# Bible Literacy Quiz: A Test of Scripture Knowledge

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

This article is also available in Spanish.

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

Evangelical pollster George Barna says,

> Over the past 20 years we have seen the nation's theological views slowly become less aligned with the Bible. Americans still revere the Bible and like to think of themselves as Bible-believing people, but the evidence suggests otherwise. Christians have increasingly been adopting spiritual views that come from Islam, Wicca, secular humanism, the eastern religions and other sources.{1}

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

**Take the Bible Literacy Quiz yourself: click here for a format with the questions and answers separated.**



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

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

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

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

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

Esther and Ruth.

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

1. I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife—or anything that belongs to your neighbor. (Exodus 20:2-17)

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

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

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

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

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

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

(Matthew 7:12)

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

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

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

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

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

Moses. (Exodus 20)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Lord Jesus. (Matthew 5-7)

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

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

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

Pontius Pilate. (Matthew 27:26)

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

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

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

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

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

He was tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1) Hebrews 4:15 tells us that He was tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

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

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

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

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

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

Job. (See book of Job)

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

David. (1 Chronicles 29:28)

**24. Who was “the weeping prophet?”**

Jeremiah.

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

Daniel. (Daniel 6)

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

David and Goliath. (1 Samuel 17)

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

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

**28. What are epistles?**

Letters.

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

Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4)

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

Abraham. (Genesis 22:2)

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

Passover. (Exodus 12:27)

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

Joseph. (Genesis 41:41)

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

Esther. (Esther 2:17)

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

Ruth. (Ruth 4:17)

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

Gabriel. (Luke 1:26)

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

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

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

He was raised from the dead. (John 20)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**44. Who taught in parables?**

The Lord Jesus. (Matthew 13:3)

**45. What are parables?**

A short, simple story with a spiritual point.

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

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

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

Bathsheba. (2 Samuel 11)

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

Solomon. (2 Samuel 12:24)

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

Deborah. (Judges 4:4)

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

Solomon. (1 Kings 3:12)

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

Adam. (Genesis 2:20)

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

Moses. (Numbers 12:3)

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

Samson. (Judges 13-16)

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

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

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

Nehemiah. (Nehemiah 2:5)

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

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

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

Jonah. (Jonah 1:17)

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

Malachi.

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

Joshua. (Joshua 10)

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

Saul. (1 Samuel 13:1)

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

Solomon. (1 Kings 6)

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

Levites. (Deuteronomy 10:8)

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

Jericho. (Joshua 6:20)

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

Manna and quail. (Exodus 16)

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

Jesus and Peter. (Matthew 14:29)

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

Stephen. (Acts 7)

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

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

**68. What is the Lord’s Prayer?**

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

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

Mary Magdalene. (John 20:16)

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

John the Baptist. (John 14:10)

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

Egypt. (Matthew 2:13-15)

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

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

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

Lazarus. (John 11)

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

Paul. (see book of Acts)

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

Barnabas. (Acts 13:2)

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

Peter. (Acts 12)

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

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

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

Isaiah 53.

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

Jacob. (Genesis 32:22-32)

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

Timothy and Titus.

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

Paul. (Acts 28:5-6)

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

James and Jude. (Matthew 13:55)

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

Luke and Acts. (2 Timothy 4:11)

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

Joseph. (Genesis 37:3)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Moses. (Exodus 3)

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

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

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

Esau. (Genesis 25:33)

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

Psalm 23.

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

Peter. (Matthew 26:69-75)

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

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

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

Hebrews 11.

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

Elijah and Moses. (Mark 9:4)

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

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

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

Hosea. (Hosea 1:2)

**98. What are the two sacred ordinances that the Lord commanded**

**us to observe?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nobody knows.

**102. Which is the "epistle of joy?"**

Philippians.

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

The end of the world.

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

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

**Note**

1. bit.ly/fR8BuA

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# The Glory of Grace

*Sue Bohlin explores God's marvelous grace as the unending flow of His power, presence and favor in our lives.*

I bet you recognize "grace" as a theology word. Many of us are quick to say, "Oh yeah, I know what that is. We're saved by grace through faith." Or we know of churches with the word "grace" in their name. But many of us don't have a real handle on it. Often that's because we haven't seen it modeled in our families, our churches, or our communities. We're too focused on trying to prove ourselves good enough, too busy trying to keep God from getting mad at us.



But this misunderstood blessing of grace is *hugely* important. It's one of the big things that sets Christianity apart from all other religions! Any other world religion involves performance-based works. Biblical Christianity says, "We're messed-up broken people before a holy God, and there's nothing we can do to earn His approval. But He loves us and delights in us despite the fact that we don't deserve it." With all other religions, the emphasis is on "do." Because of grace, in Christianity the emphasis is on "done."{1}

One of the most powerful elements of grace is simply *acceptance.* The book of Romans assures us that we are accepted by both the Father (Romans 14:3) and the Son (Romans 15:7). We can do nothing to earn Their acceptance; it's a gift. The Father says, "I accept you just the way you are, but I love you too much to leave you that way. Come to Me: My arms and My heart are open to you because of what My Son did in His incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. I have always loved you, My precious child. I chose you before the foundation of the world, to adopt you into My family."{2} I love to think of God stamping our foreheads with an invisible tattoo that says, "Accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6,

KJV).

Pastor Mark Driscoll has an especially great definition of grace. Instead of the one we've heard for years, "God's undeserved favor," Mark calls it "ill-deserved" favor.{3} But my all-time favorite definition comes from John Ortberg: "Grace is the offer of God's ceaseless presence and irrational love that cannot be stopped. It's the flow of God's power and presence and favor in your life from one moment to the next that enables you to do whatever it is God has for you to do."{4} I want to focus on God's power, presence, and favor, as well as giving some real-life examples of what grace looks like.

## Power

A little boy was playing in his sandbox one Saturday morning when he discovered a large rock in the middle of it. The boy dug around the rock, managing to dislodge it from the dirt. With a little bit of struggle, he pushed and nudged the rock across the sandbox. But then he found that he couldn't roll it up and over the little wall. The boy shoved, pushed, and pried, but every time he thought he had made some progress, the rock tipped and then fell back into the sandbox.

All this time the boy's father watched from his window as the drama unfolded and his son burst into tears of frustration.

As the tears fell, a large shadow fell across the boy and the sandbox. It was the boy's father. He asked, "Son, why didn't you use all the strength that you had available?"

The boy sobbed, "But I did, Daddy, I did! I used all the strength that I had!"

The father corrected kindly, "No, son, you didn't use all the strength you had. You didn't ask me." With that, the father reached down, picked up the rock and removed it from the

sandbox.

Experiencing God grace means depending on Him to provide the power for our lives, whether it's dislodging a big ol' rock in our sandbox or simply making it through the day.

I like to think of the power of God's grace as electricity that is available twenty-four hours, seven days a week. God's grace is always available to us at every moment of our life, and because of His goodness and faithfulness, we never have to fear a power shortage of God's grace.

The key to experiencing the flow of God's power is what Jesus called *abiding,* choosing to remain in a state of trustful dependence on God. Jesus said in John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for *apart from Me you can do nothing*."

I love to illustrate this by turning on a shop light that's plugged into an electrical outlet. When I press the switch, the light goes off, even though the power is still flowing and available. We can shut off the expression of grace, the flow of God's power, by quenching the Spirit—by actively disobeying God, or by passively ignoring Him. But His power can shine in our lives again as soon as we open ourselves up to Him, asking for His help, intentionally depending on His power and not our own. Grace is the flow of God's power in our lives.

## Presence

One morning, as I swam laps in the health club pool, I was meditating on these three aspects of grace. I said, "Lord, what do You want me to know about Your presence?" At that very second, I "just happened" to see a large sign on the wall right in front of me: "WARNING: NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY." I literally laughed out loud, realizing that this was code for "You're on your own, buddy." God's grace means we never have to fear that there's no lifeguard on duty, that we're on our

own, because He has promised to never leave us or forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6, Hebrews 13:5). The Lord Jesus' last promise was, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

My favorite illustration of grace as God's presence is the building of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Dwight Edwards relates that during its initial stages of construction, "Twenty-three workers fell to their deaths. Finally, halfway through the project, a large net was put in place beneath the bridge. From then on, only ten men actually fell—all caught by the net. Plus, the workers' productivity was raised by twenty-five percent. Assured that their safety was no longer in question, they pursued their work with far greater freedom and effectiveness than before. This is exactly what God has done for us. Stretched wide beneath us, extending from eternity past to eternity future, is God's perfect grace, assuring every believer that we can never fall from His favor. No matter how badly we falter or fail, we can never plunge past the grace of God."{5}

Think of grace as the hand of God ready to catch you when you fall. Because God is good and He is sovereign, that means nothing can happen that He cannot redeem. There is no such thing as an unrecoverable disaster. Even when we sin deliberately and stupidly, we cannot jump beyond the bounds of His grace. Now, His grace usually involves painful discipline, because God disciplines those He loves (Hebrews 12:6), but we cannot out-sin God's love and grace.

Recently, a friend of mine was anguishing, "Why did God allow me to wreck my marriage and family? I wouldn't let my children run out into the street and be hit by a car, why did He let *me* go that far?" As I turned to the Lord for an answer, He whispered, "I'm always protecting My children, but you don't see the disasters I avert." Part of God's grace is the safety of His protecting presence.

## Favor

One important element of grace is favor. One dictionary defines favor as “an attitude of approval or liking.”

Five-year-old Matt got up from his nap one day and said, “Guess what, mommy, I just had a dream about Jesus!” The mommy asked, “Well, what did Jesus say to you?” “Nothing.” “Well, what was Jesus doing?” “Nothing.” “Now Matthew, you just said you had a dream about Jesus, he MUST have said or done *something*!” Matt was quiet for a moment, and then with a wiggle and grin he looked up and said shyly, “He just stood there and *liked* me.”

When somebody likes you, their eyes light up when they see you. Did you know God’s whole face lights up when He looks at *you*? The Bible talks about His face shining on us.{6} God doesn’t only love us, He *likes* us! Experiencing God’s grace means He showers not only love but *like* on us, and His face reflects His heart of favor toward us.

Every child needs to receive the “3 A’s” of favor from his daddy: attention, affection, and approval. The Father poured out the 3 A’s on the Lord Jesus at His baptism when He said, “You are My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”{7} Those words are like gold, and we can receive them into our own hearts as well.

I love the way one daddy blogger expresses grace toward his daughter. He writes,

> I love you. I love the way your hair rolls into ringlets and falls into your eyes. I love the way you read yourself books, even though you can’t read. I love the way you dance and twirl around the kitchen. I love the way you wave at cars that pass on our walks. I love the way you scream “Dad” in the middle of the night. I love the way you say “do it again” when we do something fun. I even love the permanent

> marker custom design you put on my new Mac. But as much as I love you, Jesus loves you more. I sacrifice a lot because I love you, but Jesus sacrificed everything because he loves you. So if somewhere along the way you fail a test or love a boy who does not love you back or have a mastectomy or develop Alzheimer's or gain some weight or lose a job, you will still hold infinite value because Jesus loves you. No matter what. You are loved exactly as you are. Always.{8}

Oh yeah. That's the beauty of grace.

## What Grace Looks Like

I want to share some examples of what grace looks like, both the way God showers grace on us, and the way people share His grace with others.

God has poured grace on me in a huge way when traveling internationally. Because of a schedule change, I found myself flying back to Dallas from Germany just in time to speak at a weekend women's retreat. I arrived home from the airport with just enough time to repack my bags and pick up my speaking notes and props. I then drove two hours to the retreat facility, arriving while the women were still singing. I literally got out of the car with my notebook in hand, walked in the door and up to the stage to start speaking. With the time difference, my body felt like it was five o'clock in the morning and I'd been awake for twenty-two hours. But God not only kept me alert, He filled me with His energy, and the women couldn't tell any difference.

When we've received God's grace, we are able to turn around and give it to others.

Grace means responding with patience when someone forgets they already told you something, or that you told *them* something, and just going with the flow. Grace means lifting off the burden of needless "shoulds" that weigh people down. One

grace-filled speaker invited people to respond in song at the end of her message, saying, “If you’d like to sing, great! Join us! If you need a rest, feel free to just listen.” She removed any pressure to perform. At our church, a couple of pastors managed to deliver a message on giving and stewardship without even a hint of shame, or condemnation, or pressure. That’s what grace looks like.

When my friend’s mother contracted Alzheimer’s, she told her daughter early in the progression of the disease, “If I get to the point where I don’t recognize you, don’t take it personally.” She was expressing grace in being more concerned about her daughter’s hurt than her own loss of memory.

Another friend needed eye surgery to keep her from losing her sight. Her friend Angela, who has been blind for a number of years, told our friend, “Don’t be concerned about talking about your vision to me—I am so over that!” That’s what grace looks like.

One of my favorite stories happened one night to my dear friend who was starting to realize what monsters her abusive parents were. She had always patterned herself after her mother, and suddenly realized she had even chosen the same dishes as her mother’s when they got married. Suddenly she couldn’t abide the thought of keeping them in the house a moment longer. She grabbed a plate out of the cupboard and hurled it to the floor, smashing it to pieces. Her husband heard the noise and came to see what was going on. When she explained the connection between their dishes and her mother, her husband calmly said, “Have at it. Tomorrow morning I’ll take you to get new dishes.” Not only did he clean up the mess when she was done, but all those shards damaged their kitchen floor—and he never once mentioned it. That’s grace.

**Notes**

1. See, for example, John 15:5; 19:30; Colossians 3:4;

Ephesians 2:8-9.
2. Ephesians 1:4-5
3. marshill.com/media/religionsaves/grace
4. This quote came from a sermon preached at Pastor Ortberg's church, Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, California, 2003. When I emailed him asking for a specific citation, his answer was, "I have no idea, Sue."
5. Dwight Edwards, *Experiencing Christ Within Workbook: Passionately Embracing God's Provisions for Supernatural Living* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2002), p. 105.
6. Numbers 6:25
7. Matthew 3:17
8. jeffdlawrence.com/2011/12/23/some-thoughts-on-how-to-talk-to-little-girls/

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# Grace and Truth About LGBT

*Sue Bohlin provides a compassionate, biblically based look at what is happening as LGBT ideology has taken root in the culture.*

## What Does God Think About LGBT?

This article is about grace and truth in the context of LGBT, those who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender. What does God think about people for whom this is their primary (or even secret) identity?



After 20-plus years of walking with dear friends dealing with unwanted same-sex attraction, the very first thing that comes to my mind is the deep

compassion and tenderness of our God toward wounded and deceived people that He loves very much. I am reminded of Isaiah's words (42:3), "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out."

People *discover* attractions toward those of the same sex. They don't initially choose them. These disordered feelings are like the warning lights on the dashboard of a car. They are saying, "Something's wrong under the hood; check it out!" So in the beginning, same-sex attractions constitute *temptation* rather than sin, but it easily crosses over to sin when people choose to feed and nurture thought patterns that God's word says are sin.

And God's word has always called sexual behavior outside of marriage between a man and woman, sin. That's because sex is deeply spiritual as well as physical, and He wants to protect us from the harmful consequences of sexual sin. His word will last forever, and it doesn't change. So I believe God is grieved when people reject His clear biblical statements about sexual sin, as is now happening in many churches and individuals.

God's word calls us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. An important part of the Kingdom message is that God changes believers more and more into the likeness of Jesus. That means that God endorses *change,* which makes sense since growth and change are an intrinsic part of life.

But the cultural narrative says that your sexuality can't be changed. If people don't want their broken same-sex attractions, and seek help recovering God's intended design for them, it is becoming illegal to do that. It's labeled as "conversion therapy." But if someone says they're transgender and seeks to inject their healthy body with artificial hormones and mutilate it with surgery to pretend they are something they're not, that's called "gender affirmation." Yes, it's backward.

God addressed this backward thinking in Isaiah 5:20—"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter."

Back to the cultural narrative says that your sexuality can't be changed. That's not what some social scientists have found, which is that sexuality can be quite fluid and changeable.{1} There is no magic switch to flip from homosexual to heterosexual; but when people invite God into the woundings and deficits of their earlier life and receive healing in their souls, some can develop attractions to the opposite sex. I have personally seen this happen multiple times. The problem is that people aren't telling their stories, or when they try, they aren't believed.

Disordered thinking and unnatural desires are not too hard for God to handle. Remember, He can raise the dead!

## Cultural Lies vs. God's Truth

There is a massive clash between the lies of our sex-saturated culture, and the eternal truth of God's word.

**CULTURE'S LIE: Who I am is a sexual being.** Whether it's a culture or an individual, when God is left out of the equation, sex is elevated to the #1 most important spot because it's so powerful and a source of such intense pleasure (or can be). So people define themselves by their sexuality.
**GOD'S TRUTH: Who I am is God's beloved creation.** Made in the image of God, created for intimacy and fellowship with Him, my worth proven by what the Son was willing to pay for me: His very life.

**CULTURE'S LIE: Sex is a need and a right for everyone to experience.** Many people believe it is on the same level of necessity as food, water and sleep.
**GOD'S TRUTH: Sex is so powerful it is to be contained only**

**within marriage between one man and one woman.** The mingling of bodies and souls through sex is deeply spiritual as well as physical. God's prohibitions against sex outside of marriage are His gift to us, meant for our protection from the painful consequences of sexual sin. They are like guard rails on a treacherous mountain road, intended to keep us from going off the cliff to pain and destruction.

**CULTURE'S LIE: I create my own identity depending on what I feel.** Untethered from a connection to God as Creator, people live out the sad, repeated description of Israel in the book of Judges, where "all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." (Judges 17:6, for one).
**GOD'S TRUTH: My identity is who my Creator says I am.** All of us exist because God wanted us and hand-crafted each of us (Psalm 139). Feelings are real but they're not reliable. Jeremiah 17:9 instructs us on why our feelings can't be trusted: "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?"

**CULTURE'S LIE: Gender is whatever we want it to be.** Biological sex has been separated from gender (how one feels about maleness and femaleness). (Personally, this strikes me as illegitimate as proclaiming that the white keys on a piano are bad and the black keys are good.)
**GOD'S TRUTH: God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; *male and female* He created them.** (Genesis 1:27) The first words in the room when a baby is born are still, "It's a girl!" or "It's a boy!" Gender is still binary because God still creates only male and female.

**CULTURE'S LIE: I can create my own reality.** For example, recently a man abandoned his wife and seven children, announcing his chosen identity of a 6-year-old girl.{2}





Another man, deciding his identity is a female dragon, cut off his ears and nose, dyed his eyes, and inserted horns in his forehead.{3}

**GOD'S TRUTH: There is objective truth and objective reality because God is real and true.** We do not have the freedom to dismiss what is objectively true and real; 2 + 2 will always be 4, not 7 or 200, and gravity will always be operational on the planet. These things are real and true because a real and true God rooted His creation in His own nature.

**CULTURE'S LIE: "Born this way."** This lie has so much traction because it's repeated so often people assume it to be true.
**GOD'S TRUTH: No Evidence.** There is actually no scientific evidence of a gay gene or any other determiner of same-sex attraction. And in identical twins (who share the same DNA), when one identifies as gay or lesbian, the other one only identifies as gay or lesbian about 11% of the time. If homosexuality were a genetic issue, the correspondence would be 100%.

American culture continues to pump out the illusion—the fantasy, the myth—that sexuality is the most important thing about life and about us, and that sexual identity and expression is where life is found.

Life is found in Jesus, and nowhere else.

## Transgender: The Emperor's New Clothes

In the old story of the Emperor's New Clothes, scam artists appeal to the pride of a conceited emperor, claiming they can create a magical outfit for him that is invisible to anyone who is unfit for their position, stupid, or incompetent. He parades his new suit of clothes before his subjects, which of course no one can see because it's a scam. But no one will say they don't see it lest they be seen as stupid. Finally a little boy pipes up and blurts out the truth: "But he isn't wearing anything at all!"{4}

The transgender narrative is the equivalent of the Emperor's New Clothes. The objective truth is that there is no such thing as magical clothes, and there's no such thing as changing genders. People can only deceive themselves (and others), damage their bodies, and mutilate themselves—but our God-ordained maleness and femaleness, our biological sex, is stamped into every cell of our bodies.

It's especially alarming when parents, educators and other authorities feed a child's fantasy that they are the other gender. We would never do that if a child declared herself to be a cat or a unicorn; we would gently and lovingly correct her wrong thinking by speaking the truth to her. But if a boy insists he's a girl or vice versa, many progressive-minded adults are so proud of their "wokeness" that they rush to board the child on the transgender train.

Most often, children who reject their gender are reacting to gender stereotypes. Girls can think that boys get to do cooler stuff than girls, and sensitive boys who love pink and purple sparkly things can think it's better to be a girl. Both sexes who experience abuse can believe that it would be safer to be the opposite sex.

Children never see the big picture—that's why God gives them parents to help them see their world more accurately. One little boy told his parents he wanted to be a girl but no one inquired why, they just jumped on the transgender bandwagon. Turns out that when his baby sister was born and consumed a lot of attention because she was very sick, he concluded that if he were a girl, he would get the same attention.

## Transgender – Part 2

When a person experiences a conflict between their biological sex and their internal sense of whether they are male or female, that's called gender dysphoria. Various studies have shown that this very painful emotional state resolves itself about 85% of the time simply by going through puberty. It appears to reset things. So the best and wisest treatment is no treatment at all, but of course wise parents and other adults will continue to speak truth about a child's identity—especially the truth that God who is good, loving and wise chose their gender for them, so we need to receive it as His gift.

This whole transgender phenomenon has ignited where children have access to the internet on their smart phones. The illusion of transgender is easily spread by social contagion. Children and teens talk about their beliefs that they are transgender on social media, and their impressionable peers are influenced to start thinking and feeling the same way. The popularity of social media has sped up the spread of this fantasy, especially on the Tumblr platform. One academic who studied the reports of parents alarmed by sudden changes in their children coined the term "rapid onset gender dysphoria."{5}

Anyone who has been around adolescents for any length of time doesn't need to be surprised by this dynamic. Teens copy each other in all kinds of ways.

Many adolescents who identify as transgender suffer from anxiety, depression, and self-injury.{6} There is a whole constellation of painful mental health struggles all bound up together. We are also finding that a disproportionate number of teens who explore the transgender identity are on the autism spectrum.{7}

They already feel the shame of being different, of being "other than," and it's easy for them to mislabel themselves as transgender instead of just different.

One final note on transgender: we must not go along with the Emperor's New Clothes story that athletes can compete as the opposite sex just by declaring themselves so. It's not just heartbreaking, it's *wrong* for teenage boys to rob girl athletes of scholarships{8}, not to mention dignity, by unfairly competing against them and demanding to use their restrooms and locker rooms.{9}

## Why Have So Many Christians and Entire Churches Become Pro-Gay?

More and more individuals and churches have come out in support of homosexuality and gay marriage. Why is that?

I think there are two big reasons so many confessing believers in Christ have allowed themselves to be more shaped by the culture than by the truth of God's word, drifting into spiritual compromise and even into apostasy, which means abandoning the truth of one's faith.

### Reason One: Rejecting the Authority of God's Word

The first reason is that millions of people are rejecting the authority of God's word.

The bitter fruit of several decades of shallow preaching, teaching and discipleship is that many believers have been especially vulnerable to Satan's deceptive question to Eve in

the Garden of Eden: "Did God really say . . .?" When Christians ignore or flat-out reject the unmistakably clear biblical statements condemning homosexual behavior, they are playing into the enemy's temptation to justify disobedience by making feelings and perceptions more important than God's design and standards.

There are now two streams of thought on same-sex relationships and behavior: the Traditional, Biblical View and the Revisionist View.{10} The Revisionist View basically says, "It doesn't matter what the Bible actually says, it doesn't mean what 2000 years of church history has said it means, it means what we want it to say." And we want it to say that God endorses all relationships that invoke love."

**Reason Two: Snagged by the Gay Agenda**

When people don't submit themselves to the truth of the Word of God, they are easily shaped and swayed by the six points of a brilliantly designed "Gay Manifesto" spelled out in a book called *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90s.*{11} This gay agenda has been executed perfectly in the United States. (Note: these are the authors' words, not mine.)

1. *Talk about gays and gayness as loudly and often as possible.*

2. *Portray members of the LGBTQ community as victims.* Indoctrinate mainstream America that members of the LGBTQ community were "born this way."

3. *Give protectors a just cause: anti-discrimination.*

4. *The use of TV, music, film and social media to desensitize mainstream Americans to their plight as gay people.*

5. *Portray Gays and Lesbians as pillars in society.* Make

gays look good.

*6. Once homosexuals have begun to gain acceptance, anti-gay opponents must be vilified, causing them to be viewed as repulsive outcasts of society.*

This is how I see how we got to this place where so many people have been deceived. They didn't anchor themselves to the Truth of the Word of God, and they opened themselves to the cultural brine of Kirk and Madsen's plan to overhaul straight America.

I will close with four personal observations about this situation:

1. Christians have bought into the culture's worship of feelings over God's unchanging revelation

2. People love how making themselves an ally and protector of the underdog makes them feel, despite God's design and standards for sexuality and marriage.

3. Not enough of us Christ-followers are living lives that demonstrate the beauty and satisfaction of abiding in Christ.

4. The church has been dismal at loving those who struggle with their sexuality and showing them the grace that is in God's heart toward them. It's essential to both speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), and seek to show love filled with truth.

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# Abortion: A Biblical View

*Sue Bohlin calls for a spiritual and moral reflection on the topic of abortion, urging people to consider the eternal implications and affirming that God's love, grace, and forgiveness extend even to those who have committed this sin.*

 *An earlier version of this article is also available in Spanish.*

# Abortion as Spiritual Warfare

Abortion continues to be a volatile issue, and an emotional one, in the United States. It is usually seen as a political issue, but I think it's way bigger than that.

I believe we need to see abortion as spiritual warfare.



We live in two dimensions at the same time: the physical world that we can see and touch and measure, and the unseen spiritual realm that is filled with God, angels and demons (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). Jesus revealed to us that Satan is the thief who "comes only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10); abortion is one of the most wicked, heinous ways he inflicts pain and destruction on people God loves.

He steals joy and peace from women who have had abortions, as well as some of the fathers of the babies who were killed in the womb. He steals babies from what should be the safest place on earth. He steals motherhood from women and fatherhood from men. Through abortion, he steals grandchildren from grandparents.

Satan uses abortion to kill. Just in the United States, since Roe v. Wade made abortion legal, over 64 million babies have been murdered.{1} In China, the horrible one-child policy that terrorized the Chinese people for 35 years resulted in 350 million baby deaths.{2}

Satan uses abortion to destroy. Willingly choosing abortion for a pregnant teenager has been Satan's foothold in many families that were torn apart, a phenomenon I have seen with my own eyes. Abortion—and its evil twin infanticide—destroyed the natural ratio of boys to girls in China. Today, there are 30 million young men who cannot find a girl to marry because

there aren't enough to go around.{3}

The rallying cry of abortion is, "It's my body"—even though there is another human being's body involved as well. Theologian Dr. Peter Kreeft's insight is breathtaking to me: "Abortion is the Antichrist's demonic parody of the Eucharist. That is why it uses the same holy words, 'This is my body,' with the blasphemously opposite meaning."{4}

Abortion is an evil weapon in the hands of an unspeakably evil enemy. In Genesis 3, Satan declared war on the people God created and loves, and he has been warring with us ever since. The Lord Jesus triumphed over this defeated foe at the cross, but He allows battles to continue on this side of eternity to strengthen us and help us learn to depend on Him and grow stronger in our faith. In this article we'll be talking about the spiritual battlefield of abortion, but please remember that not only does Jesus win in the end, He has provided us with spiritual armor that starts with TRUTH. Let's go there now.

## The Bible's View of the Unborn

Pro-choice advocates don't like the use of the word "murder." Many of them maintain that no one really knows when human life begins, and they choose to believe that the idea of personhood at conception is a religious tenet and therefore not valid. But it *is* a human life that is formed at conception. The zygote contains 46 chromosomes, half contributed by each parent, in a unique configuration that has never existed before and never will again. It is not plant life or animal life, nor is it mere tissue like a tumor. From the moment of conception, the new life is genetically different from his or her mother, and is not a part of her body like her tonsils or appendix. This new human being is a separate individual living inside the mother. Rather like an astronaut being protected and kept alive in space.

The Bible doesn’t specifically address the subject of abortion, probably since it is covered in the commandment, “Thou shalt not murder.” (Exodus 20:13) But it does give us insight into God’s view of the unborn. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for the unborn (*yeled*) is the same word used for young children. The Hebrew language did not have or need a separate word for pre-born babies. All children were children regardless of whether they lived inside or outside the womb. In the New Testament, the same word is used to describe the unborn John the Baptist and the already-born baby Jesus. The process of birth just doesn’t make any difference concerning a baby’s worth or status in the Bible.

We are given some wonderful insights into God’s intimate involvement in the development and life of the pre-born infant in Psalm 139:13-16:

> For you created my inmost being;
> you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
> I praise you because I am fearfully
> and wonderfully made;
> your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
> My frame was not hidden from you
> when I was made in the secret place.
> When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,
> your eyes saw my unformed body.
> All the days ordained for me
> were written in your book before one of them came to be.

All people, regardless of the circumstances of their conception, or whether they are healthy or handicapped, are God’s image bearers who have been personally knit together by His fingers. He has planned out all the days of the unborn child’s life before one of them has happened.

## Chemical Abortion: “The Abortion Pill”

Chemical abortions now account for the majority of induced

abortions in the U.S.{5}

Two drugs are used in tandem to end a pregnancy. The first pill, RU-46 or Mifepristone or Mifeprex (all the same drug), shuts down progesterone. That's the pregnancy hormone that the developing embryo or fetus needs to survive and thrive. Progesterone allows the mother's body to feed and nourish and oxygenate the baby. The first abortion pill blocks progesterone, so the baby dies. Then the next drug, Misoprostol or Cytotec, causes the uterus to contract and squeeze out the baby and other pregnancy tissue like the placenta.{6}

These drugs are very disruptive to the natural progress of growing a baby inside a womb. They are unfortunately quite effective up to seven weeks' gestation, and then their effectiveness drops off. By the time the baby is ten weeks along, for one in six women the drugs won't fully empty the uterus. Dangerous complications can set in, like:

- An infection caused by an incomplete or failed abortion where the fetus remains in the uterus
- An undetected ectopic pregnancy, which can be dangerous and is a medical emergency
- Blood clots remaining in the uterus
- Heavy bleeding

What is also scary is that chemical abortions are so easy to obtain they are like over-the-counter medications. No doctor is needed to supervise. If a woman has an ectopic pregnancy, where the embryo grows in her Fallopian tube instead of her uterus, she's going to have awful pain and needs a sonogram to see where the baby is. Some of the deaths from Mifeprex abortions were from women that never had an ultrasound; they were given the drug and they had a pregnancy in their tube, and they died.

Thousands of women experience complications, called "adverse

events” that require hospital intervention, but the FDA does not require adverse events to be reported unless someone dies. The abortion pill is being touted as being “safe as Tylenol,” which is a life-threatening lie.{7} But then, abortion is spiritual warfare, and the enemy constantly lies and deceives us.

But there is good news! Many times, even while swallowing the abortion pills and immediately afterwards, women wrestle with regret for starting the regimen. There is a protocol called Abortion Pill Reversal where a doctor prescribes a dose of progesterone, the pregnancy hormone, to counteract what the mifepristone did. If started quickly enough within 72 hours of a woman taking mifepristone and before she takes the second drug, there is about a 70% chance of saving her child!{8} Thank You Lord!

## Handicapped Children

What if prenatal tests reveal that a baby is going to be born sick or handicapped? There’s no doubt about it, raising a handicapped child is painful and hard. Is it ever okay to abort a child whose life will be less than perfect?

We need to ask ourselves, does the child deserve to die because of his handicap or illness? Life is hard, both for the handicapped person and for her parents. But it is significant that no organization of parents of mentally retarded children has ever endorsed abortion.

Some people honestly believe that it’s better to abort a handicapped child than to let him experience the difficult life ahead. Dr. C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General of the United States, has performed thousands of pediatric surgeries on handicapped children. He remarks that disability and unhappiness do not necessarily go together. Some of the unhappiest children he has known had full mental and physical faculties, and some of the happiest youngsters have borne very

difficult burdens.{9} Life is a lot harder for people with disabilities, but I can tell you personally that there is a precious side to it as well. I have lived most of my life with a physical handicap, but it hasn't stopped me from experiencing a fierce joy from living life to the fullest of the abilities I *do* have. I can honestly rejoice in my broken body because it is that very brokenness and weakness that makes it easier for others to see the power and glory of my Lord in me, because His power is perfected in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Often, parents abort children with defects because they don't want to face the certain suffering and pain that comes with caring for a handicapped individual. By aborting the child, they believe they are aborting the trouble. But as we discussed earlier, there is no way to avoid the consequences of abortion: the need to grieve, the guilt, the anger, the depression.

What if a baby is going to die anyway, such as those with fatal genetic birth disorders? I think we need to look at the larger picture, one that includes God and His purposes for our lives. When a tragedy like this occurs, we can know that it is only happening because He has a reason behind it. God's will for us is not that we live easy lives, but that we be changed into the image of Jesus. He wants us to be holy, not comfortable. The pain of difficult circumstances is often His chosen method to grow godliness in us and in the lives of those touched by the tragedy of a child's handicap. When it is a matter of life and death, as abortion is, it is not our place to avoid the pain.

My husband and I know what it is to bury a baby who only lived nine days. We saw God use this situation to draw people to Himself and to teach and strengthen and bless so many people beyond our immediate family. Despite the tremendous pain of that time, now that I have seen how God used it to glorify Himself, I would go through it again.

Not all abortions are performed as a matter of convenience. Some are performed in very hard cases, such as a handicapped child or as the result of rape or incest. But again, we need to back off and view abortion—for whatever reason—from an eternal perspective. God is the One who gives life, and only He has the right to take it away. Every person, born or unborn, is a precious soul made by God, in His image. Every life is an entrustment from God we need to celebrate and protect.

## Post-Abortion Syndrome

Millions of women live with the emotional and physical aftershock of abortion. Although some do not seem to have been rocked by their choice, many many women live with deep guilt and shame and denial. Some live with the physical effects of the hormonal shock of suddenly ending the massive construction job of their body building another human being inside her womb. It's something like throwing a car into park when it was going full speed down the road.

Post-abortion syndrome or stress disorder is real for many women. The grief is real; the deep loss of the child is real. And many people need help facing the pain and getting through it. I asked a dear friend about her experience. It's been 48 years since her abortion. She wrote to me,

> "Though the procedure was fairly easy, I knew the second it was over that I had done the wrong thing.  I left that clinic empty, guilty, and depressed.  It was the start of a lifetime of sadness and regret.  I told no one other than my husband and kept that secret for over 30 years.  I suffered in silence.  I knew then that I had made the choice to end a human life.
>
> "When I became pregnant later, the sadness and guilt actually multiplied. When I could feel the baby inside me, the intense feelings of shame and guilt consumed me for

> ending my first child's life.  When my daughter was born and I held her for the first time and looked into her eyes, as happy as I was to have her, I also felt the worst pain I had ever felt because of what I had done 7 years earlier."

Ending another's life, whether freely chosen or being pressured into it, is capital-T Trauma. The woman is shaped and changed by this trauma, and I am so grateful for abortion recovery programs. They help women (and men, though there are far fewer programs for Forgotten Fathers) to experience grace and compassion as they confess their sin and receive forgiveness and cleansing from Jesus, *who died for their abortion*.

Abortion is a hard choice for which there are hard consequences. But God's love and compassion and grace are bigger than all of it, and there is such good news in Romans 8:28—God is able to make all things work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

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# "Why Would It Not Be Better to be Measured by One's Works Instead of Free Grace?"

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

Thanks for asking. Interesting question.

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

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

Consider Isaiah 64:6–"all our righteous acts are like filthy rags."

And it's not just that our works fall short of a high standard . . . it's that sin has so thoroughly corrupted our nature that even our most sincere, well-intentioned acts are tainted

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

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

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

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

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

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

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# Two Genders, Two Spectrums

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

options.

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

I suggest that God chooses where on each gender spectrum a baby comes into the world. It's our starting point, but as we mature we can embrace and grow in the other characteristics of masculinity or femininity. We can take up more "bandwidth" and become a more fully-rounded man or woman.

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

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

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

## Masculinity Spectrum 1

I really like the idea that every child, created in his or her own individuality in the image of God, is a gift box that we

as parents and care-givers get to open and discover what's inside. Every child is fearfully and wonderful made, as we read in Psalm 139, and that includes the kind of boy and the kind of girl God chose for them to be. Whoever came up with the philosophy that children are blank slates that we write on, so they become whoever and however the surrounding culture instructs them to be, must have never been around actual children. Real babies come out of the womb and start revealing how God made them.

God shapes some baby boys as rough-and-tumble. They are often considered classically "all boy." They're constantly moving. Ask boys to walk from point A to point B and they may well zig-zag their way across the room. They often have an affinity for fighting and weapons. One mama who said no toy guns in her home because she hated violence, found her young son nibbling his toast into the shape of a pistol, which he pointed at his brother and made shooting sound effects. Her other son would treat the longest French fry from his Happy Meal like a miniature rifle to pretend-shoot his brother.

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

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

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

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

And of course, there are boys (and men) everywhere in between as well. One of my sons was so sensitive and artistic he graduated with an art degree; the other puts himself square in the middle of the masculinity spectrum.

## Masculinity Spectrum 2

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

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

These are the ones who are vulnerable to spiritual attacks of being labeled gay and other ugly words. In recent years, as sensitive, artistic and creative boys feel the pain of not fitting in, they are now being encouraged to label themselves as transgender. It used to be they would think, “I don’t fit in the world of boys. There’s something wrong with me.” Now

they are being encouraged to think, “I don’t fit in the world of boys because I’m really a girl. Or life would be better and easier if I became a girl.” (Which, of course, is impossible.) Then if they accept these false labels and they practice seeing themselves that way, they can literally think themselves into a gay or trans identity. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Scripture tells us to “take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). All of us need to derive our identity from who God says we are.

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

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

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

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

## Femininity Spectrum 1

On the one end of the femininity spectrum are the girly-girls who come into the world wanting a pink receiving blanket and one of those headbands with a big puffy flower on their little bald head. They can’t wait till their fingernails and toenails

are big enough for Mommy to paint. In American culture they often gravitate toward pink and purple and silver glitter. They cuddle baby dolls and stuffed animals.

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

It's easy to define feminine as girly-girls, but God loves and creates another kind of femininity.

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

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

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

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

“other than.” Different.

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

## Femininity Spectrum 2

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

Girly girls can put down their mirrors and selfies, and become prayer warriors and first responders. They can walk into emotional crises and hard conversations to point people to Jesus. They can become shepherds, more concerned about other people than themselves.

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

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

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

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

What if he doesn’t want to play tackle football? What if he’d rather sit and try to draw out another kid’s thoughts and

feelings? Does it mean he's gay? No! It may be a junior counselor in the making, who's also going to be a fantastic daddy!

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

Let's forget the blue and pink boxes and just open the gift box that is each child and find out how God packed the gifts and interests inside. Let's celebrate God's good design of each child IN HIS IMAGE and affirm them as the child they are, even if they don't conform to stereotypes.

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

**Notes**

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

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# Mind Games Camp (radio transcript)



## Camp Overview

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



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

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

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

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

## Sneak Peek of Probe Lectures

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

*Here's Dr. Ray Bohlin speaking on "Christian Views of Science and Earth History":*
So, what are these three views we're going to talk about? Well first, there is the recent, or literal, view, then there's what I call Progressive Creation, then there's what I call Theistic Evolution or what is now, the term now used is Evolutionary Creation. OK . . . so what kind or form of analysis we going to apply here?

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

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

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

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

## Comments from Alumni, Part 1

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

*Anna:*
Mind Games is a brilliant camp. It has wonderful professors who are very knowledgeable in so many subjects like philosophy and science and theology, and it's so wonderful to get their perspectives on the Bible, and to hear about their spiritual walks, and to hear things that you wouldn't normally hear in

your Sunday School class or in church. It’s very spiritually enriching not only because of the sessions you’ll be going to, but also because of the environment you’re in. You’re surrounded by like-minded Christians who also love the Lord, so you’re with people that can sharpen you as iron sharpens iron. All the sessions have so much information that you can learn things from; they help you with evangelism, they help you with confidence in your own faith, they help you with discipleship. It’s so helpful, there’s so many things I’ve learned every single year, I’ve learned a new thing-so many new things every single year at Mind Games.

*Jona:*
Looking at the topics, I was terrified because I would be putting myself in a position where I could be wrong, put myself in a position where I challenge all my worldviews, even worse I’ll be surrounded by people who are way smarter than me, or have way more experience than me. And what I realized this year is that there is nothing more liberating than being ready to be wrong.

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

## Comments From Alumni, Part 2

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

*Aiden:*

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

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

## Why Go to Mind Games?

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

differently from unbelievers.

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

Alumni from these summer conferences have gone on to become leaders on their campuses, the government and the military. This week-long immersion truly changes lives, giving them a new confidence in their God, His Word, and in their role as His ambassadors. We know this because some of them come back as alumni a second or third year, and because they contact us years later and let us know how Mind Games continues to impact them.

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

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

**Notes**

1. Steve Cable, Is This the Last Christian Generation?

probe.org/is-this-the-last-christian-generation/

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# Is Probe Ministries a Hate Group?

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

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

The SPLC's website contains this lie:

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

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

No response.

Because it’s not there.

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

Unfortunately, these days mere disagreement is called hate.

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

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

And the Southern Poverty Law Center lies.

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# The Lunar Flyby and the Crucifixion

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

I think about what it must have been like for the astronauts to be cut off from their source of support and connection as they experienced total silence from Houston . . . and the

emotional impact on the folks at Mission Control to be cut off from “their people” up in space.

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

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

Before the foundation of the world, the Father and Son determined that He would die for our sins (Revelation 13:8). Before the eternal God even created the heavens and the earth, the Crucifixion was planned—and part of it was the communications cut-off between the Son and the Father. Jesus took all the sin of every human being onto Himself, so truly and so deeply that Paul describes it as actually *becoming* sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).

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

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

For you.

To reconcile us to the Father.

Can we even begin to imagine the immensity of the cost

Jesus—and the Father!—were willing to pay?

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

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

At the end of the blackout, Artemis astronaut Kristina Koch broke the silence from space by saying, "It is so great to hear from Earth again." She told President Trump, "One of the biggest highlights was coming back from the far side of the moon and having the first glimpses of planet Earth again, after being out of communication for about 45 minutes. It really just reminds you what a special place we have."{1}

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

Which I think is code for, "Abba Daddy, I'm back!"

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

**Note**

1. www.foxnews.com/us/artemis-ii-launches-astronauts-around-moon-first-deep-space-mission-since-apollo

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/the-lunar-flyby-and-the-crucifixion/ on April 8, 2026.

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

**The release of the Epstein documents has sparked outrage, confusion, and intense public debate. While the world often responds with anger, speculation, or political blame, Christians must respond to the Epstein files differently—Biblically. Scripture provides a framework for understanding both human depravity and God's justice. Here are three biblical responses believers should consider.**

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

> The Bible states, "For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open." (Luke 8:17)
>
> Also, "Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops." (Luke 12:3)



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

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

"Pagans gonna pagan."

Jeremiah 17:9 exposes the truth about the fallen and corrupted condition of humanity:

> "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. . ."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

For more articles examining culture through a Christian worldview, visit Probe Ministries.

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