“How Do I Recover From My Husband’s Adultery with Prostitutes?”

I have only been married four short years this December. I just learned my husband committed adultery on at least 2 occasions with a prostitute. He says he is sorry and wants to salvage the marriage. I have conflicting emotions from moment to moment. If we as Christians are supposed to forgive others for their sins, why does God allow for divorce when a spouse is unfaithful? I find it hard to believe that a marriage can survive infidelity and I am wondering how one ever trusts their spouse again after this type of betrayal? We are both Christians. He was saved three years ago, no religious upbringing. We do not have a Church home and share no Christian friends. We sought counsel from a Christian and that counselor told me that I had approximately 30 days from discovery to either remain, forgive and never speak of the adultery again or divorce. He says that the 30 days is biblical. I have never heard of this nor have I read it in the Bible. I think if I choose to stay within the marriage it should be based on my spouses behavior. I appreciate any information you may have and I thank you for your time.

I am so very, very sorry for the pain you are experiencing. Your conflicting emotions are totally normal and to be expected.

The biggest thing you need to know is that there is a difference between forgiving someone and trusting him again. They are not the same. When we forgive, we release the other person from our desire to exact revenge on them for hurting us. We let go of their sin against us into God’s hands so that He can deal with them. But broken trust is another matter; it needs to be earned back, and that takes time. A good amount of

time, consisting of one faithful, responsible, caring choice after another.

In order to understand God's allowance for divorce, consider what the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 19:8–"Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning." The Lord allows for divorce as a matter of love and grace for the one being hurt by a hard-hearted spouse. In the case of infidelity, when a spouse is repentant and truly wants to mend the marriage, God's desire is that He glorify Himself in the marriage by demonstrating His power and grace in the relationship.

There are many spouses who will attest to the fact that there is indeed trust after betrayal if the unfaithful one truly repents and commits to faithfulness. But it takes time, like I said. Probably close to a year minimum.

I disagree with the 30-day ultimatum. I see nothing in the Bible that says that. I do agree that if you choose to stay in the marriage it would depend on whether your husband shows remorse, demonstrates repentance, seeks accountability and is willing for his whereabouts to be checked on at all times. People who are hiding nothing have nothing to fear from accountability.

Here is a link to the Midlife Dimensions website, which offers help and resources for dealing with an affair: www.midlife.com/html/resources/articles/category_affairs.htm. I am concerned that you two are not plugged into a church home and therefore do not have any support system. This is going to make recovery unnecessarily difficult. I would hope that one way your husband could show you he's serious about mending your marriage is to find a church home and get connected to other people who will help support your marriage. God never intended for us to be "Lone Ranger Christians." His intent is for us to be knitted into the body of Christ for support and as a way to receive His various kinds of grace. You are

cheating yourself and yourselves to not be connected to an important source of life and strength. I want to strongly suggest that you make this a priority.

I hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

P.S. You might also poke around the New Life website (www.newlife.com) and educate yourself on sex addiction. If it were me, I would want to know what drove my husband to a prostitute. I would also want to know if my actions played any part in it. (For example, this is one reason the apostle Paul tells married people not to deprive each other sexually.) It sounds like you have an opportunity to each look at your own "stuff" and see what you can both do to build the marriage, as long as he's serious about it.

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"What If You Disagree with the Catholic Church About Birth Control?"

I have a friend who is a devout Catholic. She is torn about birth control in her marriage. Her priest has told her it is a mortal sin to use birth control. The few scripture references she was given, I had a rebuttal to, but I am looking for a way to help her through this crisis. This is really beginning to affect her marriage, since she and her husband do not want any more children. I would appreciate any guidance you could give us.

Dear _____,

Well, your friend has a choice to make. The position of the Catholic Church is that birth control is sin. There are many other people who are completely committed to the Bible and to a biblical world view who see freedom to use birth control in the context of submitting to Christ and actively seeking to know His personal will for them. (We mean here contraception, preventing an egg from being fertilized so no new human being comes into existence.)

Your friend will have to choose either the church's position or her own conscience after spending time in prayer (and, may I suggest, fasting) about this issue. I say this very gently and respectfully: there are lots of people (my husband and I included) who no longer accept the Catholic Church's authority, understanding that we can go directly to Christ for instruction and direction (1 Tim. 2:5). Your friend needs to ask herself if she can live with that. I suggest that's it's not enough to reject the church's authority simply to pursue whatever we want and think will make us happy (been there, done that—it doesn't work!); the only wise course of action is to pursue what will bring glory to God through our obedience to His word and Spirit.

I send this with a prayer for heavenly wisdom (James 3) for your friend, and for you as you help her walk this out.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“What are the Criteria for Euthanasia?”

I have a co-worker who is a fellow Christian and we are in a dispute over the issue of euthanasia. We have agreed to let you settle this dispute.

I contend that euthanasia is only considered to be “euthanasia” when there is a deliberate attempt to end a person’s life using some medical tool that speeds up the timeframe of a natural death, i.e. lethal injection. He contends that removing life support from a patient should also be considered euthanasia. I argue that removing life support allows for a natural death according to God’s timeframe. He argues that if a patient does not receive all that medical science offers to prolong life, then that is in effect killing this patient according to our own timeframe, since it is God who gives us the scientific knowledge to have access to these life support systems. He has an interesting point, but I simply don’t agree with him and can’t find anything in the scriptures that affirm either argument. Can you help us?

Regarding withholding treatment of a dying patient, you are both right depending on the circumstances. When a patient is truly and imminently dying (and we can know this since certain bodily functions can begin to irreversibly shut down such as the ability to eliminate fluids), continuing normal body maintenance such as food and water can actually increase the patient’s discomfort without altering their chances for survival. This is little more than torture for no intended purpose. Letting nature take its course and relieving as much discomfort and pain as possible is a completely humane and biblical course of action. Some may argue that prolonging life in this instance may allow God an opportunity to work a miraculous healing. We simply have to ask ourselves, How much time does God really need? If He is sovereign, then He will

act in His timeframe, not ours.

However, if the person has a terminal illness but the acute death process has not yet begun and there are normal measures that offer hope and comfort without adding an unnecessary burden, then these measures ought to be pursued. But I must emphasize that this is a tricky judgement call. An Alzheimer's patient is dying and will die relatively soon, but when do normal measures become more of a burden than a help? In Joni Eareckson Tada's 1992 book, *When Is It Right to Die?*, she tells of her father who suffered a series of strokes and could no longer expel waste fluids. They chose to remove the IV (which would simply have bloated his body and not nourished it) and simply soothe his mouth and lips with ice chips as his body died. However, she strongly insists that patients in a Permanently Vegetative Stae (PVS) are severely disabled but not dying, and they deserve whatever care we can give them.

These decisions will always require a host of opinions—medical, familial, and pastoral—to arrive at the best course for this individual patient. Hard and fast rules will lead to abuses which is one of the reasons why pro-euthanasia laws are always a bad idea. They simply can't cover all the possible contingencies, now or in the future. Regulations will be impossible to write and to enforce.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Do You Have More Information on School Discipline Problems?”

In the late 1940s teachers listed the worst problems they faced in school as chewing gum, running in the hall, etc. A few years ago teachers listed some violent crimes as the worst problems. Do you have more detail on this?

One example often used to demonstrate social decline is the list of discipline problems in the public schools. Usually the list contrasts school problems 50 years ago with those today.

Supposedly the top problems in the schools 50 years ago were: talking, chewing gum, running in the halls, making noise, getting out of line, violating the dress code, and littering. According to the survey, today’s school problems are: drugs, alcohol, pregnancy, suicide, rape, and robbery.

Unfortunately, the school discipline list is an invention. The lists are not the result of research or surveys. The first list (50 years ago) catalogues daily disturbances. The second list (today) is actually composed of items from a “Safe School” questionnaire. To read more about these school discipline lists, see Barry O’Neill, “The invention of the school discipline lists,” *School Administrator*, 51 (1994): 8-11. I would NOT recommend you use these lists to demonstrate social decline.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate social and moral decline in this country would be to cite many of the statistics in Bill Bennett’s book *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994) or at the Empower America Web Site (www.empower.org). These show a dramatic change in social statistics from 1960 and use respected instruments of measurement.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

"I Liked the Article About Modern-Day Knights"

I read the article "Raising a Modern-Day Knight" by Louis D. Whitworth. I would like to thank him and the others involved with the article. I am going to be turning 20 April 16 of this year. I know that I am not a teenager anymore but that did not make me a man. At least I do not feel like one. I do have Jesus in my heart. I was raised at a FBC understanding. Also I did not get a Father till 12. I would like to thank him again and the site. I will be looking at your site in the future. I pray that Mr. Whitworth will get this message of thanks.

Hi _____,

Happy Upcoming Birthday!

I will certainly make sure that Lou gets your message. He is no longer with Probe, but I will forward your note to him. Do yourself a favor and get a hold of the book he reviewed (*Raising a Modern-Day Knight* by Robert Lewis), or another truly exceptional book that we enthusiastically recommend to all our high school and college age guys who come to our conferences: *Tender Warrior* by Stu Weber. If you want to know how to grow into being a godly man, that's the best book there is. Lots of men in their 30s and 40s have been greatly impacted by this book, and if you read it as you turn 20 you will be SET!

God bless you.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Vegetarianism is a More Biblical Diet!”

I, as a vegetarian and a Christian, thought it important to point out that being a vegetarian is the more “natural” form of diet considering the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 1:29 we see that God gives the the fruits and seeds, vegetables etc…”as meat,” causing one to consider then obviously He (God) made a distinction between the meat of animals and the meat for humans to eat. I personally try to eat as close to Gen 1:29 as possible….this is not saying that meat is wrong—Jesus ate meat—yet Hinduism is simply ripping off God’s original plan and adding a twist of spirituality to what God intended to be natural and common sense. I am also not making a blanket statement that meat is unclean…not calling unclean what was made (or possibly created to be?) clean…considering the mass production of cattle in the U.S. and horrible sanitation we have adopted as common practice in the meat industry largely as a whole…we owe it to ourselves to consider these points that:

1. **God created man for a plant based diet**
2. **That changed when sin entered the picture**
3. **We are God’s temple, BODY, soul and spirit**
4. **Animals being killed and eaten was symbolic also of Jesus’ sacrifice and our remembrance of Him in communion**

(a bit of foreshadowing). Also possibly why when meat consumption is documented it is only in special occasions—e.g.: symbolic feasts, sacrifice of the priests, celebrations of significance—but not frivolously. One would soon run out of cattle if you were eating them all the time. You wouldn't sin too much either if you had to sacrifice cattle all the time.

5. **We are never commanded to eat meat.**
6. **The meat back then and the meat now are almost two completely different things (as far as healthy content and environment are concerned.**

Anyhow, I thank you for you time and on a final note…nothing in this world is the Devil's original idea…it is simply a twist of God's original idea…this goes for religions as well as health practices. The religions of the world have truth to them but those truths belong to Christianity and have been twisted and blown way out of proportion. May God bless you richly. Grace and Peace.

I agree with much of what you wrote but I would not go so far as to say that vegetarianism is more natural from a Biblical perspective. Clearly that was God's initial intent, but the Fall changed many things as you indicated. Sin was not natural to our being before the Fall but is quite natural after. So it is quite possible that most of our bodies are going to struggle on a purely vegetarian diet as a result of changes wrought by the Fall. In fact, the care and knowledge needed to follow a strictly vegetarian diet and remain healthy, may indicate that in our fallen state, a diet that includes meat may be more natural. Just a thought.

Also we are clearly told that we can eat meat in Genesis 9:3, "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant." It is the same language and tense as in Genesis 1:29. Neither statement is strictly a command but God's intent is made quite clear.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“You Are Judging Gays”

I was browsing the web for so information on a term paper and was disappointed in your site. I wish you all would choose to follow Paul in his thinking by following Romans 2:1-2. Please do not judge me because I would like to meet you in Heaven one day! I just hope that a young person that is experiencing mixed feelings about their sexuality does not view your site and feel that they are undeserving of God’s love because that is the message that you all seem to be giving. Love me as I love you, unconditionally!

Thank you for your note.

Please define “judging.” The verses you mention in Romans immediately follow a strong indictment of homosexual behavior. Why do you ask us to follow Paul’s example when Romans 1 is full of strong language about how sinful homosexual behavior is? Is *that* judging? I don’t think so; there is a difference between comparing someone’s behavior to God’s laws, which are rooted in God’s character—and making assumptions about someone’s heart issues and motives, which is judging.

If you have found anything on our website that is judgmental of a person’s heart—as opposed to agreeing with the scripture about sinful *behavior*—I would appreciate you pointing it out to me. It’s interesting, I’ve had feedback from homosexual strugglers and those who *used* to be strugglers, and they didn’t find anything judgmental in our articles. Some of these

people are my friends, because I work with a ministry that helps those who want to stop identifying as gay and receive inner healing for their same gender attraction.

Yet you are concerned that someone reading our articles would feel that we are saying they are undeserving of God's love because they struggle with their sexuality? Please show me how you arrived at that conclusion!

These are not empty words. I really, really want to know what you saw. My concern is that you may have been shaped by the culture's "new tolerance" that says that to disagree with the concept that all sexual expression is equal, and equally fine, *especially* if you ground your position in scripture, is being judgmental. If that's the case, then I respectfully suggest that you do not understand what judging someone really means. If I am speeding and get pulled over by a police officer who says, "You were going 70 in a 45 zone, ma'am," it would be inappropriate and untrue for me to complain, "You're judging me!" He's not saying anything about my heart or my character; he is comparing my behavior to the law.

Having same-gender attraction is not a sin; acting on it is. People in both categories are unconditionally loved by God, but the consequences for one's chosen behavior do not negate His love. God is love, but God is also holy, and that's why He offers cleansing and forgiveness and healing to those who seek Him for it.

I appreciate your time in reading this.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Should Christians Give the Pledge of Allegiance?”

Should Christians give the pledge of allegiance?

Your question is an old one. First century Christians struggled with how much allegiance (if any) they were to give to Rome. The founders of this country struggled with it as well.

At one extreme you have the Jehovah’s Witnesses (who do not pledge because they believe it is idolatry). At the other extreme you have Christians with a mindset of “my country right or wrong.” A proper biblical response is somewhere in the middle.

Romans 13 tells us to obey those in authority. Other passages allow for civil disobedience (Acts 5:29, Daniel, etc.). Christians who live in a country with a godly government shouldn’t have much concern about a pledge of allegiance. However, Christians who lived in, say Nazi Germany, might legitimately have reservations about a pledge of allegiance in that country.

I believe that if a Christian feels that it would be wrong for him or her to pledge allegiance, then I believe he or she should refrain. But if Christians then concludes it is wrong for every other Christian to do so, they are mandating a standard of behavior that I do not believe can be found in Scripture. Obviously Jesus Christ deserves our total allegiance, but I don’t believe that a pledge of allegiance to a country undermines that.

Even though this issue doesn’t necessarily involve the issue of civil disobedience, you might want to look at Civil Disobedience, my transcript on the topic, at the Probe web page (www.probe.org) as well as some of my other writings on

Christians and government.

Thanks for writing. I hope this helps.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

“You Are Close-Minded and Prejudiced Against Homosexuals”

What is wrong with homosexuals? Are you against Jewish people also? Do you think the Holocaust was wrong?? If you do then you should understand that you are supported modern-Hitler ideas by being prejudiced against homosexuals. When did you decide that you were heterosexual? At what age? If you don’t know, it’s because you never had to decide. You just are the way you are. Homosexual people never decided they wanted to be gay. I have a hard time understanding why people are racist also. If you think racism is wrong, maybe you should think about your opinions against gays. I still cannot believe that there are people in this world still close-minded. I cannot wait until people like you get off of this earth, and make it a happier place. Thank you for your time.

I’m not sure what you read on our website that would make you conclude we are prejudiced against homosexuals. Perhaps you are confusing our position against homosexual practice, with bigotry against those who discover they have homosexual feelings. We condemn homosexual practice because God, who created sex in the first place, condemns it as abnormal and a perversion of His plan. We also believe in the dignity of

human beings, made in the image of God, who are given the gift of choice of our actions, and that includes the choice over whether to act on homosexual desires or not. We do not condemn those who experience homosexual feelings, recognizing that those are not chosen; but we agree with the Bible when it says that acting on those feelings is sinful and wrong. Please understand, this is a difference between actions and feelings. One is wrong, the other is not.

We are not prejudiced against homosexuals, but we will proclaim the truth that people don't have to be gay and lesbian. Offering a way out of a destructive, difficult lifestyle is loving, not prejudiced. But many people believe the lie that being gay is as unchangeable as being a person of color, when that is not true. It's not easy to change, and many don't succeed, but that doesn't mean it's not possible. Ask people in Alcoholics Anonymous; they'll tell you the same thing about achieving freedom from the bondage of alcohol.

I think it is unwise to equate a belief that "homosexual behavior is wrong" with the belief that it's okay to judge people as inferior because of the color of their skin. There is a huge difference between a person's chosen behavior and the unchosen manifestation of genetics.

You ask, "What is wrong with homosexuals?" Our answer is, they are relationally and sexually broken people for whom there is hope in Jesus Christ. Those who recognize their brokenness and seek help can find it. But this answer comes with a humble awareness that we are all broken people in one area or another—or several.

Thank you for writing.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Should Christians be Studying Literature and History from Secular Textbooks?”

After homeschooling my children for 5 years we were led to put them into our church’s Christian school. My question for you has to do with our school’s adoption of a few textbooks that are not from the Christian worldview and how we are supposed to train our children with these books.

My 5th grade daughter’s textbook is politically correct, multicultural and full of pictures, graphs and charts. The content that is there is slim and boring; in other words, “dumbed down.” The school adopted it for reasons that it is popular and they want the kids to do well on the SAT’s.

The 6th to 8th grade literature textbooks changed from Bob Jones (traditional Christian) to McDougal Littell (secular). The stories in the new textbooks are awful. Most of the authors I have never heard of and from their biographies in the textbook, they do not embrace a Christian worldview. Their stories are negative, immoral, and depressing. Again I believe that our school adopted these books because they are popular, may cause the kids to do better on the standardized tests and they offer a diverse view of the world.

On that last point is where I am having the most problem. The school says that they will combat the negative and immoral stories with Biblical principles to help the children defend their faith. There is no written teacher or student materials, however. Further, when I ask my daughter about the teacher’s

rebuttal from a Christian worldview she could not explain to me what the teacher had said in class. I can't say I blame her in that she is only 11 years old.

One story in her 6th grade textbook is called "Scout's Honor" by Avi. This so-called comedy is about three arrogant Boy Scouts that earn a badge by lying, cheating and stealing. This story not only depicts the Boy Scouts in a bad light – have you heard about their pro-traditional family stand which they took recently – but it promotes the path of the ends justifying the means.

Should Christians be studying literature and history from secular textbooks? Are the school's arguments valid in that the immoral readings can be used as a apologetics-type course? What is the best way to train our children to respond to immoral behavior? Do we start apologetics in the 6th grade, 7th grade, or 8th grade in this manner? Is there another way? Are we sheltering the kids too much by not letting them read the works of the world and them tempering them in Biblical truth?

You have touched on one of the most important questions for Christian educators. Part of an answer to your question includes the importance of age appropriateness. I believe that the younger children are, the more vital it is that we give them an uncompromised Christian perspective. As they grow older and can understand more complex or abstract issues it becomes important to introduce them to other worldviews. This is dangerous for children who have yet to understand that there is a spiritual and intellectual battle going on in our society and in the world. However, if we never introduce them to other perspectives while still under Christian instruction they are open to discouragement and confusion when exposed to opposing ideas in college or later in life. The point is that when students are mature enough they should encounter difficult ideas under the direction of capable Christian instructors. This often acts as an inoculation against

discouragement later.

The use of secular textbooks also depends on the subject matter at hand. A good math text from any source can be integrated into a Christian classroom by an alert instructor without much concern. History and literature texts provide a much more difficult challenge. I would want to know that considerable time had been spent on worldview instruction beforehand. Students must be able to comprehend the different faith presuppositions being made by the different worldviews in order to evaluate works of literature sufficiently. I am not against a multicultural component in history and literature as long as it is genuinely attempting to inform students about other cultures belief systems and traditions. Attempts to make all belief systems or worldviews morally equivalent has to be rejected and shown to be invalid to the students, as does religious pluralism. Offering a multicultural curriculum simply to comply with state or testing standards is not a sufficient cause. The material should be as inclusive as truth demands and must be interpreted through a Christian worldview.

I do not doubt that some middle school students are capable of understanding the worldview issues at hand and that they can benefit from reading and discussing works that challenge the Christian perspective. However, the instructor should be very careful to introduce this material only after properly preparing the students and to maintain a healthy balance between works that reinforce the students faith and those that present a challenge to it. Those schools who offer a classical approach (the trivium) to Christian schooling usually note that the middle school years are ideal for introducing the instruction of logic and debating skills (dialectic phase). Materials that help accomplish this instruction often must include opposing viewpoints.

Merely offering students a diverse view of the world does not appear to me to be a legitimate goal of Christian education.

Introducing students to various perspectives in order to evaluate them in light of revealed truth and to become a more effective ambassador for Gods Kingdom might be more appropriate.

Make sure that when you voice your concerns to your childs teacher that you are ready to listen carefully to his or her response. If you have to take up the matter with the schools administration, do so in a manner that will benefit the school in the long run.

I hope this is of some help.

For Him,

Don Closson
Probe Ministries