“What is a Biblical View of Kabbalah?”

My daughter-in-law has told me that she is checking out the religion Kabbalah. What can you tell me about this religion and do you have a Biblical critique? She was also dabbling into Wicca. My wife found your critique and we have forwarded it to her.

I am so sorry. It sounds like you have received your “marching orders” from God: to intercede for your d-i-l!! This is spiritual warfare.

The Watchman Fellowship (watchman.org) provides this short description of Kabbalah:

> *Kabbalah: (Various spellings) Mystical Jewish teachings intermingled with teachings of gnosticism, Neoplatonism, magic and the occult. The word Kabbalah means secret oral tradition and was coined by an eleventh century Spanish philosopher, Ibn Gabirol. The philosophy developed in Babylon during the middle ages from earlier Hebrew speculation and numerology. An early Kabbalist, Moses de Leon, developed and systematized the philosophy in his thirteenth century work, The Book of Zolar (sometimes spelled Zohar meaning Splendor).*

The Christian Research Institute has this article on the subject (note that there are different spellings for the same thing):
www.equip.org/articles/kabbalah-getting-back-to-the-garden

Bottom line: Kabbalah is a mystical spiritual teaching that emphasizes secret knowledge (old-fashioned gnosticism, addressed by Paul in Colossians, that’s still around today). This secret knowledge stands in direct opposition to the way

God communicates plainly with us through the Bible. Kabbalah uses animistic principles (see our article on animism) of superstitious practices to attempt to exert control over the world: “numerology, talismans, amulets, and incarnation of divine names and words,” to quote from the CRI article.

Your daughter-in-law is searching for spiritual truth and experience. Praise the Lord! That IS better than spiritual disinterest and apathy. I pray with you that the Lord will pierce the darkness and deception of her heart with His truth and the evidence of His love, drawing her to Himself.

Blessings,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“What’s a Biblical Description of Witchcraft?”

I was just curious if the Bible has any description of what witchcraft is or what characteristics of a person make them a witch?

First of all, here are the biblical references to witchcraft and other occult practices:

DEUTERONOMY 18:9-14
When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations.
There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination,

one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.
For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you.
You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.
For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so.

LEVITICUS 19:26-28,31
You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying.
You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard.
You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the LORD.
Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.

In her excellent book *Lord, Is It Warfare?*, Kay Arthur provides this glossary of terms used in these passages:

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN DEUTERONOMY 18:9-14 AND LEVITICUS 19:26-28,31

1. **Casts spell:** the act of charming; “tying up” a person through magic; used in the sense of binding with a charm consisting of words of occult power.

2. **Divination:** the act of divining sorcery; soothsaying; pagan contrast to true prophecy or prophesying; man’s attempt to know and control the world and future apart from the true God using means other than human; foretelling or foreseeing the future or discovering hidden knowledge through reading omens, dreams, using lots, astrology, or necromancy.

3. **Interpret omens:** a type of divination; seeking insight or

knowledge through signs or events.

4. **Medium:** necromancer; one who foretells events or gains information by conversing with spirits of the dead; conjurer.

5. **Necromancer:** one who calls up the dead; medium.

6. **Spiritist:** familiar spirit; one who has esoteric knowledge through non-human means; diviner.

7. **Soothsaying:** witchcraft; observing clouds for augury; foretelling future events with supernatural power but not divine power; interpreting dreams; revealing secrets.

8. **Sorcerer:** magician; conjurer; enchanter; one who practices magic arts, sorcery, charms, with an intent to do harm or to delude or pervert the mind; one who claims to have supernatural power or knowledge through (evil) spirits.

9. **Witchcraft:** soothsaying; practice of witches; the use of formulas and incantations to practice sorcery; act of producing extraordinary effects by the invocation or aid of demons; the use of magic arts, spells, or charms.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Do You Have Any Advice to High School Graduates?”

Funny you should ask; after polling some wise people I know on “Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me Before I Graduated,” I just

shared these thoughts with our graduating senior girls in our church.

• **The importance of choosing purity.** This is the biggest area of regret for many people, but especially young women, who pay a greater cost of giving their bodies away. One lady said, “I wish someone had told me that my body is a precious gift from God to give to ONE man. I wish someone had told me that if someone pays attention to you or says nice things, it doesn’t mean they love you and it SURE doesn’t mean you have to give them your body.”

One element of choosing purity is to choose modesty in dress and behavior. Showing skin (especially midriffs, shoulders and backs) is a great temptation to men and it is a statement about oneself that a girl might not want to be making: “I care more about what’s trendy than about honoring God with my body. I want guys to look at me, even if they have to struggle with their flesh over it.”

• **Don’t get into credit card debt.** The credit card companies will throw undeserved credit at you, and it doesn’t take any time at all to be way over your head. One young lady was so desperate for other people’s approval that she got $80,000 into debt to buy friends and impress people. The people aren’t around anymore, but her debt certainly is. Proverbs says that you are in bondage to your debtors, and credit card debt is a terrible kind of prison.

• **If you find yourself wondering, “Should I be doing this?” you probably shouldn’t.** Untold heartache and regret can be avoided by listening to that internal alarm. You won’t wonder “should I be doing this?” about things you should do, like, “Should I brush my teeth today?” “Should I be kind to my friends?” “Should I exercise self-control?”

• **Choose your friends wisely.** You will become like the people you hang out with, so choose people with beliefs and behaviors

consistent with godliness.

• **Pursue your relationship with Christ.** Less than half of the students in church youth groups will still be walking with God ten years after they graduate. Pre-decide to be one of those people. Go to church every Sunday. *GO TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY!* Get plugged into campus Christian groups as soon as you get to college. If you don't go to college, get plugged into some Christian fellowship group where you will be continually encouraged in your walk with God in the context of Christian community. You are like wet cement; you will (probably) determine the shape of your spiritual life for the rest of your adult life by the choices you make and the habits you form during ages 18-24.

• **Pursue wisdom.** Pray for "wisdom beyond your years." God loves to answer that prayer! Pray for your future spouse. Young women tend to be very passionate and full of longings for connection to a husband; turn that emotional energy into something constructive by praying faithfully for your husband. You might consider keeping a journal for him that you can give him when you marry, so he can see how you became the woman you will be. Write down your thoughts and feelings as well as the ways you are praying for him, even before you know him. At the same time, don't go to college for an "MRS degree," looking for a husband. Trust God to take care of that in His time. Getting married is a lousy goal for college.

• **Develop self-confidence.** Forget all the garbage about self-esteem that you were taught in school. It's not bestowed, it's earned. Real self-esteem is self-confidence, and there's only way to get it: by doing hard things, by rising to a challenge and working until you succeed.

• **PRAY!** Pray for your roommate. Pray for your studies, pray for your work. When you find yourself battling loneliness or homesickness, press hard into Jesus and let those hard feelings drive you to pray in dependence on Him. Trust God to

be in control, and rest in Him. He loves you more than you can imagine!

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

“When Are We Truly Forgiven, at the Cross or at Confession?”

Some Christian writers have claimed it’s unnecessary for Christians to ask for God’s forgiveness since all our sins (pre- and post-conversion, past and future) were forgiven when Christ said “It is finished” (John 19:30). But two scriptures seem to contradict this: Jesus’ model prayer instructs us to pray for forgiveness for ourselves (Luke 11:4), and he says in Matthew 6:15 that God will not forgive us (assuming “us” refers to believers, as he is addressing his disciples) if we do not forgive others. When do you consider that we are truly forgiven, at the cross or when we confess our sin (1 John 1:9)?

Great question!

I think it’s frankly obnoxious to teach that we don’t have to ask for forgiveness when we sin. One follower of one of these writers you mention carried it so far as to make a personal vow that he didn’t ever have to say “I’m sorry” or “Please forgive me” when he hurt anyone because after all, his sins were forgiven at the Cross! (Need I elaborate on what that did to his marriage and family and workplace relationships???)

