

# “Why Would It Not Be Better to be Measured by One’s Works Instead of Free Grace?”

Why would it not be better to be measured by one’s works instead of free grace?

Thanks for asking. Interesting question.

I think a clear understanding of our works and of grace would bring clarity to the difference.

What do we bring to the table in terms of our works? Consider what Paul wrote in Romans 7:18—“I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.”

Consider Isaiah 64:6—“all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.”

And it’s not just that our works fall short of a high standard . . . it’s that sin has so thoroughly corrupted our nature that even our most sincere, well-intentioned acts are tainted at the root. The problem isn’t just what we do but what we are. A glass that contains poison doesn’t become safe because you pour something good into it, because the contents are compromised from the start. This is why even the most moral, sincere, generous, religiously devoted person cannot earn a right standing before God on the basis of their character or effort. We generally underestimate the impact of sin. It’s not just a blemish on what might be an acceptable record; it’s a disqualifying condition. Whatever good we attempt to do still flows through a fallen nature, mixed with impure motives, self-interest, and pride we often can’t even detect in ourselves. God, who sees not just actions but the heart behind them, cannot receive that as righteousness.

Consider what Jesus Himself said in John 15:5—"Apart from Me, you can do nothing."

The very best we have to offer in our own strength and from our own efforts to a holy and perfect God counts as nothing. He is not impressed.

Compare our works to God's grace: perfect, holy, favor and blessing and empowering we don't deserve. He pours His supernatural life and divine energy into us! He gives us the privilege of loving Him and serving Him and others with His own power. I like to think of the difference between the power of a tiny hearing aid battery . . . and the power of the sun. That's the beginning of the distinction between our own puny human efforts and God's unimaginable power.

Sometimes children are provided with a pile of Cheerios or Froot Loops cereal and a string so they can make a Mother's Day necklace for their mamas. Compare that to a string of priceless pearls and diamonds given by the world's wealthiest man. I think the difference between our works and God's grace is infinitely bigger than that.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

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## Two Genders, Two Spectrums

*Sue Bohlin suggests a biblical view of masculinity and femininity that encompasses the variety within two genders as God creates us.*

How do you see the variations of gender in people? Many people automatically think of a single spectrum with masculinity on one end and femininity on the other.

I don't think that's the way it works.



Consider the very first thing we encounter about gender in the creation account of Genesis 1:27–

So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

Just two genders. No matter how many choices of made-up genders that Facebook used to offer.

We can look at the issue of gender spiritually by reading about how God created us male and female. We can also see the binary nature of gender by looking at biology. Male bodies produce small reproductive sex cells called gametes—sperm—and female bodies produce large gametes, eggs. There are no other options.

In this article we'll be walking through a way of looking at gender that I believe faithfully reflects what God has revealed in His word about His design for us as human beings. Instead of a single spectrum with male and masculinity on one end and female and femininity on the other, I suggest there are two separate spectrums<sup>[1]</sup>: a masculinity spectrum and a femininity spectrum. God makes delightful variations in girls and women, and equally delightful variations in boys and men, all of us made in His image and created for His glory.

I suggest that God chooses where on each gender spectrum a baby comes into the world. It's our starting point, but as we mature we can embrace and grow in the other characteristics of

masculinity or femininity. We can take up more “bandwidth” and become a more fully-rounded man or woman.

One end of the masculinity spectrum, I suggest, are the rough-and-tumble boys who are constantly moving, playing sports, making noise, getting dirty, and can easily be emotionally clueless. On the other end of the spectrum are the sensitive, artistic, creative boys. And there’s everything in between.

On the femininity spectrum, we see girly-girls on one end, who love frilly clothes, playing with their doll babies, and in American culture are drawn to pink and purple and sparkly. On the other end are the tomboy jockettes who are often gifted athletes and natural leaders, and hate girly clothes. And, as with their brothers, there is everything in between.

Let’s explore these different gender spectrums and hopefully gain a fuller understanding of the goodness of God’s creation just the way He makes each one of us.

## **Masculinity Spectrum 1**

I really like the idea that every child, created in his or her own individuality in the image of God, is a gift box that we as parents and care-givers get to open and discover what’s inside. Every child is fearfully and wonderfully made, as we read in Psalm 139, and that includes the kind of boy and the kind of girl God chose for them to be. Whoever came up with the philosophy that children are blank slates that we write on, so they become whoever and however the surrounding culture instructs them to be, must have never been around actual children. Real babies come out of the womb and start revealing how God made them.

God shapes some baby boys as rough-and-tumble. They are often considered classically “all boy.” They’re constantly moving. Ask boys to walk from point A to point B and they may well zig-zag their way across the room. They often have an affinity

for fighting and weapons. One mama who said no toy guns in her home because she hated violence, found her young son nibbling his toast into the shape of a pistol, which he pointed at his brother and made shooting sound effects. Her other son would treat the longest French fry from his Happy Meal like a miniature rifle to pretend-shoot his brother.

These rough-and-tumble boys are often emotionally clueless. They don't *mean* to be insensitive, they just don't pay much attention to non-verbal cues from other people. They tend to enjoy rough-housing with their daddies and with other boys. They will chest-bump and jostle each other in their male way of expressing friendship and affection. And these boys are drawn to contact sports, especially anything with balls.

God delights to make other boys, though far fewer of them, as sensitive, artistic, and creative. They are often gifted in the performing and visual arts, music, dance, drama, and design. They tend to experience life through a magnifying lens attached to their soul; everything is bigger, louder, and more vibrant. They can experience negative communications as more critical than they actually are. A parent's frown may feel as devastating as a spanking.

They constantly scan their environment, sensing when others around them are upset. My husband can spot these sensitive boys at age two in the church nursery. He has seen boys drop whatever toy they had and go over to another toddler asking, "You okay? It's okay."

Many of them don't care for sports, especially contact sports. Often they lack the eye-hand coordination needed for sports that utilize balls, rackets, clubs and other game equipment. They can do better at sports that scratch their competitive itch where they're racing against the clock, like cross-country running.

And of course, there are boys (and men) everywhere in between

as well. One of my sons was so sensitive and artistic he graduated with an art degree; the other puts himself square in the middle of the masculinity spectrum.

## **Masculinity Spectrum 2**

We see the two kinds of boys and men in the account of Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25. Esau, the rough-and-tumble man, was a hunter, an outdoorsman. His twin brother Jacob was a mama's boy, more interested in hanging back in the tents with his mother, in all probability the sensitive, artistic, creative type.

Since sensitive boys are in the minority, they often get bullied by the rough-and-tumbles or boys in the middle of the spectrum, and they can easily feel like they don't fit, they don't belong. They feel different from an early age.

These are the ones who are vulnerable to spiritual attacks of being labeled gay and other ugly words. In recent years, as sensitive, artistic and creative boys feel the pain of not fitting in, they are now being encouraged to label themselves as transgender. It used to be they would think, "I don't fit in the world of boys. There's something wrong with me." Now they are being encouraged to think, "I don't fit in the world of boys because I'm really a girl. Or life would be better and easier if I became a girl." (Which, of course, is impossible.) Then if they accept these false labels and they practice seeing themselves that way, they can literally think themselves into a gay or trans identity. But it doesn't have to be that way. Scripture tells us to "take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). All of us need to derive our identity from who God says we are.

Thinking of the masculinity spectrum, I like to ask, where would you put Jesus?

I think He embodies the entire spectrum. He was the best of

rough-and-tumble men, strong and physically active; He started out as a carpenter or handyman, and men were drawn to Him. Was He artistic? Have you ever seen a sunrise or a sunset? Jesus paints the sky with glorious colors! Was He creative? Scripture tells us He was the Creator of the universe!

I have observed over years that as boys and men grow spiritually, they start taking up more bandwidth on the masculinity spectrum as they become more well-rounded. Rough-and-tumbles learn to listen and show compassion, and sensitives stretch out their comfort zone to take more initiative and reject passivity.

Rough-and-tumbles can become great leaders and servants as they use their strength to love and serve others. Sensitives can become great husbands, dads, pastors, counselors, and teachers as *they* use their gifts to love and serve others.

## **Femininity Spectrum 1**

On the one end of the femininity spectrum are the girly-girls who come into the world wanting a pink receiving blanket and one of those headbands with a big puffy flower on their little bald head. They can't wait till their fingernails and toenails are big enough for Mommy to paint. In American culture they often gravitate toward pink and purple and silver glitter. They cuddle baby dolls and stuffed animals.

One progressive-minded mother didn't want to support gender stereotypes for her daughter, so instead of buying her stuffed animals and dolls, she gave her cars and trucks. One afternoon she saw her little girl lining up the cars and trucks, covering them with a blanket, and tenderly kissing them "night-night" as she put them down for a nap. Just as she would have with dolls and stuffed toys, if she'd been allowed to have them.

It's easy to define feminine as girly-girls, but God loves and

creates another kind of femininity.

He delights to make some girls tomboy jockettes. They have no interest in frilly clothes or makeup. They don't care for skirts or dresses and in fact will often push back when required to wear "girl clothes." For them, comfort is everything. You can find them outside climbing trees, shooting hoops, and perfecting their spirals. Some mechanically-inclined girls want to help their dads work on cars and lawnmowers. They tend to have no patience for girly-girl activities; girl drama drives them crazy. Barbie is stupid, and who wants to play house—nobody wins!

Many times they are gifted athletes, and often natural leaders.

Like sensitive boys, tomboys are outnumbered by girly-girls and those in the middle of the femininity spectrum. Being the minority, they are often bullied. They are judged and ostracized for not being like the other girls.

Sensitive boys and tomboy girls can get the message loud and clear that they don't have what it takes to be a good boy or girl. They can conclude, wrongly, that they don't belong in the world of boys, of girls. They burn with the shame of being "other than." Different.

But God makes every person male or female on purpose, for His glory. They DO belong in the world of boys or girls, of men and women!

## **Femininity Spectrum 2**

As girls grow spiritually, becoming more like Jesus, they can take up more bandwidth on the spectrum and become a more well-rounded expression of femininity.

Girly girls can put down their mirrors and selfies, and become prayer warriors and first responders. They can walk into

emotional crises and hard conversations to point people to Jesus. They can become shepherds, more concerned about other people than themselves.

Tomboys can embrace the softer, more nurturing side of femininity. These girls often want to fight and defend those needing protection. They need to be introduced to spiritual warfare! Whether as a princess warrior or a warrior princess, the kingdom needs all girls and women to be fully engaged in fighting evil!

Many of the gender issues today are about stereotypes. People want to stick everybody in either a blue box or a pink box. They make sweeping generalizations like

- “Boys wear blue and brown and play with trucks and guns.”
- “Girls wear pink and purple and play with Barbies and jewelry making kits.”

But what if a boy thinks blue and brown are boring, and he loves pink and purple? Does it mean he’s gay? No! Jesus loves pink and purple! Have you ever seen a sunrise?

What if he doesn’t want to play tackle football? What if he’d rather sit and try to draw out another kid’s thoughts and feelings? Does it mean he’s gay? No! It may be a junior counselor in the making, who’s also going to be a fantastic daddy!

What if a girl thinks it’s just WRONG that she has to stay inside and learn to make gravy because Grandma says that’s what girls do, when there’s a broken carburetor outside she’s itching to get her hands on? What if she’s an amazing softball player? Does it mean she’s a lesbian? No! It means she’s a gifted mechanic or athlete!

Let’s forget the blue and pink boxes and just open the gift box that is each child and find out how God packed the gifts and interests inside. Let’s celebrate God’s good design of

each child IN HIS IMAGE and affirm them as the child they are, even if they don't conform to stereotypes.

Can you imagine how freeing it would be to celebrate the full spectrum of masculinity and femininity, and teach kids to appreciate and celebrate it in each other?

## Notes

1. I do realize that the plural of spectrum is *spectra*, but most people don't take five years of Latin like I did. For those who wince at my coining a word, my apologies.

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# Mind Games Camp (radio transcript)



## Camp Overview

There's one thing we do here at Probe that is my favorite part of ministry. Our Mind Games Camp is a week-long, total immersion, give-it-all-we've-got experience for high school

and college students that changes minds and hearts forever.

Beautiful Camp Copass in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area is surrounded by a lake on three sides and it feels very seclude—even though it's not far from the Dallas-Ft. Worth airport, so students can easily fly in. We teach Christian students how to think biblically on a wide range of subjects: understanding how others think as they understand their worldviews, how they can know that Christianity is true, creation and evolution, human nature, the differences between guys and girls, the problem of evil and the value of suffering, campus Christianity, and even how to watch a movie with their brain turned on. They learn about a compassionate but biblical view of LGBT, different views of science and Earth-history, and genetic engineering.



Returning campers get to experience what is always a highlight for our students, a special alumni track with new lectures in an intimate, personal setting. The alumni always tell the first-timers what an amazing difference it makes to come back a second or even third time, because they get so much more out of the conference than they ever thought possible.

The Probe teachers don't just give the lectures, though; we continue conversations at meals where we eat and visit with the students instead of each other. We break up into discussion groups to help the students process what they're learning in the sessions. There is free time every afternoon and evening to hike, swim, play basketball or card games, read or nap. Or of course, just hang out with new friends. The students are delighted to meet other thinking Christians from all over the country, students eager to think and grow in their faith as they learn to love God with their minds together. They enjoy getting to know us as the instructors, too. We're not only available the whole week; we look for opportunities to engage in conversations that will encourage and affirm what God is doing in the minds and hearts of these precious young people.

We talk about Mind Games in this article, but you can go to our website, [MindGamesCamp.com](http://MindGamesCamp.com), and check out our videos, a typical week's schedule, and lots of other information. In the next sections you'll hear a little bit from several instructors, and also from several of our Mind Games alumni.

## **Sneak Peek of Probe Lectures**

Here are snippets from lectures of four of our Probe Mind Games instructors:

*Here's Dr. Ray Bohlin speaking on "Christian Views of Science and Earth History":*

So, what are these three views we're going to talk about? Well first, there is the recent, or literal, view, then there's what I call Progressive Creation, then there's what I call Theistic Evolution or what is now, the term now used is Evolutionary Creation. OK . . . so what kind or form of analysis we going to apply here?

*Sue Bohlin on "God, Gender and Transgender":*

Masculinity reflects the strong Father heart of God, to use His strength to love us by protecting us and providing for us. So I love this idea of the Father heart of God, especially when you have a father wound, because of a father either not being there, or not loving you well, not connecting with you well. So often God our Father says, 'I will be your Father. Come to Me, let Me show you what a father is supposed to be.'

*Todd Kappelman on "How to Watch a Film":*

The Need for Interpretation, Matthew Arnold: this is where we start getting some of our rules that we look at when we look at a film. When interpreting a film, one should ask these following questions: first, number one. How important is life to the director, writers, etc., and are the tough issues dealt with or avoided? This goes to the seriousness of a film. I mean, are we watching a romantic comedy, are we watching a

film, drama, of somebody overcoming heroin?

*Tom Davis on "The Deity of Christ"*

Are all religions basically the same? And we have a law of logic called the law of non-contradiction. To kind of put this in somewhat symbolic terms, A cannot be non-A. You can evaluate the consistencies of things, you can tell if all religions are the same with this law.

## **Comments from Alumni, Part 1**

This week we're talking about our memorable, life-impacting, week-long summer Mind Games Camp. But you don't have to take our word for it. Consider what some of our alumni have to say:

*Anna:*

Mind Games is a brilliant camp. It has wonderful professors who are very knowledgeable in so many subjects like philosophy and science and theology, and it's so wonderful to get their perspectives on the Bible, and to hear about their spiritual walks, and to hear things that you wouldn't normally hear in your Sunday School class or in church. It's very spiritually enriching not only because of the sessions you'll be going to, but also because of the environment you're in. You're surrounded by like-minded Christians who also love the Lord, so you're with people that can sharpen you as iron sharpens iron. All the sessions have so much information that you can learn things from; they help you with evangelism, they help you with confidence in your own faith, they help you with discipleship. It's so helpful, there's so many things I've learned every single year, I've learned a new thing-so many new things every single year at Mind Games.

*Jona:*

Looking at the topics, I was terrified because I would be putting myself in a position where I could be wrong, put myself in a position where I challenge all my worldviews, even

worse I'll be surrounded by people who are way smarter than me, or have way more experience than me. And what I realized this year is that there is nothing more liberating than being ready to be wrong.

*Blaine:*

Out of all the events that I've had this year, this was probably one of the ones I looked forward to the most. Last year I had such a great time and made amazing memories and connected with tons of people, and I got to see some of them this year, and as I was going through the camp I learned a lot more as we dove deeper into the topics and revisited them, and as I grew closer and gained connections with some new people and some alumni, it felt like I was growing closer to a family. And it was just really fun overall.

## **Comments From Alumni, Part 2**

Aiden and Gideon keep coming back because they love it so much!

*Aiden:*

This is my third year. Every year always blows me out of the water because there is a certain level of connection, a certain level of deepness and humanity that you don't get to see outside of this camp. It's incredible to me just how deep you can get with complete strangers in a week. It's just really powerful to me, that God has blessed this camp, that God has blessed the teachers and the professors (I don't know what you prefer to go by) but like the continuing and consistent level of love and care and just connection is what draws me to this camp and what keeps me coming. And so if I had to say one thing about this camp, that this camp was probably one of the most impactful things in my life

*Gideon:*

This has been my fourth year attending Mind Games and this has impacted my life so many facets, seen and unseen. It has been

a really great experience to get to know people my age, have peers, because in my life I really haven't had very many peers of equal anything it's been more mature and spiritual-and it's been rather difficult just being a person who loves God and striving for more, and this camp has really let me be able to become who I want to be and not just who I would have been. And this camp has really allowed me to become more like Jesus. I truly believe that, and I'm convinced of that.

## Why Go to Mind Games?

We now know that three out of four high school seniors who had been part of a church youth group drop out of church within a year.<sup>{1}</sup> One reason for this is that they don't own their faith; they don't know that Christianity is true, and they don't know why it's true. They tend to equate faith with a warm fuzzy feeling that doesn't stand up to the challenges of life. Many students are afraid to express their doubts so they never learn that there are good, solid answers to their questions. They are sensitive to the disconnect that happens when those who profess to be Christ-followers act no differently from unbelievers.

For over thirty years, Probe's Mind Games conferences have been preparing young people for the challenges to their faith. In that time, we have witnessed firsthand the incredible thirst for a reliable trustworthy faith. Again and again we hear that some had despaired of ever finding something like Mind Games. The conference consistently exceeds expectations, and students often tell us they wish they had brought their friends.

Alumni from these summer conferences have gone on to become leaders on their campuses, the government and the military. This week-long immersion truly changes lives, giving them a new confidence in their God, His Word, and in their role as His ambassadors. We know this because some of them come back

as alumni a second or third year, and because they contact us years later and let us know how Mind Games continues to impact them.

Mornings start with an informal devotional by Probe staff and a time of prayer. They receive twenty-five hours of instruction using video clips, role play, Q and A, and other teaching techniques. They connect with each other and process what they're learning in small groups. We as staff get to know and truly love them.

Mind Games Camp is best for those who have finished their junior or senior years of high school, and for college freshmen and sophomores. [Note: especially motivated students younger than that are welcome, though!] Please go to [MindGamesCamp.com](http://MindGamesCamp.com), and check out videos. You can look at a typical schedule, and find out all the details. And then register someone you love. It will make a difference in time and eternity.

### Notes

1. Steve Cable, Is This the Last Christian Generation?  
[probe.org/is-this-the-last-christian-generation/](http://probe.org/is-this-the-last-christian-generation/)

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# Is Probe Ministries a Hate Group?

The U.S. Department of Justice recently indicted the Southern Poverty Law Center for fraud as it spread hate by secretly funding the very groups it claimed to be fighting, including the Ku Klux Klan.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is famous for its list of hate groups, which has included Probe Ministries. We were tagged as an "anti-LGBT" hate group because we don't agree with the LGBT agenda. We align ourselves with the Bible's standards that all sex outside of marriage violates God's commands for human sexuality.

The SPLC's website contains this lie:

These groups are not listed on the basis of opposition to same-sex marriage or the belief that the Bible describes homosexual activity as sinful. Anti-LGBT groups engage in crude name-calling and disseminate disparaging propaganda and falsehoods about this population, such as the claim that gay men molest children at vastly higher rates than straight men.

When they slamed us as a hate group, I inquired what evidence of such "name-calling" and "disparaging propaganda and falsehoods" they had found on our website.

No response.

Because it's not there.

Over the years, as the Probe webmistress (and primary writer and speaker on gender and sexuality issues), I have repeatedly invited people to identify any hate-filled words on our website so I can change them, but no one has ever responded. I believe that is because you won't find words of hate on our website articles or in any of our recorded messages.

Unfortunately, these days mere disagreement is called hate.

As my pastor has said, "Truth sounds like hate to those who hate the truth." There are so many cultural lies about God's design for sex and identity that when we proclaim God's truth in a culture that embraces lies, we get called hateful and discriminatory.

Please know that we are not a hate group. We are a truth group, seeking to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

And the Southern Poverty Law Center lies.

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# The Lunar Flyby and the Crucifixion

The Artemis lunar flyby on April 6, 2026 included a fully scheduled 40-minute loss of communication between the astronauts and NASA. Radio signals between the capsule and Mission Control were blocked by the moon as the astronauts flew over its far side.

I think about what it must have been like for the astronauts to be cut off from their source of support and connection as they experienced total silence from Houston . . . and the emotional impact on the folks at Mission Control to be cut off from “their people” up in space.

Everybody knew the 40-minute communication blackout was going to happen, but actually experiencing it took things to a new level of reality for everyone who was a part of the lunar mission.

What I love about this event is how it helps me appreciate, even to a small extent, what it must have been like during Jesus’ crucifixion, for both the Son and His Father.

Before the foundation of the world, the Father and Son determined that He would die for our sins (Revelation 13:8). Before the eternal God even created the heavens and the earth, the Crucifixion was planned—and part of it was the communications cut-off between the Son and the Father. Jesus

took all the sin of every human being onto Himself, so truly and so deeply that Paul describes it as actually *becoming* sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).

When Jesus became our sin, that cut off the communication—and intimacy—between Him and His absolutely, completely holy Father. For the first time in all eternity, there was unimaginably terrifying silence in the broken connection between Father and Son.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus wrestled in prayer before His passion to the point of sweating blood. I can't help but think that, as horrible as the gruesome physical suffering of the cross would be, the fear of separation from His Father must have loomed even larger and more loathsome. That was part of what He was willing to experience for me.

For you.

To reconcile us to the Father.

Can we even begin to imagine the immensity of the cost Jesus—and the Father!—were willing to pay?

The Artemis blackout lasted 40 minutes. The divine blackout lasted three hours. Breathtakingly appropriately, there was a physical blackout those three hours as a supernatural darkness descended on the planet. People knew it was dark, but they couldn't know what was happening in the unseen spiritual realm as well.

But both the Father and the Son were experiencing a heartbreak none of us can begin to imagine.

At the end of the blackout, Artemis astronaut Kristina Koch broke the silence from space by saying, "It is so great to hear from Earth again." She told President Trump, "One of the biggest highlights was coming back from the far side of the moon and having the first glimpses of planet Earth again,

after being out of communication for about 45 minutes. It really just reminds you what a special place we have.”<sup>{1}</sup>

As gratifying as it must have been for the astronauts to hear from Mission Control, and for Mission Control (plus the millions of people on earth watching and listening on the internet) to hear from Artemis, that was a drop in the bucket compared to the incredible reunion in the spirit realm when Father and Son were able to talk to each other again. Jesus’ first words after the communications blackout were, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” (Luke 23:46)

Which I think is code for, “Abba Daddy, I’m back!”

I sure hope there’s a video of Their reunion in heaven!

### Note

1.

[www.foxnews.com/us/artemis-ii-launches-astronauts-around-moon-first-deep-space-mission-since-apollo](http://www.foxnews.com/us/artemis-ii-launches-astronauts-around-moon-first-deep-space-mission-since-apollo)

This blog post originally appeared at [blogs.bible.org/the-lunar-flyby-and-the-crucifixion/](https://blogs.bible.org/the-lunar-flyby-and-the-crucifixion/) on April 8, 2026.

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# The Epstein Files: 3 Important Ways For Christians to Respond Biblically

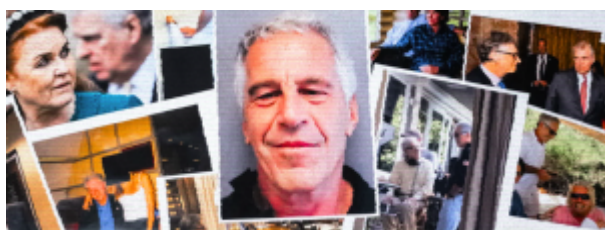
The release of the Epstein documents has sparked outrage, confusion, and intense public debate. While the world often responds with anger, speculation, or political blame,

Christians must respond to the Epstein files differently—Biblically. Scripture provides a framework for understanding both human depravity and God’s justice. Here are three biblical responses believers should consider.

## 1. Jesus promised that shameful and evil things like the Epstein files would be brought to the light.

The Bible states, “For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.” (Luke 8:17)

Also, “Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.” (Luke 12:3)



Epstein, his grandiose lifestyle, potential co-conspirators, and the revelatory atrocities committed and recorded in the shadows against [God’s image bearers](#), away from public view for years, eventually found their way to the light, where all could see and witness. The Epstein files highlight the true condition of the human heart apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

## 2. The Epstein Files affirms Biblical truth regarding the depths of human depravity.

“Pagans gonna pagan.”

Jeremiah 17:9 exposes the truth about the fallen and corrupted

condition of humanity:

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. . .”

[Ecclesiastes 9:3 states](#), “This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of man are full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live, and after that they go to the dead.”

The temptation to look down our noses at people exists, as the world self-righteously exposes the Epstein files by exclaiming, “Well, *I* would never do such a thing!” But humility can allow this revelation to serve as a painful reminder that every single one of us has a heart so equally deceitful and desperately wicked that it required the torture and death of God’s Son, Jesus Christ.

Apart from the breathtaking grace of God, each of us has the capacity to do what is being revealed in the Epstein documents. Romans 8:17 reminds us that “nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.” The Fall broke every human being so much that the only good things in us come from the *imago Dei*, the image of God imprinted on us. And only the regenerated heart can transform us into people who wouldn’t think to engage in the kind of behaviors the Epstein Files are revealing.

### **3. The Epstein Files highlight the dark side of the love of money, power and idolatry.**

Like the partridge that gathers a brood that she did not hatch, so is he who gets riches but not by justice; in the midst of his days they will leave him, and at his end he will be a fool. (Jer. 17:11)

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. (1 Tim. 6:10)

The files tell the story of the rich and famous seeking to rub shoulders with other rich and famous people. The thing that drives the attraction to celebrities might be the hope that fame and fortune will rub off on an insecure heart and fill it with vanity and emptiness. What a reminder that we are all born with a God-shaped hole in our hearts that nothing but God Himself will fill and satisfy.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

For more articles examining culture through a Christian worldview, visit [Probe Ministries](#).

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## When You Can't Forgive Yourself

"I know that God forgives me, but I can't forgive myself."

Lots of people find themselves trapped in self-recriminations, overwhelmed by regret and sorrow for things they have done (or not done). They beat themselves up, often secretly hoping this will make up for their sin. But they can't get past it.

You can read the Bible from cover to cover and not find a single instruction on forgiving oneself. That's because it's

not there.

We don't have the power to forgive ourselves. It's like trying to separate ourselves from our shadow.

As I understand it, this idea comes from humanistic psychology. For millennia, people have recognized the freedom and beauty that comes from being forgiven and released from bad things we have done. But what do you do when you leave God, the ultimate Forgiver, out of the picture? Either because of not believing in Him, or because of ignoring Him, but you still need forgiveness?

Forgive yourself?

What does that look like? Looking in the mirror and declaring, "OK, I forgive you"? That usually doesn't work—those are empty words.

We need, instead, to look to the Lord and receive His gift of forgiveness. For every wrong (or even dumb) thing we have ever done, Jesus says, "I died for that. I paid for that with My life."

The thing about forgiveness is that since we are the image of a just God, our souls cry out for justice, which pretty much means that in order for things to be made right, "Somebody's got to PAY!" And Jesus did pay, with His life, on the cross. His last words were, "It is finished—it is paid in full."

So instead of focusing on forgiving ourselves, we need to focus on Jesus and thank Him for His incredible gift of taking our sin off us and onto Himself. Thank Him over and over, until the truth soaks down deep into our hearts and we own it as true.

For a lot of people, there is a stain of shame that weighs heavy on their heart. They may even embrace the truth that God has forgiven them, but they still *feel* guilty. And that's why

they say, "I guess I just can't forgive myself."

First John 1:9 offers us two magnificent promises: If we confess our sins (that means to agree with God that what we did was wrong), He is faithful and just to **forgive** us our sins and **cleanse** us from all unrighteousness. When God forgives us of a sin, He sends it away (that's what biblical forgiveness means) forever. He takes it off our account and puts it on Jesus' account. But that's not all. He also cleanses us with the purifying power of Jesus' blood, which removes the stain of sin and shame.

But our culture elevates feelings to the level of an idol, and it's easy for us to say, "Well, that may be what the Bible says, but I'm not feeling it. So it must not be real. Or it's true for other people but not me."

If God says it, it's true. So the way to overcome the faulty thinking and feeling is to repeat (daily is a good plan), "Lord, Your word says that if I confess my sins, and You know I have, You are faithful and just to forgive me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. I thank You for cleansing me even if my feelings haven't caught up to reality. I choose to receive Your forgiveness and Your cleansing, especially since it cost You Your life, Lord Jesus."

Repetition is often the key to allowing truth to soak down into our hearts and minds.

But some will still say, "Well, God may forgive me, and maybe Jesus paid for my sin on the cross, but I still just can't forgive myself."

Let me reframe what that may mean.

"Well, God may forgive me, but He's God so He has to. I am clinging to the guilt and shame, and I'm going to keep beating myself up because that's all I know. I have to pay for it somehow."

Taking that position is saying, “Jesus, my sin may have cost You Your life, but it wasn’t enough. I have to add to it with self-condemnation. My standard is higher than Yours because I’m that kind of holy.”

Whoa.

In that case, wise people have suggested that instead of focusing on the sin one can’t forgive themselves for, the right next step is to repent of what is actually pride and arrogance before the Lord. As author Randy Alcorn says, refusing to humbly receive God’s forgiveness as enough is “making ourselves and our sins bigger than God and His grace.”

Romans 8:1 is one of the most glorious promises in scripture: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” If God doesn’t condemn us, we have no right to disagree with Him and condemn ourselves.

The bottom line for those who are stuck in not forgiving themselves? Stop trying to do what you can’t. Receive the amazing gift of God’s forgiveness, which cost Him everything, and start thanking Him over and over for setting you free and cleaning you up from the inside out.

This blog post originally appeared at [blogs.bible.org/when-you-cant-forgive-yourself/](https://blogs.bible.org/when-you-cant-forgive-yourself/) on Sept. 19, 2023.

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## **What Christmas Smells Like.**

# And Us Too.

*Sue Bohlin recently learned something new about biblical anointing oil, and why cinnamon is such a special fragrance.*

When you walk into our Tom Thumb grocery store, there's a flower display right inside the door. For weeks, they have had bags of cinnamon-scented pine cones and it smells like Christmas. I love it! The last time I shopped I gave in and bought one of the bags and put in on the hearth in our living room.

I discovered that unfortunately, one little bag with a few pine cones does not a Christmas make. You need a bunch more.

Christmas MUSIC, on the other hand—now, that'll get you in the Christmas spirit! My husband's Christmas music playlist has been on full blast for weeks. Which includes Handel's Messiah.

We hear the word "Messiah" a lot more during the ramp-up to Christmas, but do you know what it means? It means "Anointed One."

In the Old Testament, in Exodus 30:22-33, God gave the formula for a perfumed anointing oil to be used ONLY for sacred things and sacred people. Moses smeared it on the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, and all the pieces of furniture in the holy place. And Aaron and the other priests were anointed with this oil.

It was a fragrance set apart—that's what "holy" means—from all other fragrances. When people smelled it, they immediately thought of God. They thought, "Oh, that's what God smells like!"

If I were to ask you, "What does Christmas smell like?" I bet the first thing to come to mind is cinnamon, right?

Well, that was one of the elements of the anointing oil as

well.

For many hundreds of years, the people of God used this sacred anointing oil that wordlessly proclaimed, "This is what sacred smells like. This is what God smells like."

At the same time, they looked for the promised Messiah to come, and Messiah meant "Anointed One." So the sacred smells of the anointing oil were another signpost pointing to Jesus.

Every time you see or hear the term "Jesus Christ," you can think "Jesus Messiah," because "Christ" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word for "Anointed One."

When Jesus came, He showed us what the Father was. He smelled like the Father.

He smelled like God.

And here's the interesting thing. After He went back up to heaven, people started calling His followers "Christ-ians," which means "Little Christs." Little **anointed ones**.

2 Corinthians 2:15 says, "For we are to God the sweet aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing."

Just as Jesus smelled like God, so do believers in Jesus!

Not literally, but our lives are a fragrant aroma of Christ that point us to God.

We may not smell like Christmas, but smelling like God is even better, don't you think?

*(Major thanks to my favorite female theologian, Dr. Nika Spaulding, who shared this insight connecting the dots about anointing, Jesus Messiah, and God-smelling Christians in her Substack teaching on the book of Exodus.)*

This blog post originally appeared at on [blogs.bible.org/what-christmas-smells-like-and-us-too/](https://blogs.bible.org/what-christmas-smells-like-and-us-too/), Dec. 23, 2025.

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# The Value of Suffering: A Christian Perspective

*Sue Bohlin looks at suffering from a Christian perspective. Applying a biblical worldview to this difficult subject results in a distinctly different approach to suffering than our natural inclination of blame and self pity.*

*This article is also available in [Spanish](#).*



*There is no such thing as pointless pain in the life of the child of God. How this has encouraged and strengthened me in the valleys of suffering and pain! In this essay I'll be discussing the value of suffering, an unhappy non-negotiable of life in a fallen world.*

## Suffering Prepares Us to Be the Bride of Christ

Among the many reasons God allows us to suffer, this is my personal favorite: it prepares us to be the radiant bride of Christ. The Lord Jesus has a big job to do, changing His ragamuffin church into a glorious bride worthy of the Lamb. Ephesians 5:26-27 tells us He is making us holy by washing us with the Word—presenting us to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish. Suffering develops holiness in unholy people. But *getting there* is painful in the



Lord's "laundry room." When you use bleach to get rid of stains, it's a harsh process. Getting rid of wrinkles is even more painful: ironing means a combination of heat plus pressure. Ouch! No wonder suffering hurts!

But developing holiness in us is a worthwhile, extremely important goal for the Holy One who is our divine Bridegroom. We learn in Hebrews 12:10 that we are enabled to share in His holiness through the discipline of enduring hardship. More ouch! Fortunately, the same book assures us that discipline is a sign of God's love (Heb. 12:6). Oswald Chambers reminds us that "God has one destined end for mankind—holiness. His one aim is the production of saints."[1](#)

It's also important for all wives, but most especially the future wife of the Son of God, to have a submissive heart. Suffering makes us more determined to obey God; it teaches us to be submissive. The psalmist learned this lesson as he wrote in Psalm 119:67: "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees."

The Lord Jesus has His work cut out for Him in purifying us for Himself (Titus 2:14). Let's face it, left to ourselves we are a dirty, messy, fleshly people, and we desperately need to be made pure. As hurtful as it is, suffering can purify us if we submit to the One who has a loving plan for the pain.

Jesus wants not just a *pure* bride, but a mature one as well—and suffering produces growth and maturity in us. James 1:2-4 reminds us that trials produce perseverance, which makes us mature and complete. And Romans 5:3-4 tells us that we can actually rejoice in our sufferings, because, again, they produce perseverance, which produces character, which produces hope. The Lord is creating for Himself a bride with sterling character, but it's not much fun getting there. I like something else Oswald Chambers wrote: "Sorrow burns up a great amount of shallowness."[2](#)

We usually don't have much trouble understanding that our Divine Bridegroom loves us; but we can easily forget how much He longs for us to love Him back. Suffering scoops us out, making our hearts bigger so that we can hold more love for Him. It's all part of a well-planned courtship. He does know what He's doing . . . we just need to trust Him.

## **Suffering Allows Us to Minister Comfort to Others Who Suffer**

One of the most rewarding reasons that suffering has value is experienced by those who can say with conviction, "I know how you feel. I've been in your shoes." Suffering prepares us to minister comfort to others who suffer.

Feeling isolated is one of the hardest parts of suffering. It can feel like you're all alone in your pain, and that makes it so much worse. The comfort of those who have known that same pain is inexpressible. It feels like a warm blanket being draped around your soul. But in order for someone to say those powerful words—"I know just how you feel because I've been there"—that person had to walk through the same difficult valley first.

Ray and I lost our first baby when she was born too prematurely to survive. It was the most horrible suffering we've ever known. But losing Becky has enabled me to weep with those who weep with the comforting tears of one who has experienced that deep and awful loss. It's a wound that—by God's grace—has never fully healed so that I can truly empathize with others out of the very real pain I still feel. Talking about my loss puts me in touch with the unhealed part of the grief and loss that will always hurt until I see my daughter again in heaven. One of the most incredibly comforting things we can ever experience is someone else's tears for us. So when I say to a mother or father who has also lost a child, "I hurt with you, because I've lost a precious

one too," my tears bring warmth and comfort in a way that someone who has never known that pain cannot offer.

One of the most powerful words of comfort I received when we were grieving our baby's loss was from a friend who said, "Your pain may not be about just you. It may well be about other people, preparing you to minister comfort and hope to someone in your future who will need what you can give them because of what you're going through right now. And if you are faithful to cling to God now, I promise He will use you greatly to comfort others later." That perspective was like a sweet balm to my soul, because it showed me that my suffering was not pointless.

There's another aspect of bringing comfort to those in pain. Those who have suffered tend not to judge others experiencing similar suffering. Not being judged is a great comfort to those who hurt. When you're in pain, your world narrows down to mere survival, and it's easy for others to judge you for not "following the rules" that should only apply to those whose lives aren't being swallowed by the pain monster.

Suffering often develops compassion and mercy in us. Those who suffer tend to have tender hearts toward others who are in pain. We can comfort others with the comfort that we have received from God (2 Cor. 1:4) because we have experienced the reality of the Holy Spirit being there for us, walking alongside us in our pain. Then we can turn around and walk alongside others in their pain, showing the compassion that our own suffering has produced in us.

## **Suffering Develops Humble Dependence on God**

Marine Corps recruiter Randy Norfleet survived the Oklahoma City bombing despite losing 40 percent of his blood and needing 250 stitches to close his wounds. He never lost consciousness in the ambulance because he was too busy praying

prayers of thanksgiving for his survival. When doctors said he would probably lose the sight in his right eye, Mr. Norfleet said, "Losing an eye is a small thing. Whatever brings you closer to God is a blessing. Through all this I've been brought closer to God. I've become more dependent on Him and less on myself." [\[3\]](#)

Suffering is excellent at teaching us humble dependence on God, the only appropriate response to our Creator. Ever since the fall of Adam, we keep forgetting that God created us to depend on Him and not on ourselves. We keep wanting to go our own way, pretending that we are God. Suffering is powerfully able to get us back on track.

Sometimes we hurt so much we can't pray. We are forced to depend on the intercession of the Holy Spirit and the saints, needing them to go before the throne of God on our behalf. Instead of seeing that inability to pray as a personal failure, we can rejoice that our perception of being totally needy corresponds to the truth that we really are that needy. 2 Corinthians 1:9 tells us that hardships and sufferings happen "so that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead."

Suffering brings a "one day at a time-ness" to our survival. We get to the point of saying, "Lord, I can only make it through today if You help me . . . if You take me through today . . . or the next hour . . . or the next few minutes." One of my dearest friends shared with me the prayer from a heart burning with emotional pain: "Papa, I know I can make it through the next fifteen minutes if You hold me and walk me through it." Suffering has taught my friend the lesson of total, humble dependence on God.

As painful as it is, suffering strips away the distractions of life. It forces us to face the fact that we are powerless to change other people and most situations. The fear that accompanies suffering drives us to the Father like a little

kid burying his face in his daddy's leg. Recognizing our own powerlessness is actually the key to experience real power because we have to acknowledge our dependence on God before His power can flow from His heart into our lives.

The disciples experienced two different storms out on the lake. The Lord's purpose in both storms was to train them to stop relying on their physical eyes and use their spiritual eyes. He wanted them to grow in trust and dependence on the Father. He allows us to experience storms in our lives for the same purpose: to learn to depend on God.

I love this paraphrase of Romans 8:28: "The Lord may not have planned that this should overtake me, but He has most certainly permitted it. Therefore, though it were an attack of an enemy, by the time it reaches me, it has the Lord's permission, and therefore all is well. He will make it work together with all life's experiences for good."

## **Suffering Displays God's Strength Through Our Weakness**

*God never wastes suffering, not a scrap of it. He redeems all of it for His glory and our blessing.* The classic Scripture for the concept that suffering displays God's strength through our weakness is found in 2 Corinthians 12:8-10, where we learn that God's grace is sufficient for us, for His power is perfected in weakness. Paul said he delighted in weaknesses, hardships, and difficulties "for when I am weak, then I am strong."

Our culture disdains weakness, but our frailty is a sign of God's workmanship in us. It gets us closer to what we were created to be—completely dependent on God. Several years ago I realized that instead of despising the fact that polio had left me with a body that was weakened and compromised, susceptible to pain and fatigue, I could choose to rejoice in it. My weakness made me more like a fragile, easily broken

window than a solid brick wall. But just as sunlight pours through a window but is blocked by a wall, I discovered that other people could see God's strength and beauty in me because of the window-like nature of my weakness! Consider how the Lord Jesus was the exact representation of the glory of the Father—I mean, He was all window and no walls! He was completely dependent on the Father, choosing to become weak so that God's strength could shine through Him. And He was the strongest person the world has ever seen. Not His own strength; He displayed the Father's strength because of that very weakness.

The reason His strength can shine through us is because we know God better through suffering. One wise man I heard said, "I got theology in seminary, but I learned reality through trials. I got facts in Sunday School, but I learned faith through trusting God in difficult circumstances. I got truth from studying, but I got to know the Savior through suffering."

Sometimes our suffering isn't a consequence of our actions or even someone else's. God is teaching other beings about Himself and His loved ones—us—as He did with Job. The point of Job's trials was to enable heavenly beings to see God glorified in Job. Sometimes He trusts us with great pain in order to make a point, whether the intended audience is believers, unbelievers, or the spirit realm. Quadriplegic Joni Eareckson Tada, no stranger to great suffering, writes, "Whether a godly attitude shines from a brain-injured college student or from a lonely man relegated to a back bedroom, the response of patience and perseverance counts. God points to the peaceful attitude of suffering people to teach others about Himself. He not only teaches those we rub shoulders with every day, but He instructs the countless millions of angels and demons. The hosts in heaven stand amazed when they observe God sustain hurting people with His peace." [\[4\]](#)

I once heard Charles Stanley say that nothing attracts the

unbeliever like a saint suffering successfully. Joni Tada said, "You were made for one purpose, and that is to make God real to those around you." [5](#) The reality of God's power, His love, and His character are made very, very real to a watching world when we trust Him in our pain.

## **Suffering Gets Us Ready for Heaven**

Pain is inevitable because we live in a fallen world. 1 Thessalonians 3:3 reminds us that we are "destined for trials." We don't have a choice whether we will suffer—our choice is to go through it by ourselves or with God.

Suffering teaches us the difference between the important and the transient. It prepares us for heaven by teaching us how unfulfilling life on earth is and helping us develop an eternal perspective. Suffering makes us homesick for heaven.

Deep suffering of the soul is also a taste of hell. After many sleepless nights wracked by various kinds of pain, my friend Jan now knows what she was saved from. Many Christians only know they're saved without grasping what it is Christ has delivered them from. Jan's suffering has given her an appreciation of the reality of heaven, and she's been changed forever.

I have an appreciation of heaven gained from a different experience. As my body weakens from the lifelong impact of polio, to be honest, I have a deep frustration with it that makes me grateful for the perfect, beautiful, completely working resurrection body waiting for me on the other side. My husband once told me that heaven is more real to me than anyone he knows. Suffering has done that for me. Paul explained what happens in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18:

*"Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far*

*outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."*

One of the effects of suffering is to loosen our grasp on this life, because we shouldn't be thinking that life in a fallen world is as wonderful as we sometimes think it is. Pastor Dick Bacon once said, "If this life were easy, we'd just love it too much. If God didn't make it painful, we'd never let go of it." Suffering reminds us that we live in an abnormal world. Suffering is abnormal—our souls protest, "This isn't right!" We need to be reminded that we are living in the post-fall "Phase 2." The perfect Phase 1 of God's beautiful, suffering-free creation was ruined when Adam and Eve fell. So often, people wonder what kind of cruel God would deliberately make a world so full of pain and suffering. They've lost track of history. The world God originally made isn't the one we experience. Suffering can make us long for the new heaven and the new earth where God will set all things right again.

Sometimes suffering literally prepares us for heaven. Cheryl's in-laws, both beset by lingering illnesses, couldn't understand why they couldn't just die and get it over with. But after three long years of holding on, during a visit from Cheryl's pastor, the wife trusted Christ on her deathbed and the husband received assurance of his salvation. A week later the wife died, followed in six months by her husband. They had continued to suffer because of God's mercy and patience, who did not let them go before they were ready for heaven.

Suffering dispels the cloaking mists of inconsequential distractions of this life and puts things in their proper perspective. My friend Pete buried his wife a few years ago after a battle with Lou Gehrig's disease. One morning I learned that his car had died on the way to church, and I said something about what a bummer it was. Pete just shrugged and said, "This is nothing." That's what suffering will do for us.

Trials are light and momentary afflictions . . . but God redeems them all.

## Notes

1. Oswald Chambers, *Our Utmost for His Highest*, September 1.
2. Chambers, June 25.
3. *National and International Religion Report*, Vol. 9:10, May 1, 1995, 1
4. Joni Eareckson Tada, *When Is It Right to Die?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 122.
5. Tada, 118.

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# Bible Literacy Quiz: A Test of Scripture Knowledge

*Take this test of basic Bible knowledge to help assess your biblical literacy. This simple quiz examines some of the key doctrines and events of the Bible. It will give you a good feel for your breadth and depth of Scriptural knowledge.*

This article is also available in [Spanish](#).



It's alarming to us at Probe Ministries to see the drop in biblical literacy among Americans. Growing numbers of people don't know what the Bible says, even the most basic foundational truths and people and facts.

Evangelical pollster George Barna says,

Over the past 20 years we have seen the nation's theological views slowly become less aligned with the Bible. Americans still revere the Bible and like to think of themselves as

Bible-believing people, but the evidence suggests otherwise. Christians have increasingly been adopting spiritual views that come from Islam, Wicca, secular humanism, the eastern religions and other sources.[\[1\]](#)

That's because we're not reading and studying the Bible. If we don't know what God says is truth, it makes us vulnerable to believing a lie.

Take the quiz yourself: click [here](#) for a format with the questions and answers separated.

**1. Who wrote the first four books of the New Testament?**



Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

**2. Who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament?**

Most conservative scholars hold that the Pentateuch was written by Moses.

**3. What two Old Testament books are named for women?**

Esther and Ruth.

**4. What are the Ten Commandments?**

1. I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods before Me.

2. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

5. Honor your father and your mother.

6. You shall not murder.

7. You shall not commit adultery.

8. You shall not steal.

9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife—or anything that belongs to your neighbor. (Exodus 20:2-17)

**5. What is the Greatest Commandment?**

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37,38)

**6. What is the second Greatest Commandment?**

“Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39)

**7. What is the Golden Rule?**

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” (Matthew 7:12)

**8. What is the Great Commission?**

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19,20)

**9. What was the test of a prophet, to know that he was truly from God?**

He had to be 100% accurate in his prophecies. The penalty for a false prophet was death by stoning. (Deuteronomy 18:20-22)

**10. To whom did God give the 10 Commandments?**

Moses. (Exodus 20)

**11. Which two people did not die?**

Genesis 5:24 says that Enoch, who was Noah's great-grandfather, "walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away." The other was the Old Testament prophet Elijah, who was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind with a chariot and horses of fire. (2 Kings 2:11)

**12. What is the root of all kinds of evil?**

The love of money. (1 Timothy 6:10)

**13. What is the beginning of wisdom?**

The fear of the Lord. (Psalm 111:10)

**14. Who delivered the Sermon on the Mount?**

The Lord Jesus. (Matthew 5-7)

**15. How did sickness and death enter the world?**

Romans 5:12 says that sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin. The fall of man is recorded in Genesis 3, where God's perfect creation was spoiled by Adam's sin.

**16. Who was the Roman governor who sentenced Christ to death?**

Pontius Pilate. (Matthew 27:26)

**17. Who are the major prophets?**

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

**18. What people group is the Old Testament about?**

The Hebrews, who became the nation of Israel. They were descendants of Abraham through Isaac.

**19. What happened while the Lord Jesus was in the desert for 40 days?**

He was tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1) Hebrews 4:15

tells us that He was tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

**20. How many people were on Noah's ark?**

Eight: Noah and his wife, his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives. (Genesis 7:13, 1 Peter 2:5)

**21. Who was the first murderer?**

Cain, who killed his brother Abel. (Genesis 4:8)

**22. Which person was afflicted with terrible trials but trusted God through it all?**

Job. (See book of Job)

**23. Who was Israel's most well-known and well-loved king?**

David. (1 Chronicles 29:28)

**24. Who was "the weeping prophet?"**

Jeremiah.

**25. Who was thrown into the lion's den?**

Daniel. (Daniel 6)

**26. Who were the two people in the famous fight with a stone and a sling?**

David and Goliath. (1 Samuel 17)

**27. What is the book of Acts about?**

The early years of the church, as the gospel begins to spread throughout the world.

**28. What are epistles?**

Letters.

**29. On what occasion was the Holy Spirit given to the church?**

Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4)

**30. Whom did God command to sacrifice his only son?**

Abraham. (Genesis 22:2)

**31. What was the Old Testament feast that celebrated God's saving the firstborn of Israel the night they left Egypt?**

Passover. (Exodus 12:27)

**32. Who was the Hebrew who became prime minister of Egypt?**

Joseph. (Genesis 41:41)

**33. Who was the Hebrew woman who became Queen of Persia?**

Esther. (Esther 2:17)

**34. Who was the pagan woman who became David's great-grandmother?**

Ruth. (Ruth 4:17)

**35. Which angel appeared to Mary?**

Gabriel. (Luke 1:26)

**36. How did the Lord Jesus die?**

He gave up His life while being crucified. (John 19:18)

**37. What happened to Him three days after He died?**

He was raised from the dead. (John 20)

**38. What happened to the Lord Jesus 40 days after His resurrection?**

He ascended bodily into heaven. (Acts 1:9-11)

**39. What should we do when we sin, in order to restore our fellowship with God?**

1 John 1:9 tells us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

**40. How did the universe and world get here?**

Genesis 1:1 tells us, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." We are told further in Colossians 1:16 and 17 that the Lord Jesus Christ was the one who did the creating.

**41. Where did Satan and the demons come from?**

Satan was originally the best and the brightest angel, but he sinned in his pride, wanting to be God. Some of the angels followed him, and these "fallen angels" were cast out of heaven. (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28)

**42. Who directed the writing of the Bible?**

The Holy Spirit. (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:21)

**43. Where was the Lord Jesus before He was conceived in Mary?**

In heaven. (Philippians 2:6-11, 1 Corinthians 15:49)

**44. Who taught in parables?**

The Lord Jesus. (Matthew 13:3)

**45. What are parables?**

A short, simple story with a spiritual point.

**46. Which two animals talked with human speech?**

The serpent in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:3) and Balaam's donkey (Numbers 22:28).

**47. With which woman did David commit adultery?**

Bathsheba. (2 Samuel 11)

**48. Which one of their sons succeeded David as king?**

Solomon. (2 Samuel 12:24)

**49. Who was the female judge of Israel?**

Deborah. (Judges 4:4)

**50. Who was the wisest man in the world?**

Solomon. (1 Kings 3:12)

**51. Who was the first man?**

Adam. (Genesis 2:20)

**52. Who was the most humble man on earth?**

Moses. (Numbers 12:3)

**53. Who was the strongest man on earth?**

Samson. (Judges 13-16)

**54. Where were the two nations of God's people taken into captivity?**

Israel was taken into Assyria (2 Kings 17:23), and Judah into Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:20).

**55. Which cupbearer to a foreign king rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem?**

Nehemiah. (Nehemiah 2:5)

**56. Who were the two Old Testament prophets who worked miracles?**

Elijah and Elisha. (1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 6)

**57. Which Old Testament prophet spent three days in the belly of a great fish?**

Jonah. (Jonah 1:17)

**58. What is the last book of the Old Testament?**

Malachi.

**59. For which Israelite commander did the sun stand still?**

Joshua. (Joshua 10)

**60. Who was the first king of Israel?**

Saul. (1 Samuel 13:1)

**61. Who built the temple in Israel?**

Solomon. (1 Kings 6)

**62. Which of the twelve tribes of Israel served as priests?**

Levites. (Deuteronomy 10:8)

**63. Which city fell after the Israelites marched around it daily for seven days?**

Jericho. (Joshua 6:20)

**64. What did God give the Israelites to eat in the wilderness?**

Manna and quail. (Exodus 16)

**65. Which two people walked on water?**

Jesus and Peter. (Matthew 14:29)

**66. Who was the first martyr?**

Stephen. (Acts 7)

**67. Who betrayed Jesus to the priests, and for how much?**

Judas betrayed Him for 30 pieces of silver, the price of a slave. (Matthew 26:14-15)

**68. What is the Lord's Prayer?**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

**69. Who was the first person to see the risen Lord?**

Mary Magdalene. (John 20:16)

**70. Which prophet and cousin of the Lord was beheaded?**

John the Baptist. (John 14:10)

**71. To what country did the young Jesus and His parents escape when Herod was threatening His life?**

Egypt. (Matthew 2:13-15)

**72. What was Christ's first miracle?**

He turned water into wine at the wedding at Cana. (John 2:11)

**73. Which one of the Lord's personal friends did He raise from the dead?**

Lazarus. (John 11)

**74. Who was the greatest missionary of the New Testament?**

Paul. (see book of Acts)

**75. Who was Paul's first partner?**

Barnabas. (Acts 13:2)

**76. Whom did an angel release from prison?**

Peter. (Acts 12)

**77. Which event caused God to splinter human language into many tongues?**

The building of the Tower of Babel. (Genesis 11)

**78. Which chapter of an Old Testament prophet's book gives a detailed prophecy of the Messiah's death by crucifixion?**

Isaiah 53.

**79. Who wrestled all night with the Lord and was left with a permanent limp?**

Jacob. (Genesis 32:22-32)

**80. Which two pastors did Paul write letters to?**

Timothy and Titus.

**81. Who was hailed as a god when he was bitten by a snake but nothing bad happened?**

Paul. (Acts 28:5-6)

**82. Which two New Testament writers were brothers of the Lord Jesus?**

James and Jude. (Matthew 13:55)

**83. Which two New Testament books were written by a doctor?**

Luke and Acts. (2 Timothy 4:11)

**84. Who had a coat of many colors?**

Joseph. (Genesis 37:3)

**85. In what sin did Aaron lead the Israelites while his brother Moses was up on the mountain talking to God?**

They made an idol in the form of a golden calf. (Exodus 32)

**86. How many books are there in the entire Bible?**

66: 39 in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New Testament.

**87. What's the difference between John the Baptist and the John who wrote several New Testament books?**

John the Baptist was a prophet who proclaimed the kingdom of God was near in preparation for his cousin Jesus' ministry. The John who wrote the gospel of John, the epistles—1, 2 and 3 John—and Revelation, was one of the twelve apostles and one of those closest to the Lord, along with Peter and James. He called himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

**88. Who saw the Lord appear to him in a burning bush?**

Moses. (Exodus 3)

**89. How many sons did Jacob have?**

Twelve. They were the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. (Genesis 35:22)

**90. Who gave up his birthright for a bowl of stew?**

Esau. (Genesis 25:33)

**91. Which Psalm starts out, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want?"**

Psalm 23.

**92. Who disowned the Lord Jesus three times before a cock crowed?**

Peter. (Matthew 26:69-75)

**93. What did the Lord do just after the Last Supper to demonstrate His love and humility?**

He washed the disciples' feet. (John 13:5)

**94. Where is the New Testament "Hall of Faith?"**

Hebrews 11.

**95. Who appeared with the Lord Jesus in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration?**

Elijah and Moses. (Mark 9:4)

**96. Who is the second Adam?**

The Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:45-49)

**97. Which Old Testament prophet married a prostitute because God told him to?**

Hosea. (Hosea 1:2)

**98. What are the two sacred ordinances that the Lord commanded us to observe?**

Baptism (Matthew 28:19,20) and Communion, or the Lord's Table (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

**99. What are supernatural enablings that allow a believer to serve the Body of Christ with ease and effectiveness?**

Spiritual gifts. (Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:8-13, 1 Peter 4:10-11)

**100. Whose tomb was Christ buried in?**

Joseph of Arimathea. (Matthew 27:57-60)

**101. Who wrote the book of Hebrews?**

Nobody knows.

**102. Which is the “epistle of joy?”**

Philippians.

**103. What is the book of Revelation about?**

The end of the world.

**104. Who is the bride of Christ?**

The church—that is, all who have trusted Him for salvation.  
(Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelation 19:7-8)

**Note**

1. [bit.ly/fR8BuA](http://bit.ly/fR8BuA)

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