremists who kill innocent victims in the name of Allah, something that is contrary to the beliefs of most of the Islamic world. Christian extremism of this sort rears its ugly head every now and then, especially in some conflict-ridden sections of Africa. These examples have led some critics to conclude that all spiritual guidance is nonsense, and even that the idea of God is both wrongheaded and dangerous. So, we must approach the subject of divine guidance with due caution. At the same time, we must not shrink back from one of the most precious aspects of the Christian life: Today I begin by noting how the Spirit guides through circumstances. Consider, for example, the following story. In Acts, 16 the Apostle Paul and his colleague Silas

were in Philippi, where they shared the good news of Jesus with a man and his family Acts The whole household believed the message and all members were immediately baptized. How did Paul and Silas get to the home of this man and his family? Not through dreams or angelic visions. Not through biblical interpretation. Rather, they got there through circumstances, rather odd circumstances at that. The man was a jailer who had been assigned to guard two prisoners, Paul and Silas. The two missionaries got in trouble with the authorities when they cast an evil spirit out of a girl who had been used to make money for her opportunistic masters. Her spiritual freedom took away their source of income, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and accused them before the civic leaders of Philippi: An actual remnant of a jail in ancient Philippi. Some think this was the very jail in which Paul and Silas were incarcerated, though there is no way to prove it one way or the other. Photo used by permission from holylandphotos. Around midnight, when the two prisoners should have been licking their wounds and bemoaning their fate, Paul and Silas were praying and praising God. All of a sudden, a great earthquake shook the prison, knocking the chains off the prisoners. The poor jailer, supposing that his prisoners had escaped, was about to fall on his sword when Paul shouted: We are all here! He then took them to his home, where they proceeded to convert him and his entire family. Though not identified explicitly in this passage, the Holy Spirit was directing the action of Acts 16, just as the Spirit oversaw the mission of Christ throughout Acts. But, later on, we see how God wove events together to accomplish his will in our lives. Of course, the skeptic would deny that God was involved with such things. But sometimes the coincidences are so astounding that I find it very, very hard to believe anything other than that some Supreme Being is guiding events. In this post I want to tell a story from my own life in which I experienced this sort of guidance. When I was a sophomore in college, I wanted to share my Christian faith with others. So I decided to pray and ask God to help me. One brisk Saturday evening in October, I decided to go down to Harvard Square—which was always bustling with people—and see if I could share my faith with somebody. The Square was filled with students from all over the Boston area and it seemed a likely place for God to drop a seeker into my lap. I prayed earnestly for God to guide me to someone with whom I could talk openly about Christianity. And if you could make it obvious, that would be really helpful. After a half hour or so, I began to feel both discouraged and silly. It almost seemed as if God was having a good laugh at my expense. Just then, two young women approached me. Could you help us? Not only has God brought these people into my life so I can talk to them about my faith, but they happen to be two attractive women. Dunster House of Harvard University, along the Charles River On the walk down to Dunster, I kept bringing up subjects that I felt sure would lead to a productive dialogue about Christian faith. Do you every think about this? Basically, all they wanted to do that night was to party at Dunster House, not to reflect on the meaning of life with their overly-eager guide. For ten minutes I tried everything I could think of to get these women to talk about God. Of the thousands of students in Cambridge that night, it seemed as if they were the least interested in God. When we got to Dunster House, I walked them to the door. They thanked me and left quickly, no doubt glad to be away from that stranger who kept asking invasive questions. I felt like a complete idiot. This was a stupid idea. Just then I passed a student I recognized as being a friend of a friend, somebody I had met briefly during my freshman year. I need to talk to you about God. And so began a conversation that lasted well into the night.

Chapter 4 : Jesus' interactions with women - Wikipedia

*THE LIFECHANGE SERIES of Bible studies on books of the Bible can help you grow in Christlikeness through a life-changing encounter with God's Word.*

Attitudes or Viewpoints Toward the Bible In the study of bibliology it is important to be aware of the various attitudes people either have or with which they approach the Scriptures. We will divide these attitudes toward the Bible into six different categories. In its extreme form it denies divine revelation and represents the belief of atheists and agnostics. Moderate rationalism may admit divine revelation but tends to accept only those parts of divine revelation that personal reason approves. Under this approach the Bible is not viewed as authoritative, but the moderated rationalist seeks to eliminate or honor various Scriptures as he may choose. This is often the attitude of modern liberals. Mysticism also falls into a two-fold classification, a false mysticism and a true mysticism. The fundamental premise in false mysticism is that divine revelation is not limited to the Bible, but that God continues to give new truth beyond the Bible. For this kind of mystic, the Bible is not complete or final. God is still in the business of giving truth if one is only receptive to its revelation. Those holding to some form of false mysticism believe spiritual truth is being added beyond the Scriptures. In addition, it can be seen in the beliefs of some forms of the modern-day charismatic movement. Some non-cessationists believe all the gifts mentioned in the New Testament are operative today. Some believe that God is still speaking through present day prophets, and some even go a step further and claim that the revelation coming to and from these prophets is equal in authority with the Bible. This is a growing movement within some circles of the evangelical church. Some present-day evangelicals, Jack Deer and Wayne Grudem among them, believe and teach that God speaks today apart from the Bible. According to these teachers, God gives words of personal or ministry direction to His people using all the same means that He used in the past. Yet, when we consider the evidence for these views, we find that their resemblance to what the Bible actually depicts is more apparent than real. But today the church is faced with a new situation; now, with centuries of Christian orthodoxy, we confess that the writing of Scripture is finished, and that the canon is actually closed. The Holy Spirit illuminates the minds of believers to enable them to grasp and apply the truth of the Scripture. By contrast, true mysticism is the proper approach of systematic theologians who believe the Bible. It involves the fact that all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and therefore are able to be enlightened directly by the Spirit in their understanding of divine revelation. Such revelation does not exceed what the Scriptures reveal; it consists in making known divine truth recorded in Scripture. Guidance is always in keeping with the Scriptures themselves John He does not allow experience to either take precedence over the Bible nor does he judge the Bible or what is biblical by his experience. In Romanism, the Roman Catholic Church is both the channel of divine revelation and the final authority for how the Bible is to be interpreted in faith and practice. Since the Bible is the product of the church, and since the Scriptures are obscure another teaching of Romanism , only the church can properly interpret the Scriptures. In Romanism, the Bible is viewed as incomplete; there is more truth available, but it can only come through the church. Ecumenical councils and popes have from time to time made pronouncements that are considered infallible and therefore binding on church members. As a part of this approach to divine revelation, tradition must also be examined and should be studied in the light of important Scriptures Gal. In His earthly ministry, Christ repeatedly had to contradict the traditions of men in affirming the truth of the Word of God. Karl Barth , often viewed as the father of neoorthodoxy, believed that the basis of authority is the Word, but for Barth, the Word is mainly Christ. The Bible only witnesses to the Word and only becomes authoritative when it speaks to the individual. The individual must determine what is the word of God within the Bible and what is not. To clearly grasp what is and what is not, there is the need for some type of divine encounter. In short, neoorthodoxy does not believe that the Bible is the word of God, only that it contains the word of God. This means the individual becomes the final judge as to what in the Bible is the word of God and what is not. Since in neoorthodoxy the encounter is primary, the encounter actually becomes the authority and anyone can have his or her own encounter and come up with totally different conclusions. Many of the cults teach that the Bible

along with some other writing is supreme and authoritative. The perfect illustration of this is Mormonism and the Book of Mormon which Mormonism views as inspired. In the final analysis, the Bible is not the only authority; in matter of fact it is relegated to a lower position of importance. The conservative or orthodox position is that the Bible alone is our final authority for faith and practice. For the conservative believer, the Bible is the infallible word of God. It is inspired in the original autographs and is without error. This means that, while it will record the lies of Satan who deceived Eve in Genesis 3, it records it as a lie. The Bible is true in everything it affirms to be true. Concerning the mind or reason, it must be subservient to the word of God. If the mind is thinking in terms which are contrary to the Scriptures, it is not the mind that judges the Scriptures, but the Scriptures judge the thoughts of the mind. Concerning the experience of Mysticism, the Bible is the final judge of experience, and experience cannot determine the truth of Scripture. Concerning Romanism, it is not the church that determines the meaning of the Bible but, rather, the Bible determines the proper place of the Church. Concerning the encounter, a man does not need a unique encounter before he can comprehend what is the word of God in the Scriptures. Any other writing is the writing of a false prophet or false prophetess. We who hold to the supremacy of the Bible believe that knowledge is subject to the Bible, and there is no inner light that adds revelation beyond the Bible. The Scriptures contain the objective revelation of God and are therefore the basis of authority for the conservative Protestant. Sometimes in practice, though not in theory, conservatives can and do deny that the Bible is their sole basis of authority. Creeds can provide helpful statements of truth; but creeds can never be the authoritative judge of truth. Credal statements must always be considered fallible, in need of possible revision, and subservient to biblical authority. A church has a divine mandate to set authoritative guidelines for its members Heb. Healthy experience is the fruit of allegiance to biblical authority, but all experiences must be guided, governed, and guarded by the Bible. To make experience normative and authoritative is to commit the same error as liberalism by replacing an objective criterion with subjective existentialism. Walvoord, editor, Donald K. The issue of canonicity will be addressed in the material below.

**Chapter 5 : How Does God Guide Us? - Mark D. Roberts**

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The woman, whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit, came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. Jesus seems harsh toward the woman as he first denies her request for help for her daughter. He also appears to be condescending and denigrating of her as he says, "First let the children be fed, for it is not fitting to take the bread of the children and throw it to the dogs. She is identified as "a Greek, a Syrophenician by race. As to the manner of Jesus with women, he did not substitute uncritical deference for prejudice against women. He related to women as persons with words and dignity. In this story as elsewhere, Jesus is seen as capable of manifesting a critical stance toward woman, yet at the same time being respectful of her self-affirmation as she boldly countered his own remarks. Several interpretations have been offered by theologians. Evelyn and Frank Stagg suggest three possibilities: Jesus could have been instructing his disciples, first assuming a familiar Jewish prejudice toward non-Jews, and then abandoning it as its unfairness was exposed. The story may have served as an object lesson about prejudice to his disciples as a barrier is broken down between Jews and Gentiles. She passed his test. There may have been a deep struggle within Jesus as he dealt with the claims of both Jew and Gentile. He had openness to Jews who were outside of accepted circles publicans, sinners, prostitutes. He also went out of his way to affirm Samaritans for example, the woman at the well. As an ethnic group, Samaritans had mutual animosity with the Jews. It is clear that Jesus had to give himself unreservedly to Israel, and yet also to the rest of the world. Jesus may have been having a deep, honest struggle within himself over the claims of two worlds upon him. He focuses on her faith, which Jesus later describes as "great". She expressed her faith that Gentiles have a share in salvation, confessing that his messiahship transcends human segregations of Jew, Gentile, man or woman. She was his first convert in the "Gentile world". A tension between the two sisters over roles [Lk. Kitchen and study[ edit ] Only Luke relates the story of tension between Martha and Mary on the occasion of the visit of Jesus to their home. Finally she openly shared her feelings, stood over Jesus who was either seated or reclining, and complained: Tell her to help me! Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her. She sat at the feet of Jesus and was listening to his teaching and religious instruction. Jewish women were not permitted to touch the Scriptures; they were not taught the Torah, although they were instructed in accordance with it for the proper regulation of their lives. A rabbi did not instruct a woman in the Torah. Mary choose the "good part," but Jesus related it to her in a teacher-discipleship relationship. He admitted her into "the study" and commended her for her choice. In the tradition of that day, women were excluded from the altar-oriented priestly ministry, and the exclusion encroached upon the Word-oriented ministry for women. Jesus reopened the Word-ministry for woman. Mary was at least one of his students in theology. Jesus established his own priorities in declaring, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word proceeding out through the mouth of God. The central figure, however, is Jesus, identified as "the resurrection and the life. For some undisclosed reason, Jesus did not arrive until four days after Lazarus died. The grieving sisters, Martha first and then Mary, met Jesus. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and then proclaimed himself as "the resurrection and the life. Martha reflected a spiritual understanding beyond that required for preparing and serving a meal. Mary stayed in the house until Jesus called for her. She repeated the words Martha already had used: They invited Jesus to come and see the tomb where Lazarus had been laid. Jesus burst into tears. The foursome of Jesus, Mary, Lazarus, and Martha had a close relationship as persons, with neither denial of gender differences nor preoccupation with it. Here were persons of both genders whose mutual respect, friendship and love carried them through experiences of tension, grief, and joy. Apparently Jesus was secure enough to develop such a relationship with two sisters and their brother without fear for his reputation. When necessary, he could oppose them without fear of chauvinism. Jesus had much to do with the liberation and growth of Martha and Mary. Martha followed by Mary. Martha goes immediately to meet Jesus as he arrives, while Mary waits until she is called. As one

commentator notes, "Martha, the more aggressive sister, went to meet Jesus, while quiet and contemplative Mary stayed home. This portrayal of the sisters agrees with that found in Luke Anointing of Jesus The Gospels present two stories of Jesus being anointed by a woman: At least her beautiful deed gave Jesus needed support as he approached his awaited hour. Each of the two sisters Mary and Martha had their own way of ministering to Jesus: Martha, perhaps being more practical, served him a meal; Mary lavishly anointed him. A narrative in which Mary of Bethany plays a central role in at least one of the accounts is the event reported by the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John in which a woman pours the entire contents of an alabastron of very expensive perfume over the head of Jesus. Only in the John account [Jn. He says that her anointing was done to prepare him for his burial. This may help explain how Mary of Bethany could afford to possess quantities of expensive perfume. All at the table were men. Her tears fell upon his feet and she wiped them with her hair. The Bible does not say whether she had encountered Jesus in person prior to this. Neither does the Bible disclose the nature of her sin. Women of the time had few options to support themselves financially; thus, her sin may have been prostitution. Had she been an adulteress, she would have been stoned. When Jesus permitted her to express her love and appreciation to him as she did, the host rejected it contemptuously. At a minimum, this story shows the manner of Jesus with one sinful woman. His unconditional love for both saints and sinners may have been so well known that this woman had the courage to take this great risk to publicly express her love for him for seeing her not as a sex object to be exploited, but as a person of worth. Women who ministered with Jesus[ edit ] Luke 8: Most prominent among these is Mary Magdalene. Its three main focal points are Jesus, the Twelve, and certain women. Jesus is traveling through cities and towns, preaching the Kingdom of God, evangelizing, and accompanied by the Twelve. Other than mentioning that the Twelve were with him, nothing more is said of them here. The chief motive of the paragraph seems to be to bring into focus certain women, of whom there were "many". This passage presents them as recipients of healing at different levels of need, and also as actively participating with Jesus and the Twelve, accompanying them in their travels. He says there were many women. He points out that these included women who were prominent in the public life of the state as well as in the church. Jesus liberated and humanized people who otherwise were being enslaved or destroyed by forces within themselves and in society. Jesus healed many women of "evil spirits and infirmities". Only of Mary Magdalene does Luke provide any detail of her healing, stating that "seven demons" had been cast out. Presumably these "many" women had been healed of various illnesses—physical, emotional, and mental. It is significant that women whose conditions subjected them to scorn and penalty found in Jesus a Liberator who not only enabled them to find health, but who dignified them as full persons by accepting their own ministries to himself and to the Twelve. Its noun cognate, diakonos, is variously translated "minister," "servant," and "deacon" the latter for Phoebe in Romans In summary, Jesus attracted to his movement a large number of women, ranging from some in desperate need to some in official circles of government.

Chapter 6 : calendrierdelascience.com - Equipping you to encounter God in the pages of Scripture

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Related Media God uses some unusual means to bring people to salvation. So as soon as the pastor began speaking, the man put his fingers in his ears. But after a while, an insect landed on his face, and so he had to take one finger out of his ear to brush it off. A missionary to Africa many years ago told of a woman who came to every service, accompanied by her dog. She would sit on the outside, next to the aisle. At the end of the service, when the pastor gave the invitation to come forward for prayer, she would go forward, and the dog would come along beside her. In fact, he beat her so severely because of her Christian lifestyle that she died. There must not have been any law enforcement in that part of Africa then, because the man was not arrested. So he was left alone with the dog. He began to notice that every Wednesday evening about 7 p. Also, every Sunday morning, the dog would leave about 9 and return about noon. Sunday evening, again the dog would leave for a couple of hours and then return. He followed it to the church and he took a seat in the back to watch. The dog sat down near the aisle, in his usual place. After the service, he watched the dog go forward and take his place at the altar, where his wife had prayed. The man was so touched in his spirit that he, too, went forward and gave his life to Christ. So God used a dog to lead a hardened sinner to repentance! We may not have any stories quite like that here today, but if we went around the room, we would hear some very different ways that God worked to bring each of us to salvation. Our text shows us three very different people who had different encounters with God. We cannot be sure that the second person, the slave girl, actually got saved, since the text does not say. But we can hope that she was saved, since God delivered her from demonic forces. But these three encounters with God teach us that € God providentially works to draw very different people to Himself through the same gospel. These three encounters may seem insignificant, but actually they were the beginning of a movement that changed world history. Claudius had more important matters to attend to than this! And yet this was the beginning of Christianity in Europe, and its influence there changed the world. These three encounters should encourage us to be faithful to share our faith as we see how God uses the gospel to save different people. God works through His providence to draw different people in different circumstances to Himself. In other words, nothing happens by chance, even though it may seem to us to be by chance. Certainly the salvation of a soul, whom God has predestined to salvation before the foundation of the world Eph. Take the case of Lydia. She was from Thyatira, in western Turkey. The town was noted, among other commercial ventures, for its trade in expensive purple cloth. Emperors and Roman senators, as well as the wealthy, wore purple garments as a status symbol. Lydia, who was probably a widow, had moved from Thyatira to Philippi to do business there. Then he wanted to go into Bithynia, but again the Spirit said no. Finally, through the vision of the Macedonian man calling for help, Paul and the missionary team went to Europe. Luke reports that they ran a straight course, which means that the wind was favorable, and got to their destination in two days later it would take five going the other direction, Surely, God was with them now! They landed at the port city of Neapolis, walked the ten miles to Philippi, and no doubt wondered when God would introduce them to this Macedonian man who was ready to receive Christ. They stayed in Philippi for some days, but no Macedonian man materialized. As the missionary team wandered down by the river, they came upon a small group of women praying. Paul and his team sat down and explained the gospel to this small group of women. So the Lord brought Lydia from western Turkey to Philippi and Paul from wanting to go into western Turkey to Philippi, and brought them together here so that she could get saved! The Macedonian man turned out to be an Asian woman! This slave girl was being used by her owners for fortune-telling, much to the fortunes of the owners! As this continued for many days, Paul became greatly annoyed, so he commanded the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her, and it did so instantly. Luke does not tell us if this girl got saved, but we can hope that since her owners had no further use for her, the church would have taken her in and that she did meet the Lord Jesus. Luke is interested in the story because it shows how the Lord got Paul and Silas to their next divine appointment, with the Philippian jailer and an entire jailhouse full of prisoners.

Again, he does not tell us if any of the prisoners trusted in Christ, although it is not unreasonable to assume that some did. But the jailer and his entire household believed in the gospel and got saved. Advocates of infant baptism use the story of the jailer to argue that surely there were some infants among the household that got baptized. But the story does not say any such thing, and it specifically states that those who got baptized had believed in God. You have to assume infant baptism and read it into this text to find it there, because it simply is not there! Notice how different these three individuals were. Lydia was a respectable businesswoman with religious convictions. She had a home large enough to offer lodging to the four missionaries, and so she must have been fairly well-to-do. The slave girl was a piece of property to be used and discarded by her masters. Rather than seeking after God, she was actively serving Satan. The jailer was a hardened military man. He could take prisoners with their backs bleeding, throw them into the prison, fasten their feet into the stocks which were not designed for personal comfort! Also notice how different the circumstances were in which these three people encountered the Lord. The slave girl was on the streets, with absolutely no knowledge of the one true God. The jailer was saved in connection with doing his job. He was suddenly awakened by this powerful earthquake, and when he saw the prison door opened, he was ready to fall on his sword and die, since he would be tortured and executed if any of the prisoners had escaped. Out of this extreme crisis, he met the Lord. They all had to learn to accept and love each other in the same church in Philippi. The Lord works through His providence to draw very different people from different backgrounds to Himself, and He wants them to learn to love one another as a testimony to the world of His saving grace. And even though these three people were very different, it was the same gospel that saved them all. God uses the same gospel to save people, no matter how different they are. God providentially orchestrated the circumstances that led to the salvation of these people, but His messengers had to faithfully deliver the message. We should seek every opportunity to proclaim the gospel, both through our words and through our lives. Paul and his team were probably looking for men to preach to. But if he had been operating on that basis, he would have missed this opportunity to explain the gospel to this small group of women by the river. And yet this was how God intended to start the church in Europe. It would be a waste of my time to share with him or her. Paul and Silas bore witness not only by their proclaiming the gospel verbally, but also by their example. Their rights had been violated, their backs were ripped open by the rods that beat them, and they were thrown into the stocks in prison. But rather than complain, they sang hymns and prayed. It serves you right, you barbarian! If you ever are treated unfairly, you are probably being given a major opportunity for witness. If you rejoice in the Lord and keep your focus on the salvation of those who are mistreating you, your life and words can lead them to the Savior. If your focus is on yourself and getting your rights or getting revenge, you will miss the opportunity. Satan seeks to thwart the gospel by his subtle strategies. But his more dangerous strategy, because it is more subtle, is not aggression, but alignment. Those were perfectly true words! Why would Paul get irritated? If the girl had been shouting out a half-truth, I can see why Paul would be upset. But why was he upset with her shouting out the truth? As Paul put it 2 Cor. He is doing it in our day through the Mormon Church declaring itself to be just another evangelical denomination. When Protestants publicly confirm that they are one with Roman Catholics, the world mistakenly thinks that both groups are just different flavors of Christianity. You can take your pick in accordance with your preferences. But the truth is, the Roman Catholic Church and the Mormon Church both proclaim different ways of salvation than the gospel. The gospel always centers on the person of Jesus Christ and on faith in Him alone as the way of salvation. Note that he explained the way of salvation, both to Lydia and her group, and to the Philippian jailer and his household. People need adequate understanding in order to believe. They must know who Jesus is and what He claimed. The Jesus Christ that Paul proclaimed is clearly eternal God in human flesh, who came to bear on the cross the just penalty that God requires for our sins. He taught that we are justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus Rom.

*The North American Division has recently taken a Bible curriculum that was first developed in Australian and New Zealand, called the Adventist Encounter Curriculum (Bible), which was written for grades*

What does the Bible say about rape? The Bible does address the issue of rape. The Bible condemns rape whenever it is mentioned. This passage Deuteronomy This command was meant to protect women and to protect the nation of Israel from committing sinful actions. The man was to be killed by stoning while the woman was considered innocent. Though the Mosaic Law was for the nation of Israel during the time of Moses, the principle is clear that rape is sinful in the eyes of God and, under the Law, led to the most extreme punishment possible—death for the rapist. There are some difficult passages in the Old Testament in relation to this issue. One is Deuteronomy He must marry the young woman , for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives. We must see Deuteronomy In those days, social convention treated women poorly. If a woman had no father, husband, or son, she had no legal protection. Her options were slavery or prostitution. He ruined her life; it was his responsibility to support her for the rest of her life. In 2 Samuel 13, Prince Amnon raped his half-sister, Tamar. The horror and shame of being violated yet unmarried made Tamar beg him to marry her her half-brother! And her full-brother, Absalom, was so disgusted with the situation that he murdered Amnon. Critics of the Bible also point to Numbers 31 and similar passages in which the Israelites were allowed to take female captives from nations they conquered. However, the passage says nothing about raping the captive women. It is wrong to assume that the captive women were to be raped. The soldiers were commanded to purify themselves and their captives verse Rape would have violated this command see Leviticus The women who were taken captive are never referred to as sexual objects. Did the captive women likely eventually marry amongst the Israelites? Is there any indication that rape or sex slavery was forced upon the women? In the New Testament, rape is not mentioned directly, but within the Jewish culture of the day, rape would have been considered sexual immorality. Jesus and the apostles spoke against sexual immorality, even offering it as justifiable grounds for divorce Matthew 5: Further, the New Testament is clear that Christians are to obey the laws of their governing authorities Romans Not only is rape morally wrong; it is also wrong according to the laws of the land. As such, anyone who would commit this crime should expect to pay the consequences, including arrest and imprisonment. To the victims of rape, we must offer much care and compassion. Christians should model the love and compassion of Christ by assisting victims of rape in any way possible. People are responsible for the sins they commit, including rape. However, no one is beyond the grace of God. Even to those who have committed the vilest of sins, God can extend forgiveness if they repent and turn from their evil ways 1 John 1: This does not remove the need for punishment according to the law, but it can offer hope and the way to a new life.

**Chapter 8 : Enter the Bible - Books: Jeremiah**

*New Living Holy Spirit Encounter Bible: Experience the Spirit's Presence and Power in Your Life [Creative House] on calendrierdelascience.com \*FREE\* shipping on qualifying offers.*

Growing up in Christ What does it take to grow up and become spiritually mature? Why do some Christians not grow as they should? People understand the concept of growth in the physical development of humans, and we know why it is important. Babies are immature physically and mentally, but we expect them to develop. My best buddy in high school did not grow and might have been nearly a midget. But in his senior year, doctors gave him shots to make him grow. Spiritual growth is a similar concept but is far more important. Growth is development or improvement toward a goal called "maturity" or, in the Bible, "perfection". When one is "born again" as a child of God, he is spiritually immature. As time passes, he should develop the qualities or abilities which the Bible says characterize the mature. A congregation matures as individual members mature. Many Scriptures describe the need to grow and mature spiritually: Many problems result when members fail to grow: The purpose of this lesson is to study the steps each Christian should take to grow spiritually. Just as a baby needs to do certain things to grow physically, so Christians need certain kinds of activities to grow spiritually. Everyone wants them to develop new abilities. Parents sometimes use this to encourage children. Some seem to like being spiritual babies. Others feed you, clothe you, change your diaper. But being a baby is not the goal of life. We are born babies so we can grow up and be productive and useful. Likewise, we are born again, so we can become mature Christians, actively serving the Lord. Otherwise, we have not accomplished our purpose for becoming children of God. Some members who once wanted to grow, may lose that desire. They may start off on fire for the Lord, but lose their zeal. They develop a spirit of indifference or negligence. Others develop a level of maturity and stagnate. They are satisfied, thinking no more growth is needed. The Scriptures teach that growth is always needed. He forgot past achievements and failures and pressed on to greater accomplishments. But that very night he denied Him three times. Christians never reach the point we are so mature that we cannot fall. They have no desire to work and serve to the full extent of their ability. When people develop a burning hunger and thirst to work for the Lord, then they will develop the other steps they need to grow. Do you have that burning desire to accomplish more for the Lord? Have you set specific goals of work you want to accomplish for God, improvements to make, new levels to reach? A child cannot grow physically without proper food. Good parents are concerned about proper nutrition. They want children to eat what is good, not bad for them. We are touched by pictures of children starving due to poverty. Most children WANT nourishment. Babies cry for food. Once as a child I got so hungry I cried, and my mother felt really bad. We want it every day, regularly, several times a day. Scriptures show the need for regular nourishment. Time and again members fall away or are spiritual midgets because they do not eat properly. Children and adults need physical food regularly, and get very upset without it. I never ceased to be amazed when the church provides a spiritual feast, and members choose to do other things. How often do we miss the regular meals provided for our bellies? Take this test to check your spiritual nourishment. How much time did you spend this week watching TV? How much time watching sports or entertainment, or reading the paper, magazines, etc.? How much time did you spend on some hobby or outside interest, that may not be immoral but is not necessary? How many hours did you spend studying your Bible? How many services of the church did you attend? How many did you miss that you could have attended? Which do you nourish the best: Developing skills requires continual repetition: Athletes run, lift weights, and practice hour after hour in order to grow strong and develop endurance. A man once had an apartment next to a professional cello player. He thought it must be exciting to play in an orchestra. Then he listened as the man practiced the scales, exercises, and songs endlessly. Children practice skills over and over to learn them. Children learning to walk try again and again. They are proud to learn a new word, then they use it till they drive you crazy! They want to play the same thing over and over: Parents encourage children to repeat what they must learn: Growth requires exercise as well as nourishment. Get in and dig. To learn to PRAY, do it over and over. Kids may not be good at activities at first, but parents encourage them to do it over and over.

Likewise, older members must encourage the newer ones to use their talents. They may not be skilled at first, but they learn by doing. We need to encourage teachers, preachers, and song leaders. They need the practice! It is progress and development as time passes. Several important lessons follow: Children do not become full-grown instantaneously. At birth they are so small you can hold them in a little basket. Soon they are outgrowing new clothes every month. But it takes time. Sometimes children become impatient. It will come soon enough. Likewise spiritually, do not expect maturity overnight. Some new-born Christians want to know everything and do everything right away. Yet they want to be just like the mature members - and want other members to treat them with the same respect that they do mature members - before they have taken time to grow. Sometimes older members are impatient with new members. Remember that people who may be mature today did not get that way overnight. It took years of study and practice. And new converts will not become mature overnight. It will take time. New members should not get discouraged and give up. Older members should not be impatient or overly demanding. Remember how our children took time to grow, and how we had to show patience with their immature ways as they grew. But growth will come as long as people are trying and we give them time. Children make many mistakes and must often be told they are wrong. How often does a child fall while learning to walk? They fall again and again, gathering bumps and bruises. Parents are continually correcting, instructing, and punishing, till we almost feel sorry for the kids.

**Chapter 9 : Theology of Pope Benedict XVI - Wikipedia**

*The earliest attempts to translate the Bible into English contained all the elements and intrigue to produce a New York Times best seller: power, passion, corruption, betrayal, persecution, oppression and death.*

Regensburg Lecture In an address to the faculty at the University of Regensburg , Germany, [17] Benedict discussed the preconditions for an effective dialogue with Islam and other cultures. This requires a review of theology and science. Hence the human sciences , such as history , psychology , sociology and philosophy , attempt to conform themselves to this canon of science". For philosophy and, albeit in a different way, for theology, listening to the great experiences and insights of the religious traditions of humanity , and those of the Christian faith in particular, is a source of knowledge , and to ignore it would be an unacceptable restriction of our listening and responding. Only thus do we become capable of that genuine dialogue of cultures and religions so urgently needed today. In the Western world it is widely held that only positivistic reason and the forms of philosophy based on it are universally valid. A reason which is deaf to the divine and which relegates religion into the realm of subcultures is incapable of entering into the dialogue of cultures. Theology of Joseph Ratzinger[ edit ] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith[ edit ] Ratzinger became known as a theologian through his position at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith , which he headed until his election to the Papacy. It has been frequently overlooked that he opened up his congregation to theological and historical research , by providing greater access to the Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In absence of a large body of papal teachings of Benedict XVI, the Ratzinger theology is often cited. While there are likely to be many similarities between the teachings of Benedict and Ratzinger, the theology of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger has been somewhat unusual because of his "watchdog" office, which required him to address a larger variety of issues. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was much on his own, since he had only a small staff at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Young Ratzinger was something of a "rebel",[ according to whom? It would be important for him to distinguish between Ratzinger the theologian, with his justified and maybe at times problematical positions, and Ratzinger the Prefect of the Congregation of Faith. Every Roman prelate has a right to his own theological views. But he should not use his Office to force them on others. This difference is important but of course also very difficult to carry out in practice. Does the Prefect defend "only" the official Magisterium , Church teachings within the framework of Canon Law? If so, he is clearly speaking for the Church and not on his own. Does he in so-called gray areas of theology, questiones disputatae , where the Magisterium has not ruled, impose his theological view on others? Ratzinger held that God reveals and revealed himself in history and throughout history and not just once to the authors of the Bible. Ratzinger contradicted traditional Catholic theology, which led to a bitter fight. Ratzinger passed after hours of heated debate, just barely. But he had established himself as an independent thinker. His theology on revelation was discussed during Second Vatican Council. In Rome he continued the view that revelation, meaning God communicates with us, is always more than can be expressed in purely human words. God has a living message to us. I refer to what might be called Christian positivism. By thus seeming to bridge the gulf between eternal and temporal, between visible and invisible, by making us meet God as man, the eternal as the temporal, as one of us, it knows itself as revelation â€” Joseph Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, Seabury, New York, , p. In this covenantal theology, the Abrahamic covenant, as fulfilled by the new covenant, is seen as fundamental and enduring, whereas the Mosaic covenant is intervening Rom. The covenantal promises given to Abraham guarantee the continuity of salvation history, from the patriarchs to Jesus and the Church, which is open to Jews and Gentiles alike. The Last Supper served to seal the new covenant, and the Eucharist is an ongoing reenactment of this covenant renewal. Following the Letter to the Hebrews, Benedict describes Jesus death, along with the Eucharist, in which the blood of Jesus is offered to the Father, as the perfect realization of the Day of Atonement cf. As such, like all his predecessors, he does not view the search for moral truth as a dialectic and incremental process, arguing that essential matters of faith and morals are universally true and therefore must be determined at the universal level: Role of liturgy[ edit ] The ongoing revelation of God is also the reason why Pope Benedict XVI puts so much emphasis on sacred

liturgy, and why he abhorred often tasteless experiments with it. To him the crisis of the Church is a crisis of the liturgy, in which clergy and community too often backslap and celebrate each other and themselves, almost as if God did not exist. There is more and more a tendency today, to resolve the Christian religion completely into brotherly love, fellowship, and not to admit any direct love of God or adoration of God. It is not difficult to see, Brotherly love that aimed at self-sufficiency would become for this very reason the extreme egoism of self-assertion. Not surprisingly at one of the first masses of his pontificate he urged Catholics to show a greater devotion to the "Eucharistic Jesus. It was viewed as a continuation of the reforms initiated by Pius X and systematically but gently continued by Pius XII. He has spoken only positively about the Vatican II council, but differentiated between the council and a spirit of the council, which has nothing in common with its texts and resolutions. As noted above, believes that essential elements of the Council, such as the spirit of liturgy still need to materialize and has shown no evidence that he intends to reverse or limit the decisions of that council. He has, however, stated in books and interviews that Vatican II did not represent a radical break; a new age, but a more pastoral reformulation of old truths earlier doctrine, but applied the teachings of the Apostles and church fathers to the contemporary world. Indeed, the council documents quoted times the allegedly conservative Pope Pius XII more than any other person. In the pre-conclave mass to the assembled cardinals in St. Benedict has acknowledged the good aspects of charismatic Catholicism while at the same time "providing some cautions. Israel, the Church, and the World In , the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a document entitled *Dominus Iesus*, which created a lot of controversy. Some religious groups took offense to the document because it allegedly stated that "only in the Catholic Church is the eternal salvation. The document condemned "relativistic theories" of religious pluralism and described other faiths as "gravely deficient" in the means of salvation. The document was primarily aimed at reining in liberal Catholic theologians like Jacques Dupuis, who argued that other religions could contain God-given means of salvation not found in the Church of Christ, but it offended many religious leaders. Jewish religious leaders boycotted several interfaith meetings in protest. Pope Benedict XVI and ecumenism A remarkable but unappreciated aspect of *Dominus Iesus* can be found in the official Latin text, in which the famous "filioque" clause "and the Son" is quietly omitted. The changed Latin sentence reads "Et in Spiritum Sanctum qui ex Patre procedit" "and in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father" instead of "qui ex Patre Filioque procedit" "who proceeds from the Father and the Son". The filioque clause has been a source of conflict between Roman Catholic and Orthodox Church for about one thousand years. *Dominus Iesus* also went on to state that any church outside of the Catholic Church lacks "the fullness of the means of salvation", stating that the Catholic Church is the one true church. In , the Pope approved a document which stated that Orthodox churches were defective because they did not recognize the primacy of the Pope, and that other Christian denominations were not true churches because they lacked apostolic succession; a move which sparked criticism from Orthodox and Protestant denominations. The Archbishop of Canterbury described Ratzinger as "a theologian of great stature, who has written some profound reflections on the nature of God and the church". Judaism[ edit ] Even before becoming pope, Benedict advocated a "special relationship" between the Roman Church and the Jewish faith. However, Pope Benedict did create some controversy when he said that the Church is waiting for the moment when Jews will "say yes to Christ. The fact remains, however, that our Christian conviction is that Christ is also the Messiah of Israel. The Pope also called on peaceful talk with Muslims and was against the War in Iraq and gravely concerned about events around the Middle East. Buddhism[ edit ] Though his advent was congratulated by Buddhist leaders around the world, [1] [2] critics remembered that in March Cardinal Ratzinger predicted that Buddhism would, over the coming century, replace Marxism as the main "enemy" of the Catholic Church. Some also criticized him for calling Buddhism an "autoerotic spirituality" that offered "transcendence without imposing concrete religious obligations", though that might be a mistranslation from the French auto-erotisme, which more properly translates to self-absorption, or narcissism. This is due in part from the perception among those who felt the Vatican II reforms did not go far enough that Ratzinger is a conservative. It is also noted, that the Pope has a strong opposition to moral relativism, which he sees as producing views ranging "from one extreme to the other: In his biography journalist John L. Allen, Jr. As Pope Benedict was noted for being less outspoken than predicted.

Benedict has criticized genetic manipulation and the cloning of human embryos. He has said that even "good goals" cannot justify such means. Benedict, in his most recent book, indicated that evolution, although more than a theory, was still not and as a scientific theory could not be definitively proven and that in any case, the creation and evolution of the universe and its matter could not comprehensively be explained by empirical, existential, logical methods of science – necessitating other disciplines like philosophy and theology to fill in where science could not be wholly applied or where questions were not solvable by, or in the realm of, the sciences. In a letter to the bishops he said that those who do so are not in a state to receive communion. During the 1980s, as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he criticized liberation theologians and twice silenced proponent Leonardo Boff. In *The Spirit of the Liturgy* in 2000, Ratzinger attacked Rock and Roll as "the expression of elemental passions" and described some rock concerts as becoming "a form of worship – in opposition to Christian worship. The dignity and inclusion of gays[ edit ] For several decades, questions have been raised[ by whom? The Church under Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger took the position based on the traditional Magisterium of the Catholic Church , that while confirming respect for individuals, and showing "great respect for these people who also suffer", gay wedding services are not to be tolerated in the church and that Church facilities cannot be made available for them. Homosexuality and Roman Catholicism LGBT rights advocates widely criticized his letter to the Bishops of the Church, *On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons* , in which he stated that "although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder. On the other hand, to create a legal form of a kind of homosexual marriage, in reality, does not help these people. The Church in 1968 had already stated in *Humanae Vitae* that chemical and barrier methods of contraception went against Church teachings. In 1985, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a document suggesting that education on the use of condoms could be an acceptable part of an anti-AIDS program. In response, Cardinal Ratzinger stated that such an approach "would result in at least the facilitation of evil" – not merely its toleration. For the full text of the letter, see: Ratzinger generated further controversy by supporting the denial of Holy Communion to these politicians. He did add, however, that bishops should only withhold communion after meeting with, teaching and warning politicians first. When he was asked about cruelty to animals in a interview, he said, "That is a very serious question. At any rate, we can see that they are given into our care, that we cannot just do whatever we want with them. He surrounds them with His providential care. By their mere existence they bless Him and give Him glory. Thus men owe them kindness. We should recall the gentleness with which saints like St. Francis of Assisi or St. Philip Neri treated animals It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly. Bush at the White House in "There were not sufficient reasons to unleash a war against Iraq," he said on a press conference in 2002. In the spring of Pope Benedict opposed a referendum in Italy , which aimed at liberalising a restrictive law about artificial insemination and embryonic stem cell research. This was the first direct intervention in Italian politics since the collapse of the Democrazia Cristiana party. Since the referendum had been called on a summer weekend, turn out was expected to be low.