There is a difference between knowing we were forgiven at the cross, and experientially RECEIVING that forgiveness after we sin. It's like the difference between standing at the bottom of a waterfall, thirsty, with our cup upside down. . . and turning the cup right side up to receive the water.

Forgiveness was offered to everyone at the Cross, but we don't experience it until we confess our sins and receive it by faith (turning our cups right side up). The question of when we are truly forgiven depends on if you're looking at it from God's perspective or from ours. God-wise, we were forgiven before we even knew we needed forgiveness. Man-wise, we are forgiven when we receive it.

Also, receiving forgiveness afresh when we sin is what reconnects our broken relationship with God and with others. Confession and forgiveness are intrinsically related to fellowship and intimacy.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Help! My Husband's Addicted to Porn!"

I am in a dilemma. I have been married for nineteen years. We have two beautiful children and what I thought was a 'picture perfect' marriage. Although I would have liked to make love more often, my husband never seemed interested – so I assumed he had a low level of sexual desire.

Recently I discovered to my horror that my husband has been

masturbating to hard-core pornography. When I approached him about it, he was very angry at first, saying that "All husbands have secrets from their wives", but then he was extremely sorry and promised that he would never touch himself again. He also stated his undying love for me and the family arrangement and I truly believed and forgave him. I was and still am deeply hurt because I also discovered that he has been doing this habitually almost every day for the duration of our marriage, waiting for me to leave the house before he "indulges." We had a good discussion where he broke down and cried and said that life was not worth living without me in it. I slowly tried to pick up the pieces and began to think that, because he was coming to me for sex more regularly, that things had changed for the better. A few days ago, while doing the laundry, I discovered a semen stain on his underwear.

I approached my husband but he profusely denied it, saying that it was a "urine dribble stain." I certainly know the difference! He then became extremely angry, stating that I was dredging up the past. He called me awful names for being so possessive. He also squeezed my arm so hard that it had bruises on it (something that has happened before). Once again, he eventually broke down crying saying that he loved me and that he felt like crashing his car into a tree. Please help me, because, other than all of this he IS a good man. He gives me flowers and gifts all the time, he constantly tells me that I am beautiful and he says "I love you" every single day. He shows great attentiveness when we do make love and I truly enjoy being with him; he is a hard worker, a positive thinker and an emotional being who can show great depths of compassion and humility. He has done so much for so many people, including me and our children – but I am having trouble dealing with this "other side." It is killing me to think that he chooses to masturbate as soon as I leave the house – after having spent the entire day together. I am frightened of his blackmailing me to stay – because I honestly think that he WOULD kill himself if I left him. Other than

this, our sex life together (when it happens) is wonderful and we spend a lot of quality time together as a family.

He will not attend counselling sessions, as he is in denial as to how hurt and shattered I am. I feel my whole married life has been based on betrayal. I now do not trust or respect my husband anymore and although I will always love him from the depths of my heart, I no longer find that I am in love with him. Please help me.

Bless your heart! I am so sorry for the horrible pain you're in!

I asked our good friend Henry Rogers, author of *The Silent War: Ministering to Those Trapped in the Deception of Pornography*, for help in answering your question. Here's his answer:

> *I'm convinced this man has been a habitual masturbator (is that a word?) since childhood. I suspect he battled with guilt during his teen years and yet the guilt gets stronger after marriage. The reason is simple. It's after men are married that they finally realize how selfish masturbation is. Sex between a husband and a wife is giving yourself completely to your spouse. Masturbation is giving nothing. What a contrast between the two which causes feelings of guilt.*
>
> *Married men involved in habitual masturbation feel guilty because they have wives, yet at times they prefer masturbation. Masturbation can take a man into a fantasy world where he can be with anyone he wants and do anything he wants. It's selfish because the sex act that God designed for the husband and wife is taking place in the mind. Eyes can be closed to enjoy his imagination or they can be opened to enjoy pornography. Either way, it needs no one else…and it's selfish. And yes, masturbation is an addiction, too. Many men have told me they thought they would stop after marriage.*

Sadly, addictions don't stop at the altar.

A wife hates it when she finds out about her husband's masturbation because she knows that her husband is enjoying a sexual release alone. The oneness is absent. She feels unwanted, unneeded…and unloved. And it hurts. When pornography is involved the pain is worse because a wife cannot compete with the women in porn. How does she compete with the fantasy who is ready any time of the day and willing to do anything he wants?

I want this wife to know that she is not alone. There are many other wives who know the pain she is experiencing. The good news is that she can help. Here's how:

1. Pray for him daily…that he would flee from this temptation. He's done it for over 20 years, and unless God, by His grace, frees him from it, he has a tough road ahead. He needs prayer most of all.

2. Don't confront him with semen stained underwear with an "I gotcha" attitude. She'll get denial in return or names and bruises. She needs to be gentle in her confrontation. Gentle, yet firm….

3. Encourage accountability with another man. All men understand masturbation, yet we act like no one else has done it except us. (Sometimes we're not very smart…) It's OK to talk about. And it's OK to be accountable to another man. We need each other, especially if this is a problem.

4. I would also tell her that his masturbation is not because she is not desirable, or pretty or sexy enough for him. Again, he's done it from childhood…and he did it with porn before they were married. She does not need to own it as her fault…which many women do.

5. Encourage him to set boundaries for himself. When is he most prone to masturbation? When is he most likely to give

in? Where does he masturbate? Does he stay up late after she goes to bed? Try to encourage him to answer these questions and then set up some boundaries or protective measures.

6. Finally, encourage him to pray, too. In fact, they can pray together! She knows his secret and she loves him. They can talk about it…

I hope you find this as helpful as I did!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

See Also:

Pornography by Kerby Anderson

Probe Answers Our Email:

- How Do I Handle My Husband's Porn Addiction?
- I Need Resources for My Porn Addiction
- What's Wrong with Masturbation, Anyway?
- Men Have Always Looked at Porn—What's the Big Deal?
- I'm a Compulsive Masturbator

"How Do I Encourage My Gender Role-Reversed Kids?"

Thank you so much for your commentary on encouraging our children to feel blessed in their own unique gender. I have a

boy (6) and a girl (7) (and a child of unknown gender on the way). I was really nervous about raising a little boy, because I am one of two girls in my family, and had an absentee father for most of my life.

My little boy is the love of my life. He is so loving and sensitive. His dad has trouble dealing with this side of him. He also has many male qualities, but my girl child is rather rough and teases him unmercifully. How can I encourage them despite their apparent role reversals?

You brought up SUCH a great question, and I wanted to provide as powerful an answer as I could, so I asked a good friend for whom same-sex attraction is part of his story. God has done a huge work of grace in his life to bring him to the point where he can truly enjoy being a man, and has been healed from some of the woundings that came from not being supported in his masculinity when he was a boy. This was his answer for you, and I couldn't be more pleased with what he wrote:

> It's OK to be nervous about raising a boy. I think that's natural. However, there are many very helpful resources out right now that will help you in guiding your little man in the right way (i.e., Dr. James Dobson's *Raising Boys* etc.). Dad is perhaps the most important factor in guiding the young man into gender security. Even though Dad might have difficulty dealing with sensitivity and other "less masculine" traits, I urge Dad to look at Jesus, study our Savior, see what godly masculinity is. Come to grips with the fact that what our society deems masculine is often brutal cruelty. The ultimate guidebook for healthy gender security is none other than the Bible and Jesus is the ultimate example of the godly MAN.
>
> That having been said, in the early years, I believe that it is very important to make sure your children are taught good manners and how to be accepting of people that aren't like themselves—even if they are siblings. If your little girl

picks on or teases your little boy, I would encourage you to stop that behavior—through discipline, through reasoning or any other effective method. Your little boy must have an advocate in this early stage of life that is present and visible. It really is best if it is Dad but certainly someone he loves and trusts. And little girl must be taught to respect not only other people but the other gender as well.

On a more scientific note, there is a theory called the neuro-endocrine theory. This theory states that anywhere from the 8th to the 12th week of gestation, there is a hormone wash that is released in the womb that kind of kick-starts the development of gender depending on the chromosome makeup (xx being female and xy being male). Sometimes the hormone wash is not as strong as at others and the process by which the masculine moves into the left brain and the feminine moves into the right brain is not fully completed. This is not to say that any child is less male or female or more so. But it does apparently make some male children more sensitive and creative (right brain) and some female children more aggressive and decisive (left brain). It's not a bad thing or a good thing. Simply a scientific explanation of why some male children might be a bit more sensitive etc.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Can I Be Forgiven for My

Abortion?”

What if someone really believes that they were saved at a young age (14). . .but is then faced with an unwanted pregnancy at age 15 . . .and she terminates the pregnancy even though she KNOWS in her heart that it was wrong – do you believe that she can be forgiven? God tells us that He will never put more on us than we can handle . . .so what if we make the WRONG choice . . .what if we take the easy way out??? Do you think he can forgive us for this? I mean . . .what about the sacredness of life . . .I mean a baby is the most innocent of His creation . . .I hope with all my heart that it can be forgiven. . .but I just don’t see how!!! I interfered with His plan!!! Plus what about the scripture in Proverbs . . .about a man being tortured by the guilt of murder shall be a prisoner forever . . .let no one support him . . doesn’t this mean that I’m supposed to be tormented by it FOREVER!!! and no one should help me????

Okay . . .Here’s my story . . . [Story edited out]

Thanks so much for listening . . .this has been hidden for so long that it has been so difficult re-living it!!! Maybe it is my judgment to live with this internal struggle . . .maybe I’m not supposed to find peace . . .

What a mess I’ve made of my life!!!!!!!

Dear _____, precious child of God, beloved daughter of the King–

I am so very very VERY glad you wrote! I hurt with you. . . in fact, there are tears in my eyes as I write this to you–-my heart hurts for you and for the burden you have been carrying all these years.

Let’s get to the bottom line first: In Jesus’ name, YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN FORGIVEN!!! Because you have trusted Christ, the

first time you confessed your sin of abortion and asked for God's forgiveness, He gave it to you. In fact, He POURED His forgiveness out on you like an anointing of oil. Listen to 1 John 1:9:

> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

You confessed your sin, and because He is faithful and He is just (meaning, Jesus already paid for your sin at the cross), God the Father not only forgave you of your sin, He cleansed you from the stain of your guilt. Your feelings of being unforgiven and dirty and shame-filled have been lying to you, because the truth is, you are forgiven and clean and accepted in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6 KJV)

I want to challenge you to do something that will help you really GET this truth. Three times a day (at least), say out loud, "Thank You, Lord for forgiving me because Jesus died for me. I receive Your forgiveness and I receive Your cleansing. Thank You for making me clean and pure again." It really helps to say it out loud so that your spirit hears those words of truth come out of your mouth. This is the way of faith, the way we receive God's blessings by faith even before we feel them.

You have some work to do to get to the point where you can feel unashamed and pure again—but that's not a matter of EARNING those things, but of changing your thinking so that you can embrace the reality that is yours to live out. Is there an Abortion Restoration or Recovery ministry near you? Ask the Lord to show you if there is; I don't know of any network of programs to check with, but I can point you to an excellent workbook you can do on your own. This is the book that is used at our church for the Abortion Restoration class that healed, post-abortal women offer a couple of times a year.

Her Choice to Heal by Sydna Masse and Joan Phillips

Also, there are a couple of websites where you can do some reading that will be very encouraging to you as you work your way through the necessary grieving of the loss of your baby (who is in heaven, and you will see him or her again someday!), and the necessary forgiving of those involved: yourself, the boy who got you pregnant, your parents, the Planned Parenthood people, and anyone else who played a part in the trauma to your soul.

After Abortion
After Abortion Message Boards (Online Christian Support at the above site)

www.hopeafterabortion.com

I also suggest you listen to a lot of praise and worship music so that you focus on the Lord and let Him minister His love to you. As you do that, there's one prayer I would strongly suggest you pray, regularly: "Lord, show me how much You love me." He LOVES to answer that prayer!

You have not gone further than God's grace can reach, and you have done nothing that He cannot turn into good, for His glory and for your benefit. God wants to soak His grace down into the very bottom of your soul. Jesus' blood has covered and cleansed your sin, and you are clean and forgiven because He loves you so much He paid the ultimate price to prove it to you.

I'm glad you told me your story, because with every telling, you release more of the shame and the guilt, and you take another step toward healing. Who knows. . . some day you may find yourself telling your story to young girls BEFORE they make the same mistake you did, and you will watch God redeem your pain to change lives to His glory!

I SO hope this helps.

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

+ + + + + + + + + +

Addendum: I received this note from someone who works in abortion recovery ministry:

Hi Sue,

I was just reading your response to the email question: Can I be forgiven for my abortion? My heart is heavy for her and I am lifting her up in prayer.

She might also locate a recovery support group in her immediate area by doing a zip code search at www.optionline.org.

About the same time, I received this wonderful letter from the original writer:

Dear Sue,

I did find a place that ministers to women like me. . . and I am planning to participate in the "Forgiven and Set Free" Bible study. I've been through the study guide 3 times and I can't even tell you how much it helped me!! I know that I am not alone and I will continue to work on my healing…

I wanted to share a poem that I wrote with you—it comes from my heart. . .

A Baby's Perspective. . .

I can hear her talking with someone ~ I know it is all about me . . .
She says she's just not "ready" and the TRUTH she cannot see . . .
The truth that You made me and meant for me to be with her . .

.
That You would never put more on her than she is able to endure.

For You created my inmost being & placed me in her womb. . .
But she does not realize this and will make a choice real soon.
Please be with her and help her to make the choice that is right . . .
And to know that NOTHING can be hidden from Your sight!

For I am a precious baby and deserve the right to live. . .
If she could only know ~ I've got lots of love to give!
They have NO RIGHT to decide to remove me from this place. . .
But I know that real soon I will be looking upon Your face.

For You are already aware of the choice she will make. . .
Oh God ~ she just doesn't realize all that is at stake!
For as hard as she tries ~ she will be UNABLE TO FORGET. . .
I just pray someday she will feel the NEED to REPENT!

And when that time comes ~ help her to cope with what she's done. . .
And to find strength, love and compassion in the arms of Your Son!
For the blood of Jesus can purify her from all of her sin. . .
No matter how SEVERE & HORRIBLE it might have been!

I know she feels scared inside as I can hear her every cry. . .
She even prays and wishes that You would let HER die.
She is being faced with a TREMENDOUS internal struggle. . .
So many feelings and emotions she will try to juggle . . .

The biggest decision she's faced thus far has been 'what to wear'. . .
But now she feels as if she is living a TERRIBLE nightmare!
Please help her to realize the truth before it is too late . . .

That a baby is a precious gift and NEVER a mistake!

These people talking to her right now don't even have a clue!
They are telling her what they believe she really needs to do.
They tell her she would be better off without me in her life. . .
Even though he says he loves her -she's too young to be his wife!

They tell her: "You must make a choice and do it really fast . . .
Then you can get on with your life and put this in the past. . .
Just go and take care of this 'problem' and never think of it again"
Oh – God – Don't they even realize the SEVERITY of this sin-!?!??!

Why is this the ONLY advice that they have to give !!?!?!?
That it's not in her best interest to even let me LIVE!?!?!
They tell her that she has so much to look forward to ~
And forgetting about this "situation" is all she needs to do!

How can they make this option sound so easy and so right??
Oh – please God ~ before it's too late – help them to see the light!
Please forgive them – they do not know what they are saying!
When instead they should be on their knees and praying!

She is now talking to her mom about her big "mistake"
Surely my grandma will help her before it is too late!
But instead I hear my grandma say she doesn't want me to be born. . .
She says that I will only bring the family a lot of shame & scorn.

God – please be with them as they face this tragic event. . .
And when it's all over – please show them their NEED to REPENT!!

What are they thinking!?!? – THIS SHOULD NOT EVEN BE AN OPTION!!!
I never once heard anyone mention the possibility of adoption!

Why do they continue to talk as if I'm not "real". . .
That I'm just a "blob of tissue" and really "no big deal"
They do not know that You made me and have a Plan for me. . .
If only we could open their eyes so that THIS they would see!

Sooner or later she will be faced with the reality of her action. . .
And grief, despair, guilt & shame will be part of her reaction.
When this time comes – God please help her to know that it is true . . .
That there is NOTHING in this world that You cannot do!

And when my mommy is forced to deal with this someday . . .
Please let her know when she seeks You ~ everything will be okay!
That Your amazing Grace and abounding love will see her through . . .
That all she needs to do is to place all of her trust in You!

When she puts her faith in Jesus and what He did on HER behalf. . .
Then surely You will save her from all of Your wrath!
For You sent Jesus into the world to save us from EVERY sin. . .
From even the most horrendous ones that are hard to comprehend!

Please help her to realize that in Your Word she needs to trust. . .
That if she confesses this sin to You, You will be faithful & JUST. . .
You will forgive her and make her "pure" again. . .
And You will no longer remember this terrible sin!

So please let my mommy confess & feel Your presence in her heart. . .
So that she will realize that she can have a brand new start!
Please protect her from all the people who will be quick to condemn. . .
For You said let him throw the first stone who is completely without sin!

For ALL sin separates us from You and no one is “good” enough. . .
For being “perfect” and always doing “right” is just way too tough!
For we have a “sinful nature” – the bible says it through & through. . .
But if we believe & trust in Jesus we can be made completely “new”!

For You can turn ANY situation into GOOD for Your glory. . .
She may even help others someday by telling her story!
For Your love is GREATER than we can ever comprehend. . .
And Your Grace covers even the very worst of sin!

Even though I wish we would never have to be apart. . .
Please let her know I still love her with all of my heart!
Tell her I forgive her and forgive herself she must . . .
For I am in heaven with You and in that she can trust.

I pray that someday she will come to You with this big “mess”. . .
And I know that You will help her in her time of great distress. . .
When she finally finds you -in Your loving arms she will stay. . .
And I will be so very happy that I will see her in heaven one day!

“At What Point Is It Lust?”

At what point is it lusting? I often find myself looking at a girl’s back side a lot. But not to the point of looking at her in a sexual way. Just admiring the figure. It sounds stupid, but I know other Christian guys that do it, but I feel convicted every time I casually look at a girl.

There is nothing wrong at first glance with noticing and even admiring that a woman is attractive. God created women to be attractive to men and that’s normal.

Wise people have said that lusting starts when you either give a second look, or you let your look linger. When that happens, it’s usually because you’re filling your eyes on the woman’s physical appearance, not who she is as a person made in the image of God.

You don’t have to be sexually aroused to be lusting. If you’re “looking at a girl’s backside a lot,” you’re headed toward lusting. Allowing your gaze to linger so you can admire a girl’s figure is something that should wait for your wife. It’s a husband’s prerogative, but not anyone else’s. You may be admiring God’s handiwork, but you are letting your eyes rest too long on someone else’s wife, either present or future.

How would you feel if you knew there were guys watching your future wife’s backside?

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Far Is Too Far?”

My question is one that has been posed to me on many occations by many a frustrated teenager. They hear all the information about sex and everything that goes with it, but the one question which I still find being asked all the time is… “How far is too far?” as well as ways to prevent themselves from reaching these boundaries. Would it be possible for an article to be written from a biblical perspective on how far is too far and ways to prevent adolescents from crossing these boundries?

Since I have worked with high school students and addressed this issue a lot, let me share what wisdom I have gleaned from others and learned from the Word.

Another way to phrase your question is, “Where should I draw the line?”

The line is the place where our behavior moves from that which glorifies God, to that which is sin or leads to sin (either mental or physical sin).

