“Is It Biblical for a Woman to Lead a Nation?”

In view of John McCain’s pick for Vice President [Sarah Palin, Governor of Alaska]: Is it biblically sound for a women to be in charge of a nation? I feel very sound on the fact that the husband should lead the family and in a church structure a man should be in charge of the church. Can a woman lead on the national scale?

We are in total agreement with you that God’s plan is for men to lead in both the church and the family. But the Bible does not prohibit women from exercising leadership in civil governments. Note that the references to the Queen of Sheba and Queen Esther contain not even a hint of anything negative. It does seem to be understood that men will generally be the ones in authority, but there are no restrictions for systems and hierarchies outside the church and the family. So there’s nothing intrinsically wrong or evil about women ruling in civil matters.

The created order, before the fall, makes Adam and Eve co-regents and co-stewards of the earth:

> *Gen 1:26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*
> *Gen 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*
> *Gen 1:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

God’s plan for the future is that believers who endure, both men and women, will reign with Christ (2 Tim. 2:12). So the idea of women reigning is biblical within a certain context.

I do feel compelled, however, to note the sadness of Isaiah 3:12 where women ruling over God’s people is a sign of judgment. However, the context is that of a theocracy, and that makes a difference. The United States is definitely not a theocracy, with our strong lines of demarcation between church and state!

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

Shortly after this answer was posted, we received this email:

Re: Your article “Is it Biblical for a woman to lead a nation” – Why was Deborah never mentioned when she is a prominent figure all through Judges?

I addressed the issue of Deborah in the answer to email “Should Women Be Pastors?” here: www.probe.org/should-women-be-pastors/

By the way, there are 21 chapters in Judges, and Deborah’s story is in only two of them, chapters 4 and 5. She’s a major player to be sure, but not all through Judges.

Thanks for asking.

Sue Bohlin

“Are Single Women Purposeless Beings?”

You have biblically and honestly tackled the question of the roles of women in your articles.

But I have a question concerning the meaning of women’s lives. What does the Bible mean when it says that God intended to create a woman to help man? Does it then reduce single women to purposeless beings who have nothing to do on earth? I mean not the widowed, but the never marrieds.

No, the Bible does not reduce single women at all. I believe God’s design of women means that when we operate in our strengths and giftings, we are helping other people in a variety of ways. People have many needs on many levels: physically, emotionally, spiritually, aesthetically. When women bring our God-given beauty and sensitivity, nurture and compassion, intellect and leadership skills to our communities, I think we are contributing in ways that matter. Please note, none of these have to do with marital status.

I think of single friends who are teachers, helping children and adults learn and grow.
I think of single friends who are medical professionals, compassionately treating the sick and helping people get and stay healthy.
I think of single friends who are interior designers and decorators or work for them, bringing beauty and order to homes and offices.
I think of single friends who are counselors, helping people deal with pain and problems and restoring them to functionality.
I think of single friends who are serving in ministry, pointing people to Jesus and helping them grow spiritually.

It’s true that God created Eve as a helpmate for Adam, but not all women are called to marriage. Some women are called to help others in their singleness. Many of the women I know, regardless of career or calling, delight in helping others in a variety of ways. And lest anyone think being a helper is an inferior status, may I respectfully point out that God is glad to be our helper? The Psalms are rich with references to God as our helper, our rescuer, our protector. And that’s just the beginning. He created us to need help, to need Him and each other, so there is nothing “lesser than” about orienting one’s life in terms of helping others.

I hope this helps. <smile>

Sue Bohlin

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“Which Is It: Man’s Free Will or God’s Omniscience?”

A friend of mine posed this question to me. I would like to pass it along for your reflection:

> ***When we say that God “knows the future”, are we saying that He possesses knowledge of all future events? My premise is that in order for free will for Man to exist, then it is impossible for God to know all future events. In other words, these concepts are mutually exclusive. If that is true, then which one exists – free will in humans, or knowledge by God of all future events? (Or is my premise wrong?) My opinion is that free will exists, and therefore God cannot know all future events. Furthermore, Christians should not be troubled***

> ***by the concept of a God that does not possess knowledge of all future events. They should rest assured that – one way or another – He will execute His plan and carry out His promises.***

Thanks for any insights that I could pass along to him.

This is a big issue in theological circles today—sort of the "God version" of the "what did he know and when did he know it?" question. The debate over the extent of God's foreknowledge is called "open theism." (Check out Rick Wade's article called "God and the Future").

But I can tell you what we believe. God does, indeed, know every single detail of the future, which is why the Bible contains accurate prophecy of future events—because not only did God know they would (and will) happen, but because He is sovereign, He superintends them.

I think many people misunderstand the concept of "free will," which is not a biblical term. The reality is that while we have the ability to make truly significant choices, we don't have truly "free" will. You cannot, for example, choose to wake up tomorrow morning in China when you go to bed in Chicago. Or wake up speaking Chinese when all you know is English. You cannot choose to be a different gender than what God made you. (Yes, I'm aware of sex-change operations and know people who've had them—we're not even going there! <smile>) But we can make choices that make a difference: for example, in our attitudes, in who we marry and most importantly, which God we serve. We have limited freedom in our choices, and God does not force us to choose things His way; He respects our choices. But we do not have totally free will.

I think your friend misunderstands the concept of God's sovereignty ("one way or another – He will execute His plan and carry out His promises") if he thinks that God can have a

plan and execute it if He doesn't know everything that's going to happen. You can't have it both ways. A God who is not omniscient cannot be sovereign. A sovereign God MUST be omniscient.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Where Do I Find Biblical Support for the Trinity?"

I'm having a hard time with the issue of the Trinity in terms of finding support for this concept in the Bible. I am searching your website and other sites to get a handle on this doctrine. I need to be well versed on this issue as I am in a discussion with two Jehovah's Witnesses where we will be addressing the explanation of the Triune nature of God. All of the other issues I can address and I'm doing okay, but the Trinity has got me a little stumped right now. Can you help me?

I'm so glad you wrote!! I can imagine why you would be having a hard time with the concept of the Trinity if Jehovah's Witnesses are talking to you. And that's why I'm doubly glad you have access to the Probe website to help you be grounded in the truth, as well as equipping yourself to answer their faulty arguments.

The scriptural support FOR the Trinity is so strong that you have to work hard at finding proof texts AGAINST the Trinity! We have several excellent articles on the Trinity, written by a staff member (Pat Zukeran) who has extensive experience in

dialoging with Witnesses. Start here:

Why We Should Believe in the Trinity

then go here:

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Trinity

If you have further questions, we are available to answer them through e-mail (info@probe.org) or telephone.

I am sending this along with a prayer that the Lord will show you clearly and with the peace that accompanies His truth, His triune nature. (Consider, for example, the baptism of the Lord Jesus, where all three persons of the Godhead are present: the Father speaking His approval of the Son from heaven, the Son standing in the water in human flesh, and the Holy Spirit appearing as a dove Who came upon Jesus.)

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Dr. Laura is an Unsaved, Hypocritical Fool"

I read your webpage on Laura Schlessinger and I totally disagree with what you said. Laura is an unsaved, hypocritical, fool. The devil has more use for her than does the Lord. She should be at home with her child and under her husband's authority just like the Word of God says so. Amen…

God Bless

Well, I thought I had explained that Dr. Laura is Jewish but not a believer. You are right, it would seem that she is unsaved. But she is having quite an impact on the culture, which is why I wrote an article examining what she says from a biblical perspective.

At Probe Ministries, we are big believers in helping people to develop discernment. My hope is that those who read my article would be able to sort through the good things she says from the unscriptural things she says. When she says things that are true, the reason is that she's agreeing with God. After all, even a broken clock is accurate twice a day. . .

I hope you will join me in praying that the veil will fall away from her eyes and she will see the glory and majesty of the Lord Jesus, to know Him as her Messiah.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"What is the Purpose of a Painful Death?"

I know that the Bible tells us that man is appointed to die. That from dust we came, and to dust we return.

My question relates to what purpose a painful, terrifying death serves in God's plan. I realize that illness and tragedy can affect anyone at any age, but what purpose would God have (for example) for someone being trapped in a wrecked car and burning alive? I could give other examples of terrifying deaths that we all hear on the nightly news, but my question

is: what is the purpose of the "way" we die? Why some die painlessly while others suffer a lonely, frightening death?

I don't think I have the definitive answer, but as a person who has experienced various kinds of pain in my life, I know a little bit about the kinds of things God accomplishes in us during times of great pain.

A painful death is really just another life experience, so it doesn't belong in a special category. One of the things that we unfortunately can't know, because death prevents any communication with the departed, is the testimony of God's faithfulness and power and glory in that horrible experience. His grace, presence and aid is available to those undergoing awful deaths if they are willing to receive it.

It seems to me that because pain can serve to develop character and deepen the heart, it's entirely possible that a difficult death can be the final experience of pruning and preparation for life after death.

Those who "suffer a lonely, frightening death" are in a particularly wide-open position to experience the compassion and presence of the God who promised "Lo, I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20). Just as even the smallest light is more appreciated in the deepest dark, I would suggest that the light of God's presence and love might be more apparent in a horrible death.

The testimonies of many of the martyrs who died excruciating deaths for the love of their Savior yet radiated God's peace and grace in the midst of great pain, is one of the things that leads me to this conclusion.

Granted, this would be about the death of believers. What is the purpose of a horrible death for unbelievers, I cannot say, but I still believe it has something to do with the light of God contrasted with the darkness of the heart.

The bottom line is that it is a mystery, I think, but this is the best I can do.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Should I Be Alarmed by the Concept of Christian Hedonism?"

I am alarmed to hear about a concept called "Christian hedonism," which my wife encountered in a Beth Moore study. As we were beating this around, I checked on the web and found that there were some philosophers, like Erasmus and Thomas More, who attempted to syncretize religion and hedonism together. But I see a difficulty with this just like I see a difficulty with the term "Christian existentialism."

The first time you come across the term "Christian Hedonism," it really does make you scratch your head, if not blanch. I understand! But other writers are developing this idea, which actually makes a lot of sense when you get into it. John Piper's book *Desiring God* is about enjoying God. Here's a great explanation on that: http://www.desiringgod.org/library/what_we_believe/christian_hedonism.html

Actually, I think it's a great concept because we evangelicals need to connect our heads with our hearts. For too long, Christianity has been nothing but an intellectual exercise, with our hearts going untouched and, in many cases, unchanged. What a travesty! When we get caught up in God's

“wonderfulness,” there is a whole new motivation to cooperate in His transformation of our lives and hearts; we can eagerly open ourselves to Him out of love instead of sterile duty.

So, bottom line—I think Christian hedonism is a great concept, and I hope it becomes increasingly contagious! <smile>

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“My Hurting Friend Has Stopped Believing in God”

I have a friend who has had a rough couple of years. Her parents split up and she doesn’t like her mom’s boyfriend and she recently told me she has stopped believing in God though she has been brought up to be a Christian. She just told me and a friend all this stuff and we don’t know what to say, could you please help?

I wouldn’t worry about what your friend is saying right now about not believing in God. Those are the words of a broken heart. Often when people feel God has abandoned them or betrayed them because He has allowed something bad to happen, they respond by saying, “OK, God, I’ll show you, I won’t believe in You anymore!” They don’t really mean it. . . they’re just hurting so bad they don’t know how else to respond.

If she were my friend, I would just be there for her, put an arm around her and hug her and love on her, and silently ask

God to love her through me. She needs friends, she needs support, she needs to feel loved and cared for. That's how she'll eventually come to realize how God was loving her in her pain.

I also wouldn't get into any arguments about God. If she says things like "Well, I don't believe in God anymore, if God were there He wouldn't let stuff like this happen," I'd just nod and say, "Yeah, it really stinks what's going on, and I don't blame you for hurting so bad."

Just keep in mind what her heart needs instead of what her mouth is saying. And love her, love her, love her through it. Later on you can tell her you were doing it in Jesus' name.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

"I Battle Terrible Self-Esteem"

Dear Sue,

I read your testimony, How to Handle the Things You Hate But Can't Change. I am not physically handicapped, but what about spiritual or mental handicaps? I not saying I am stupid or slow but things happened to me as a child that have haunted me all my life. I have a very low self-esteem and I don't feel like I am worth anything to any body. I feel more like a hindrance then a help. I am a Christian and I am spiriting, but strongholds from the past keep me in bondage. I have

served the Lord most of my life and in many areas my life has changed, but in this area of low self-esteem, I have prayed about it for so long without results, that I have almost decided to learn to live with it. If our God can heal the physical can he not heal the mental? Sometimes I get physically sick over this thing. As they say I am sick and tired of being sick and tired. This thing is so deep that I don't know what to do about it anymore. It is destroying my marriage and hurting my kids. It is a constant battle.

My mother died when I was about two-and-a-half and my father married again when I was five. I then had new brothers and sisters and the home life was not exactly Shangri-la. I ran away when I was fifteen and have never really looked back. I understand why I feel rejected but what I can't understand is why I can't get rid of it. I found the Lord when I was seventeen and it has been the best thing ever. I brought my husband to the Lord when we were dating and both my girls are born-again and serve the Lord. But why after all these years does this one thing still plague me? I have rebuked it until I wore my rebuker out. And still this thing is there. Sometimes it fades into the background but it is always there hovering over me. I am sad to see my family suffer because of my suffering. They do not complain but it makes me sad not able to fix this problem for their sakes. I don't know if you can help, but please pray that God will bring along the right person who can help me.

Dear _____,

Thank you for sharing your heart with me. I am so very, very sorry to hear of the heavy burden you have been carrying all this time. You must be exhausted!!

I can understand why rebuking this thing isn't working; it can't be overcome by rebuking anything. From what I understand of your life and your situation, you have been wounded by not just life but also by the lies of the evil one who wants to

keep you in bondage to false beliefs. Since you are a believer, you need to know who you are in Christ so you can replace the false beliefs with what is true.

For instance, you've been carrying the baggage of feeling rejected, but you won't be able to let go of it until you embrace the truth that you are "accepted in the Beloved," as Ephesians 1 says. And if God accepts you, you can choose to see yourself as acceptable. . . and you can choose to accept yourself. Listen—it's only been two years since I made a conscious choice to realize that God MADE me to be a self-accepting person, so I can accept myself!

The best resource I know of to help you grow in your identity in Christ is Neil Anderson's book *Victory Over the Darkness.* Another couple of excellent books that would help are both by Kay Arthur: *Lord, Heal My Hurts* and *Lord, Is It Warfare?* I promise you, _____, Satan doesn't want you to know and fully grasp the truth that you are a princess, a greatly beloved child of the King and the Bride of Christ. . . infinitely significant and valuable simply because God made you no matter WHAT happened after that! But Neil's and Kay's books are really good for helping people move out of the darkness of the enemy's lies and into the light of the truth.

I hope this helps.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Do I Find Out Who I Am Inside?”

I have a question…..I’ve been struggling lately with my identity. Not my identity in Christ, but who *I* am! I know what I want to do, I know what ministry I want to get in, I know my strengths and my weaknesses! But I’ve been trying to figure out who I AM!!! I’m not shy or timid, I just lack a persona, a character. I feel like sometimes (and I know this isn’t true) that God has written the script for my life and forgot to write the character backgound. IT’S KILLING ME INSIDE, I FEEL SO EMPTY AND HELPLESS….How do I find myself, how do I figure out how I’m supposed to act, feel, think. People say “Well, you should be more like Jesus in what you do in your life and your personality” but I don’t trust that response. How do I find my personality, I FEEL LIKE A SKITTLE WITH NO FLAVOR, I find it impossible to be me. Help!

A very wise man was teaching on boundaries and provided the most wonderful chart:

> ***Who Am I?***
> *I AM:*
> *What I think / What I don’t think*
> *What I feel / What I don’t feel*
> *What I want or need / What I don’t want or need*
> *What I will do / What I won’t do*
> *What is acceptable to me / What is not acceptable to me*

“Who I am” is the answer to these questions. It’s not like a test where you sit down and fill in the blanks; it’s more of a grid through which you pass the moments of your life, with these questions in the background. It takes a while to come up with a picture of who you are by finding out the sorts of things you like and don’t like, what you think and what you

don’t think, what you want or need and what you don’t what or need, etc.

For instance, there was a time in fourth grade when someone asked me who I was rooting for in the World Series. I didn’t have a clue, not being a baseball fan. So I found out what team John Witten was for, since he was the love of my life at that point in time, and that’s who I was for. But I really wasn’t: the REAL me didn’t care about baseball and couldn’t care less who was in the World Series. But I didn’t know that that was an acceptable answer. I do now!

I would suggest you write these questions on an index card and carry them with you, and as your personal beliefs and preferences and surface, make a note of them. I think you’ll discover who you are.

I hope this helps—I am very confident that it should at least help you get started!

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries