“Why Are Pagans and Their Religion Evil?”

I really want to understand how modern pagans are seen as evil and how their religion is seen as evil; is everything that’s not Christian evil? Is it not everyone’s personal choice?

You ask some very good questions. First, you ask why modern pagans and their religion are seen as evil. I think what I would say here is that, from a biblical perspective, modern pagans are not necessarily any more (or less) evil than anyone else. The Bible tells us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Thus, according to the Bible, all men and women are sinners. We have all thought, said and done things which are displeasing to God and contrary to His perfect moral standards. In this sense, we are all evil and in need of God’s forgiveness and grace.

If, as the Bible teaches, Jesus really is the one and only way to God the Father (John 14:6), then all other religions are ultimately false. Of course, it’s important to remember that this does NOT mean that everything they teach is false. For example, many non-Christian religions say that we shouldn’t lie, steal, commit sexual immorality, or murder. Clearly, Christianity agrees with this and teaches the same thing. Further, Judaism, Unitarianism, and Islam teach that there is only one God. Again, Christianity certainly agrees with this.

In other words, other religions (including various pagan religions) may certainly teach some things that are true and good. But if Christianity is really true, and if Jesus really is the only way to God, then no other religion is ULTIMATELY true (in all that it teaches). In this sense, then, Christians would consider pagan religions “evil.” That is, we would consider these religions evil because they are leading their adherents astray and away from the only true God and the

Savior Jesus Christ. If Christianity is true, then these religions will ultimately hurt (not help) those who follow them.

Finally, many Christians believe that God has given people free-will. God will not force anyone to become a Christian against his/her will. He offers us salvation, forgiveness and eternal life as a free gift, but He will not force it on us. Thus, people do have a choice regarding what religion they will follow. But God will hold everyone accountable for their choices. And those who reject His gracious offer of forgiveness and salvation through faith in Christ will be held accountable for their sins and suffer the terrible fate of eternal separation from God in hell. Again, passages like Matthew 25:41-46 and Revelation 20:11-15 make this quite clear. This is why Christians believe it is so important to tell people about Jesus and their need for Him. If He really is the only way to God the Father, then it would be very unloving of us not to tell people about this. Most Christians simply want to see their friends, relatives, and co-workers in heaven. They don't want these people to be eternally separated from God, the Ultimate Source of every good and perfect gift.

I hope this helps. If you're interested in reading about the Christian plan of salvation, please visit Bible.org at http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=276.

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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“You Should Research Reincarnation and the Lost Words of Jesus”

I came into your site because I was interested in what you had to say about reincarnation. I got to looking around and first I do whish to say that it is a wonderful site. I do have some problems with it though. I have been baptized a Baptist. Of course. I used to believe as you do. I have done alot of study on the Bible and other religions. I still believe in Jesus and that he died for my sins. I love the lord with all my heart and soul. But I do not believe that my father would send me to a place of fire and torment. I have the gift of discernment of the spirit. This has been accepted by several churches in my area. I can tell you all about a person after a short time with them and I see spirits, ghosts demons whatever you wish to call them. I can also see into the future somewhat. I do not try to do any of this, it just happens when it happens. This is a gift the lord gave me. Yet you people tell me I am going to hell for it.

I have found several contradictions in the bible myself, a book that I would at one time have died for. I spent a long time asking God to show me the truth. I believe he did. And still is.

I never picked up a bible till I was 24 years old. I went to church when I was younger, but never payed a whole lot of attention, because I did not feel they were teaching the true word of God. I was 6 years old when I realized this. I am very happy that you love the lord so very much. But even Jesus stated that the Bible would be Tampered with and those that did it would be punished. So why is it so hard to believe that it has happened? You are so ready to believe all the others things that have come true so why not this? Alot of God’s word

was not even put in the Bible. Do some research yourself on reincarnation and the old church, the older christian belief, and you will find the lost words of Jesus. Did you know that they destroyed the original Bible when they wrote the new King James Version, and then told everybody that it was the original? I believe that you have to worry about being decieved also. Just like the rest of us we must learn the truth for ourselves and stop depending on everyone but God. He says do not trust man, but only him.

Hello _____,

Although (as you yourself realize) we would disagree about the issue of reincarnation, it seems that the more fundamental issue about which we would differ is the Bible – particularly whether or not it is a trustworthy message from God.

You said you found some contradictions in the Bible, but you didn't say what they were. Have you ever attempted to see if there might be good explanations for such alleged Bible difficulties? If not, and if you're interested in exploring this issue, please allow me to recommend the following site: www.tektonics.org. This site has explanations for hundreds of alleged Bible difficulties.

You also said that the Bible was destroyed at the time of the King James translation. I'm afraid your information is incorrect on this point. For instance, we have thousands of New Testament manuscripts going all the way back to the early second century. The King James translation wasn't done until 1611 – hundreds of years after our earliest manuscripts (which we still have). So it's simply not true to say that the Bible was destroyed at this time. If you would like to explore this issue further, please visit Bible.org at http://www.bible.org/topic.asp?topic_id=5. Here you will find dozens of articles about the Bible by very competent and capable Christian scholars.

Hope these resources prove helpful. Thanks again for writing and God bless you!

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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"If Child Sacrifice Is Sinful, Why Did God Require It of Abraham?"

According to Deut 18:10-12, "Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire…" OK, so at least as far back as Moses' time, human sacrifice was wrong – sinful.

But…why then would God test Abraham by asking him to make a human sacrifice of Isaac? It seems to me that God is asking him to do something sinful to prove his obedience and devotion. That goes against God's character, doesn't it?

Thanks for your question. Much has been written about Gen. 22. Let me mention a few important points and refer you to some more extensive answers.

First, notice Gen. 22:5: "So he said to his servants, You two stay here with the donkey while the boy and I go up there. We will worship and then return to you.

The NET Bible comments, "It is impossible to know what Abraham was thinking when he said, We will. . .return to you." When he went he knew (1) that he was to sacrifice Isaac, and (2) that

God intended to fulfill his earlier promises through Isaac. How he reconciled those facts is not clear in the text. Heb 11:17-19 suggests that Abraham believed God could restore Isaac to him through resurrection."

Second, notice vv. 7-8, "Isaac said to his father Abraham, My father? What is it, my son? he replied. Here is the fire and the wood, Isaac said, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? 22:8 God will provide for himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son, Abraham replied. The two of them continued on together."

Again, the NET Bible comments, "*God will provide* is the central theme of the passage and the turning point in the story. Note Pauls allusion to the story in Rom 8:32 (how shall he not freely give us all things?)" (See http://www.bible.org/netbible/gen22_notes.htm).

Finally, we must remember that God never allowed Abraham to actually carry out the sacrifice. God never intended that he actually sacrifice his son. He apparently intended to test Abraham's faith in, and love for, God. It's a radical test, to be sure, but one which God never intended for Abraham to actually carry out.

For more information, please visit:

1. www.tektonics.org/gk/humansac.html
2. www.christian-thinktank.com/qkilisak.html
3. www.tektonics.org/whatis/whatfaith.html

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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“What About Household Salvation?”

What is your view on Household Salvation? (I am thinking of two scriptures: Acts 11:14–“…and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household” and Acts 16:31–“They said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'”)

Thanks for your letter. My view on Household Salvation is that each member of the household, upon hearing the Gospel message, can be saved on the one condition of personal faith in Christ. Acts 11:14 MAY be predictive (i.e. predicting that everyone in the household would respond positively to the Gospel with personal faith in Christ). Acts 16:31 makes it clear that personal faith is the necessary condition for salvation. I think this verse is just a shorthand way of saying that whoever believes can likewise be saved. To hold that an entire household could be saved on the basis of one member’s faith in Christ would flatly contradict all the New Testament passages that speak of the necessity of personal faith in Christ for salvation.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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“If Angels Can’t Marry, Then How Could ‘The Sons of God’ Father Giants?”

Hi Michael, I read your answer to “Is the Genesis Story of ‘The Sons of God’ True?” and have a question about it. Mark 12:25 tells us that angels cannot marry. So I’m confused as to how the sons of God could have married women who then “bore giants”?

Mark 12:25 is possibly the passage most often cited against the view that the “sons of God” in Gen. 6 refers to fallen angels. And, of course, this view may be correct.

It’s difficult to know with certainty what the passage in Gen. 6 means. However, when one considers how the phrase “sons of God” gets used elsewhere in the Old Testament (e.g. Job 1-2; etc.), it’s clear that it’s often used to refer to angels. Also, New Testament passages like Jude 6-7 and 2 Peter 2:4f, seem to lend support to this interpretation.

One of the Bible.org folks addressing this issue at http://bible.org/question/who-are-%E2%80%9Csons-god%E2%80%9D-genesis-61-8 wrote this about the “marriage” issue:

> *“I heartily agree with Bob Deffinbaugh’s arguments and presentation of this passage in his commentary, Genesis: From Paradise to Patriarchs which is on our web site in the Bible Studies / Old Testament / Books / Genesis section. I believe those who reject this view do so through exegetical gymnastics because of their own refusal to believe this could happen. They often refer to Christ’s statement about angels not marrying, but this is talking about God’s normal plan for them. They were created as a host and were not to propagate like mankind and fill the earth. This in no way says that under Satan’s orders and power they could not leave their own*

> *(idios, unique, peculiar, distinct, proper) domain (arche, rule, sphere of rule, influence) and abandon their own proper abode (oike,te,rion, habitation, dwelling place) (Jude 6).”*

Since angels have the ability to assume human form, and since fallen angels are said to sometimes “possess” human beings, it seems to me possible that the “Sons of God” in Gen. 6 were angels. But, of course, I don’t know this for sure. And I certainly might be wrong.

If you’re interested in exploring this issue further, please see some of the discussions on bible.org here.

Hope this helps.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“I Can’t Find a Good Reason to Believe in God and the Bible”

I have been reading some of the questions and answers that have been given about god, angels and the rest. Some of the questions make sense but to me almost none of the answers. Just so you know, I am a non believer in all of that and can find no good reason to believe. I tried going to church, going to meetings, bible study, prayer meetings—for me there are no real answers to anything in this life, just excuses. Maybe I

am writing this with hopes of finding some.

When I have read the bible I find the good that everyone talks about and speaks of. It is always the same few things. The reason for me is because there is so little of it. I find plenty of ethnic cleansing, wars of extermination, murder of men women and children ordered by god. If the numbers in the bible are true which I do not believe they are, it is just something to try and frighten people. If the numbers of people ordered murdered by or murdered by god are anywhere near what is real, it makes Hitler, Stalin and Mao look like made-up cartoon characters. Yet we read about them and are appalled, so why not god?

I really believe to read the bible without horror one must undo everything that is tender, sympathizing and benevolent in the heart of man. That is what is the most frightening thing to me about most people who believe. I know I cannot read the bible with an open mind and not be appalled at the majority of the actions of god. I have tried. For me this is not divine love. People are always upset at the amount of violence that is in society, much of it on television—why not by the amount of it in the bible? The treatment of women is one of the most horrible I have ever read…for the most part. In both the old and new testament. That can easily be pointed out in both the laws of the part of the world at that time and in the laws of god.

I do not at all understand how the two most powerful beings in existence cannot solve their own problems and if they can't do that, how am I to believe either of them can assist me in any way? And because they couldn't get along, the entire human race is damned because of that? Makes no sense to me. That to me is like saying one of my siblings did something wrong so I am going to spank all of you for it. And in the case with god it is not because of the siblings it is because he and satan can't get along.

Because of this and many more things I have read in the bible along with research on the meaning of words and laws of that time…I cannot believe. There are too many other teachings that show a much more kinder way of life for human beings. There are many people I have met in life who know that the violent nature of human beings does not exist in all of us…and that is what we live everyday. I believe that in those in whom it does exist, the bible more so than not gives excuses for it to continue. If the entire book is what it is really about, then entire book should be taught. I would love to attend a class bible class that teaches that. I have not yet found one. I know I would be a tough student…not because I want to be…but because I want to know. I just can't take another bible study that does not go into everything in the book

Thank you for writing Probe Ministries. Although it may be a hard thing to read, I believe that God's command to the Israelites to utterly destroy the Canaanites teaches us a very important lesson about God. God is absolutely holy and will by no means leave the guilty unpunished (see Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Proverbs 11:21; Nahum 1:3). The Canaanites were guilty of some of the worst crimes imaginable: terrible idolatry, immoral sexual behavior, and child sacrifice, just to name a few. All the way back in Genesis 15:13-16, God revealed to Abram His plan to give His people the land of Canaan. However, notice that His promise would not be fulfilled for over 400 years. Why? Because, as God said, "the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete" (Gen. 15:16). We must not forget, therefore, that God was very patient with the wicked practices of these people. He gave them hundreds of years to repent and turn from their wicked ways. But they chose not to. In the end, God did indeed judge them for their sin—just as He will one day judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31; Matt. 25:31-46; Revelation 20:11-15).

Let me also point out that God, as the Sovereign Creator and Judge of all mankind, has the right to give life and to take

it away. After giving the Canaanites hundreds of years to repent, God finally judged their sins by waging a holy war against them through His people. This was a Divine judgment upon the Canaanites for their sins. It was also the means by which God would protect His chosen people from being corrupted by the wicked practices of these peoples (see Deuteronomy 12:2-4; 20:16-18). The lesson we are taught, I believe, is that God takes sin very seriously and will, as the perfectly holy and righteous Judge of all mankind, punish all sin without exception. In the end, not one sin will go unpunished. If any sin went unpunished, God would not be perfectly just. But since He is perfectly just, not one sin will go unpunished. This is a sober warning to all mankind that God is very serious about judging sin. It is quite proper for us to react to these stories with a healthy fear of God's judgment. Although God's judgment on the Canaanites was severe, the number of peoples killed is not anywhere close to the numbers murdered by Hitler and Stalin. But even if they were, it's important to put these events in proper perspective. After all, God's judgment on those who reject His Son and the free offer of His friendship, grace, love and forgiveness, results in much more severe consequences than mere physical death (see Revelation 20:11-15). Those who reject Jesus' sacrifice on the cross in their place as the only acceptable payment for their sins, will have to pay for their sins themselves. And this involves eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46).

As for the treatment of women, it's very important to recognize that women in ancient Israel, and especially in the early church, were treated far better than they were in the surrounding cultures of those days. All the way back in Genesis 1:27 we are told that BOTH men and women are created in the image and likeness of God. Paul says that in Christ there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ (Galatians 3:28). He urged husbands to love their wives in the same manner that Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). This is a sacrificial sort of love that would even give its

life for the beloved, just as Christ did for His church. Christianity actually did more than any other force in the ancient world to bring about an elevation in the status of women.

It's important to realize that man is not punished because God and Satan can't get along. This idea is taught nowhere in the Bible. Men are to be judged and punished for their sins (unless they repent and receive God's mercy through faith in Christ Jesus), just as Satan and his angels are to be judged and punished for theirs. We will not be punished because God and Satan can't get along. Furthermore, we shouldn't think of God and Satan as virtual equals. Satan is a rebel angel, a being originally created good by God, but who rebelled against God and sinned. Satan has no more power relative to God than you or I. Compared to God, Satan is completely powerless. Indeed, the only power he has is due to the fact that God created him with it, maintains him in existence, and (for the moment) allows him to exercise it in a manner contrary to His perfect moral will. At God's proper time, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity (Revelation 20:10). He will never be permitted to wreak chaos and moral rebellion in God's world again.

Finally, I will honestly say that I don't believe there is a higher example of moral purity, holiness and virtue than that of Jesus. If what He taught is true, then the only way to be reconciled to God is through faith in Him (John 14:6). Furthermore, the Bible does not acknowledge that anyone (other than Jesus) is without sin or guilt. The Bible teaches that not one of us is righteous (Romans 3:10), but that all of us are sinners (Romans 3:23). Nevertheless, although the wages of sin is death, the free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23). Although Christians are not perfect, Christ Jesus is. And it is to Him that God invites us to look for His grace, mercy, love, forgiveness, and eternal life. "O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is

the man who takes refuge in Him!" (Psalm 34:8).

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

"What Part of the Bible Was Written in Africa?"

In your article ["The Authority of the Bible"] you said it was written on three continents (Africa, Asia and Europe). Where in the Bible does it say about the continent of Africa?



The first five books of the Bible (called the Pentateuch) are traditionally held to have been written by Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai (which is in the country of Egypt and continent of Africa). Also, Jeremiah may have written at least some of his book from Egypt, where he was taken after the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

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“Who Do You Think You Are to Decide What is Real in the Angel World?”

I don’t know much about you or your Probe organization, however I read the information you passed off as truth regarding knowledge of angels and how you interpret the posers [editor’s note: maybe she means “possessors”?] **of angel knowledge as being from some pit of hell. Where did you get such authority to decide who is real and who is not in God’s world? Did he come to you and instruct you personally on these matters or is this simply your opinion? I don’t doubt you are educated in your field, yet the angry tone of your paper left me feeling you are in need of some relaxation and spiritual healing—maybe a retreat would help you to gain some insight into the fact that perhaps you are not the ultimate authority on God and his angels. I do believe in angels and have had many situations in my life where their presence is known to me in a number of ways. If I am open to receive the wisdom and have faith that God is watching over me, his angels surround me every moment of the day. The soul or spirit of a human being was created by the Divine and to think that I have the corner on God’s messengers’ existence and how to tell what is which would really be giving me—a mere mortal—an extremely heavy cross to bear. God loves you, Sue. Try to remember He is constantly revealing more to us on a daily basis. If your**

beliefs are so rigid, you may be missing the ever changing delight in experiencing this thing called life we are all in together! Judge not, lest ye be judged and may his angels help you to understand that God speaks to all of us differently. A fallen angel is one who thought he knew it all (Satan) and his ego got him banished. If you have to condemn people on your web page, you are becoming dangerously close to closing out the Light. Smile.

Thanks for writing.

> *Where did you get such authority to decide who is real and who is not in God's world? Did he come to you and instruct you personally on these matters or is this simply your opinion?*

Perhaps someone edited the version you saw, but the one I wrote was filled with scripture references. My authority is not my opinion but the Word of God. Who better to teach me—and anyone else who wants to learn—about God and angels than God Himself, through His Word?

> *I don't doubt you are educated in your field, yet the angry tone of your paper left me feeling you are in need of some relaxation and spiritual healing—maybe a retreat would help you to gain some insight into the fact that perhaps you are not the ultimate authority on God and his angels.*

I appreciate your good wishes for me; however, the angry tone you see in my article must have been on the receiving end since there's no reason to be angry about this subject, nor was I angry when I wrote it. I do not claim to be the ultimate authority of God and His angels, but I do claim that the Bible IS the ultimate authority, and all I did was go to the Bible to find out what God said, and then relate it to our experiences and what people teach today.

I am so glad there is an ultimate authority outside myself. What is your authority? Is it your personal opinion and experience? If that's the case, how do you know it's true? How do you know you're not being deceived?

> *I do believe in angels and have had many situations in my life where their presence is known to me in a number of ways. if I am open to receive the wisdom and have faith that God is watching over me, his angels surround me every moment of the day.*

Me too. However, the Bible says there are two kinds of wisdom, heavenly wisdom and earthly wisdom. How do you know which kind you are receiving? I can compare the wisdom I receive to God's word and know if it's true, or a lie sent to me by "ugly angels." How do *you* tell the difference between the two kinds of wisdom?

> *The soul or spirit of a human being was created by the Divine and to think that I have the corner on God's messengers' existence and how to tell what is which would really be giving me—a mere mortal—an extremely heavy cross to bear.*

You're right, which is why I rely on the Bible and not my own opinion.

> *God loves you, Sue. Try to remember He is constantly revealing more to us on a daily basis.*

I do experience His leading on a daily basis, but there's a difference between this personal leading and the revelation of new truth, which ended when the Biblical canon was closed. When people say that God is revealing new truth, red flags go up for me because that truth often contradicts what He's already said in His Word. And THAT is the authority for judging this "truth" and "revelation." Failing to compare this "revelation" is what makes us vulnerable to the lies of Satan

and the demons.

> *If your beliefs are so rigid, you may be missing the ever changing delight in experiencing this thing called life we are all in together! Judge not, lest ye be judged*

Hmmmm. . . . without knowing me, you have judged my experience of life and called my beliefs rigid because I am confident of their basis in God's word. Please remember that words on a screen or on a page are only part of the story, and your perception of what I (or any other writer) say is filtered through your own beliefs and presuppositions.

> *and may his angels help you to understand that God speaks to all of us differently.*

The Bible tells me that it is the Holy Spirit who teaches God's people, not angels. If you're listening to angels' teachings of "understanding," how can you be sure you are listening to holy angels and not unholy angels? And if "God speaks to all of us differently," what do you do with contradicting messages? They can't all be right. Somebody's lying somewhere in the spirit realm. That's one of the major points of my article. We are lied to on a regular basis by fallen angels who hate us and want to lead us astray. How do you know which ones they are unless you depend on God's Word instead of your own experience and opinion?

> *A fallen angel is one who thought he knew it all (Satan) and his ego got him banished. If you have to condemn people on your web page, you are becoming dangerously close to closing out the Light. Smile.*

There's a difference between condemning people, and condemning false teaching and the demonic powers behind it. I hope you can develop the discernment to tell the difference.

Thank you for sharing your concerns with me. I pray God will open your eyes to the truth and you will hear His call to be careful about communication with angels, lest you be led astray.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“Is It Judging Others to Call Them Evil?”

Is it judging others to call them evil? For example, if someone rapes children, is it OK to say that person is evil unless he/she repents? Or is that judging others?

There is little to gain by referring to individuals as “evil” whether it is spoken directly to someone or just thought to yourself. Calling someone evil would certainly be considered inflammatory. The concept of evil is sometimes unnecessarily avoided or swept under the rug in our culture. However, calling someone evil rather than referring to their actions as evil is probably not necessary in most cases. Ultimately, sin is sin and everyone is capable of great evil. The example you gave, rape, is certainly evil and the one who commits such an act could properly be referred to as evil. There are no “little sins” in God’s sight, however, so the liar and glutton could also be called evil. So, no, it is not wrong to refer to someone as evil but it will probably prove counter-productive to actually call someone evil. A less inflammatory approach would be better.

If you do a word search for evil, you will find that the Lord Jesus did not hesitate to call some men evil if that's what they were. But then, He had the right to judge the thoughts and intentions of their hearts, being God and being informed by the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, the apostle Paul is the only NT writer who calls men evil, and that only occurs twice—and neither time is he referring to specific individuals. The rest of the time the NT writers talk about evil as a force and a chosen behavior, and the evil one (Satan). Given this perspective, we believe it would be wiser to rephrase the judgment of evil as applying to the beliefs and actions rather than calling an individual evil.

Sue Bohlin

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"Men Have Always Looked at Pornography—What's the Big Deal?"

Men have always looked at pornography—what's the big deal?

I asked for insight on this question from my friend Emily Efurd, a licensed marriage and family counselor who has been working with sex addicts for over a dozen years. She writes:

> The one thing we know from the Bible is that men and women are different. Many people take a statement like that and do a lot of damage with it, but what I mean is that God created them to be different. One of the major differences is that men are sexually aroused by visual stimuli and women are

sexually aroused by feeling special, cherished and loved. Many men believe that looking at pornography makes them better lovers for their wives. Unfortunately these men are hacking away at their marriage one piece at a time. Let me tell you a story about a man named Frank.

Frank was well into his twenties when he married. He and his wife had life all planned out. They would mature in the marriage for a few years, then have a family, which they did, with a boy and a girl. He was a professional, had a good job, was a great dad and even went to church occasionally. Frank's pornography habits were known by his wife, she even shared in watching some of his videos, but she soon grew bored with it. Frank did not get bored with it. His viewing pornography escalated beyond *Playboy* and videos to "peep shows" and trading or buying some "really great stuff" on line. Because his wife didn't look anymore she missed out on some great things he saw, so he began to ask her to do certain things and dress in certain garments when they made love. She began to wonder if she was not attractive to him anymore. Frank kept asking his wife to get breast implants, so that she would look like the women in the pictures. At this point she became very self-conscious about her looks, and did not like to even change clothes in front of Frank. He became irritated with her and enjoyed lovemaking with her less and less. She just wasn't as "sexy" as he wanted her to be. He found more pleasure in waiting until his wife had gone to bed (which became earlier and earlier) and sitting in front of the computer with these "beautiful babes" and letting his imagination take over. He enjoyed pleasuring himself rather than taking pleasure in his wife. As the relationship deteriorated, they were barely speaking. As she confided in her friends about what a bum of a husband Frank was, one friend at work kept telling her how beautiful and wonderful she was, and that he'd know how to appreciate a woman like her. I don't need to tell you how that ended. Frank suspected she was having an affair so he

turned to the 16-year-old babysitter, because she looked a lot like the porn pictures.

By the time I met Frank, there had been a bitter divorce, fighting each other for custody of the children, and felony charges for aggravated sexual assault of a child (the 16-year-old babysitter). Frank told me that looking at pornography had nothing to do with the problems he had.

How does a person come back from this kind of misery? Understanding how a man conditions his own arousal pattern is the first step. As Frank looked at porn and masturbated to those images, he was conditioning his arousal to more deviant sexual images. Soon *Playboy* just didn't do it for him anymore. He needed more graphic sexual images to masturbate to. As those images became boring he needed something like live images to look at. As this addiction grew it is no wonder that he lost interest in his wife. He became obsessed with finding more graphic images and lost his ability to draw boundaries around what is appropriate and not appropriate.

Frank's therapy started with getting a clear understanding of how he got where he was. Then he had to make the decision that he didn't want to be there anymore and be willing to make some changes in his behavior. Giving up masturbating was difficult because even without looking at the porn images he had a great collection in his imagination. As he progressed he began to recognize times that he was free of the urge to masturbate. He became more aware of how he objectified women in general. Objectifying women means that you look at them as body parts, rather than as a person. "Wow, great breasts," "Look at that body," and undressing women in your mind is an indication you're objectifying women. I asked Frank to begin to consciously look at women in the face, noting the color of their eyes, and hair. He became more aware of how much he did see women as sexual parts. I'd known Frank about two years when he finally

admitted to me that he was the one who destroyed his marriage and he took full responsibility for his other inappropriate behavior. He thanks God for the chance to change his way of thinking and living and often tells people how mighty and powerful the love of God is to forgive and restore him to dignity and integrity.

Psalm 51 tells Frank's story, because it was also King David's story.

> Oh loving and kind God, have mercy.
> Have pity upon me and take away the awful stain of my transgressions.
> Oh wash me; cleanse me from this guilt. Let me be pure again.
> For I admit my shameful deed; it haunts me day and night.
> It is against you and you alone I sinned, and did this terrible thing.
> You saw it all, and your sentence against me is just.
> But I was born a sinner, yes from the moment my mother conceived me.
> You deserve honesty from the heart; yes utter sincerity and truthfulness,
> Oh give me wisdom.
>
> Sprinkle me with the cleansing blood and I shall be clean again,
> Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.
> And after you have punished me, give me back my joy again.
> Don't keep looking at my sins—erase them from your sight.
> Create in me a new, clean heart, O God, filled with clean thoughts and right desires.
> Don't toss me aside, banished forever from your presence.
> Don't take your Holy Spirit from me.
> Restore to me again the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.
> Then I will teach your ways to other sinners, and they—guilty like me—will repent and return to you.

> Don’t sentence me to death. Oh my God, you alone can rescue me.
> Then I will sing of your forgiveness, for my lips will be unsealed—oh, how I will praise you.
> Psalm 51: v. 1-15

I asked Emily for the bottom line steps to overcoming sex addiction:

1. Recognize how you got where you are by examining the small but important choices you have made over time. (Note: more in-depth information on this step is available here in the Probe Answer to E-mail “Help! I’m a Compulsive Masturbator!”)
2. Confess it all as sin and choose to repent by changing your behavior. Slam the door on your former behaviors.
3. Stop masturbating, which is a type of substance abuse. (The brain chemicals activated by arousal and orgasm are a specific chemical substance that can become addictive. There is no recovery from substance without giving up “using.”)
4. Stop objectifying women as sex objects or body parts and train yourself to see them as real people. For example, look them in the eye and note their eye color; note their hair color.

Hope you find this as helpful as I did.

Sue Bohlin

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