Scripture says, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman” (1 Cor. 7:1). One of the meanings for the Greek word for “touch” means “to press against in such a way as to kindle or catch on fire.” So another way to translate this verse would be, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman so that they become sexually aroused.”

This is true wisdom, because once people become sexually aroused, hormones kick in and it gets hard to think rationally. So it is far easier to stay in control by limiting our behavior to that which isn’t sexual.

I suggest that this means not touching anyone in a way you wouldn't dream of touching one's pastor (or pastor's wife, depending on your gender), or family member. When it comes to dating couples, that means not kissing each other with anything more than you'd give your sister or brother.

So the bottom line is, I suggest that "the line" should be drawn between a short kiss and a long kiss. Short kisses are not necessarily sexual, but long kisses are. Sexual arousal happens after you cross the line from a short kiss to a long kiss. Sexual activity outside of marriage is the sin the Bible calls fornication; it's a sin because God wants all sex (and sexual activity, even if it's far short of intercourse) to be contained within marriage since it's so powerful. Many kids define sex as intercourse, but God's view of sex is far broader than that. Even physiologically, we can tell that sexual feelings occur as a result of doing things that are a long way from intercourse.

Things become startlingly clear when you think: "What if I touch or kiss my brother or sister in this way?" If the thought of French kissing your sibling grosses you out (and I hope it would), then that means it's sexual, and it falls in the category of "off limits."

This discussion is a different approach from "How far is too far," because that question really means "How close to the edge of the cliff can I walk without falling off?" God wants us to ask, "What do I need to do to stay holy and glorify God in everything I do?"

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“I Can’t Forgive Myself for Not Being a Virgin”

I am writing you in order to possibly get some advice on something that has been laboring me for a long time now. I am an extremely strong Christian who is attending a Christian university in order to become a Youth Pastor as a career/mission. Unfortunately though I have made some very bad choices in my life, and I continually have trouble giving them entirely to God. The biggest battle that I face day in day out is the fact that I am no longer a virgin, and I’m not married. Three months ago I broke up with my girlfriend of two years, because I could no longer live with myself continuing having sex outside of marriage. Since then I have fully given myself to Christ once more, except for the fact that I can not live in peace with the fact that I would not be able to give my virginity to my wife if I get married. I was just wondering if you had any advice for me in how I could possibly live with myself a little better than I am now. I realize that I made an irreversible mistake, and that I must suffer the consequences of my actions, so if you don’t have any advice for me than I completely understand. Thanks for being there for people to ask their tough questions to. I know I appreciate it greatly.

Consider the dynamics of the Lord Jesus’ exchange with the woman caught in adultery. He looked right past her sin to the precious soul underneath, with total love and acceptance. The same way He looks at you! When He told her, “Go and sin no more,” He was acknowledging that she had sinned but the grace of His acceptance was a shame-buster. Don’t you know that the shame just fell off her in chunks? Those words communicate the ability to move forward, beyond our sin, into the life of holiness and righteousness God calls us to.

It’s true you can’t give your virginity to your future wife. But you can give your purity to her. Consider the response of a godly young woman accepting this truth about you and forgiving you for it anyway—as the Lord Jesus said, “He who is forgiven much, loves much.” It prepares you to love this kind of special woman that more more!

I think the enemy of your soul has succeeded in keeping your focus on yourself and your sin—now confessed and repented of, so it’s GONE—instead of on Jesus. He has no condemnation for you, and He invites you to give Him your shame since He knows how to deal with it . . . He despises it! (Heb. 12:2) He makes it wither up and disappear!

Don’t let Satan have another minute of your life. Every time you are tempted to wallow in your remorse and guilt, turn it around and thank the Lord for forgiving and cleansing you. (Have you let Him cleanse you? [1 John 1:9] If not, thank Him for cleansing AS WELL AS forgiving you.) But He’s probably preparing a young lady right now for you who will deal graciously with your past. That young lady might just be someone who has committed the same sin as you, who will not only forgive but fully understand. Then you can both rejoice together in being understood and giving each other lots of grace.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries