

# “Should My Husband Get Baptized If He Still Wants to Get Drunk?”

My husband is now a newly born again believer and wants to get baptized. My concern is that even though he has asked Jesus to be his savior and wants to get baptized, he won't give up getting drunk. He says it is his “one thing” he isn't ready to give up. Should he still get baptized?

I'm so glad you wrote! What's your understanding of what it means to be baptized? It is an outward symbol of an inward reality: that he has trusted in Christ, is now a member of His family, and wants to testify that a very important change has happened inside.

It doesn't mean he has his act together. <smile>

You can read all the way through the New Testament and not find any specifications for being baptized other than deciding to follow Christ, and no reasons *not* to be baptized. As your husband walks with the Lord and starts to realize that the abundant life starts with Jesus living inside him, He will provide a different way of viewing getting drunk. But that's going to take time, and I want to encourage you, one wife to another, to let the Lord be in charge of the timing of that dealing with that behavior. There are reasons he gets drunk that God is fully aware of, and will deal with at the right time.

Please, give your husband a break. . . and a baptism party! ☐ Celebrate this great, great news. . . and let the Holy Spirit be the Holy Spirit. He knows all about your husband's drinking. You pray, and trust God.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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*After reading this article on our website, this wise wife wrote to me:*

Twenty-six years ago, my husband and I started going to a local church sometimes. God had been calling us to Him for some time, and at that point I fully committed my life to Him. My husband was born again when a man from church took the time to befriend my husband and explain the gospel to him. My husband continued drinking (I didn't only because I was pregnant).

I didn't say anything to him, but he later told me that he started hiding from me how much he was drinking because he was feeling guilty. One day our pastor stopped by with his family when they were out for a bike ride, and my husband offered him a beer! I was mortified; I didn't know much about being a Christian, but I did know that it wasn't socially acceptable to offer a pastor a beer!

Thank God for that pastor, though, and the people of that church who welcomed us and took a genuine interest in us. The pastor graciously declined with "no thanks" but continued visiting and didn't make my husband feel like a leper or give him a lecture. Not too long after that, an elder of the church encouraged us to start coming to Sunday School Bible study classes instead of just worship services. Because my husband felt comfortable with the pastor, he talked to him about this. He told our pastor, "I want to come to church more often, but I like drinking beer and don't want to stop, and I don't want people to judge me." The pastor told him, "Whether or not you should be drinking beer is between you and God, and no one at church is going to say anything to you about it. Don't let that thought keep you from coming to church or growing closer to God."

So we started going to Bible studies and became more involved

in the church. Within a few months, just after our son was born, my husband quit drinking. It happened this way: My husband later told me that he had been feeling the conviction that he shouldn't be drinking and he knew that he didn't want his son to grow up like he had, with an alcoholic father. But he liked beer so much that he kept ignoring the thoughts. One day when my husband was in the garage, he felt that conviction so strongly that he knelt down on the floor there in the garage and surrendered himself completely to God, and vowed not to drink again. He quit that very day, and God helped him keep that vow. He came into the house to find me, very emotional, and told me what had happened.

I can't take credit for being wise enough not to say anything to him about drinking; that had to be the Lord's work. But I do think that because I didn't say anything to him about it, the struggle stayed between my husband and God and didn't become a power struggle between him and me. I know enough now to know that a wife should not attempt to be her husband's conscience on matters such as this; God calls her to love and honor her husband.

God does not always use the same timeline or the same routes with everyone, and not everyone is equally responsive to God. But that woman can be sure that God IS working with her husband, just as He is working with her, and that His Spirit is dealing with anything He wants her husband to change. She can trust God enough to leave the conviction to Him, and to guide her in what her responses should be in difficult decisions (such as if he wants her to drink with him) and how to honor her husband without compromising her beliefs. I will pray for this woman and pray that her husband will respond to the Lord and fully commit his life to Him.

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# “Is It OK For a Pastor to Hit His Adult Daughter?”

Is it right for a pastor to hit his 22-year-old daughter? And not feel the need to apologize? Even if it's because it was first a heated argument? Is it right?

Oh \_\_\_\_\_. I am so sorry! No ma'am, it is NOT right for any man to hit any woman for any reason. It is an abuse of his strength and an abuse of his God-given position of protector of his family.

When we are speaking on [“Guys Are From Mars, Girls Are From Venus”](#) (gender differences), my husband Ray always reads this quote from Stu Weber in his book *Tender Warrior*:

“Let me put it a little more bluntly—if you lay a hand on a woman, you should be shot, okay? A woman was made to be provided for, protected, and cared for. A man was made to be a provider, protector, and care-giver. Nothing is more pitiful than a man forfeiting his masculinity or a woman her femininity by transgressing the created order.”

I would hope that there would be healthy accountability in place in your church that you could go to the elders of the church and ask for help. I would put it like this, taking my cue from Abigail's respectful confrontation of David when he was angry and ready for blood (1 Samuel 25): “Dad, it's not right for you to use your strength to hurt me. I'm going to ask you one time to please don't do that again. When you treat me so disrespectfully, you are not being the man of God that I know you want to be. I want to help you be the godly father I know you want to be, so if you ever hit me again I just want you to know I'm going to the elders to ask them to help you

with your anger and lack of self-control.”

That, of course, would infuriate him, because people doing shameful things don't want to be forced to face it. And it's possible that in the culture of your church or your community, men don't think there's anything wrong with hitting women they're related to. If that's the case, you might want to think about finding a safer place to live.

But the bottom line is no, it's not right, and I'm sorry you even had to ask.

Sue Bohlin

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## **“Is ‘I am Second’ OK?”**

**I am looking into a ministry called I am Second. I believe it is based in Dallas, Texas? From the little bit I can find on it, it seems to have links with the Emergent Church and Brian McLaren? Curious if you guys know anything. Thanks.**

I am Second ([iamsecond.com](http://iamsecond.com)) is indeed based here in Dallas and is not part of the emergent church except that all wise pastors and churches, including [emergent](#) ones, will recognize it as a powerful tool for the gospel. [It features great video stories of life change in people who are second because Jesus Christ is first.] In fact, Ray's and my pastor and church (Watermark Community Church) is featured on the website.

When Probe moves to the new [Hope Center](#) in a couple of months, we are looking forward to welcoming I am Second as one of our office neighbors. This is a building with 30+ ministries as tenants, and the Hope Center Foundation is very picky about

the theology and integrity of the ministries they allow to office there. We're delighted to be so close to an excellent ministry like theirs!

So glad you asked!

Sue Bohlin

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## **“You Condemn All Other Religions!”**

I agree with there is one true God but in all the pages I have read on this site, I find that you are condemning all the other religions. But in my studies I have seen all religions have the same basis of love, peace, and understanding, and the belief that how you act on earth determines how you will spend eternity. But it's cocky religious people that spend their weeks living the way they want but then condemning others for living the way they see unfit and breaking the laws they're supposed to live by. Correct me if I'm wrong but doesn't the Catholic Church Bible say "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone," and seeing how it also says sex is a sin then doesn't that mean we all have sinned by being born and should not judge? But the religious people of the world constantly judge and they are hypocrites for cramming one religion down other people's throats.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

It is true that various world religions all address concepts like love, peace, and understanding. But that doesn't mean they have the same basic concepts. The various world religions

are extremely different in their core beliefs. It's also true that we take the unpopular position that biblical Christianity is the only way to know God in this life, and the only way to live with Him in heaven after death. But the reason we take that position is because Jesus Himself made the claim, outrageous if it's not true, that He is God, that He came from heaven, and that He is the only way to God the Father: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me." That claim is absolutely CRAZY unless He really is God, and He really is the only way to be reconciled to God. Since He said He would be put to death and would come back to life, and then He did, He backed up His claim.

So we believe Him.

It's not just the Catholic Church's Bible that says "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone" (all versions say that), but it's important to understand the context of Jesus' statement. It doesn't mean we are not to judge at all, it means we are not to point fingers at someone else's sin when we are guilty of the same thing. I'm afraid you have a misunderstanding about the Bible's statements about sex. God doesn't say sex is a sin. He invented sex and gave it to us as His gift, to be contained within the only safe place for it: marriage. Sex outside of marriage is sin; sex within marriage is His good gift to be enjoyed. Being conceived during sex (which has always been God's good plan) is not what makes us sinners; we are all sinners because we inherited a "bentness" for sin from our first father, Adam. This has nothing to do with sex.

I appreciate that you're bothered by religious people attempting to cram their beliefs down the throats of anyone else. Based on what I know of God's heart from reading all of His words, I think He's bothered by it too. He offers a quality of abundant life on earth, and the promise of life in heaven with Him, but He also says it is our choice to accept His offer or not. Nowhere in the Bible is there any hint that

cramming religion is acceptable. That's because God wants to be in a love relationship with us, and force or manipulation are opposites of love.

See \_\_\_\_\_, all of us have a sin problem. We are sinners, and God is a holy God. Our sin keeps us from having a relationship with Him, and God can't allow any sin into heaven when we die. The different world religions have different solutions to the sin problem. Some of them deny that it exists, then they have a real problem explaining events like 9/11. Others suggest that enough good works can outweigh our sins, but they offer no proof that this is true—or even hint at how many is “enough.” That's a terrible thing to be wrong about! We believe that because Jesus provided proof that He is God, we can trust what He said about being reconciled to God the Father through Himself as the only way.

I hope this helps. . . and I am sending this with a prayer that you will carefully consider the same question Jesus asked when He was on earth: “Who do you say that I am?”

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin

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## **“If Jealousy Is a Sin, Why Is God a Jealous God?”**

**If jealousy is a sin, then why does God say He is a jealous God?**

Great question. Not understanding this distinction was Oprah's



point of departure from orthodox Christianity, when she heard that God is a jealous God, and her reaction was, "What? God is jealous of *me*?"

There is a difference between holy jealousy and sinful jealousy.

Holy jealousy means that one is appropriately possessive of something that belongs to him or her. For example, I am not willing to share my husband's heart or body with any other woman because he is mine. I'm happy to share his gifts and energies with the body of Christ and the larger world, and I even love to see that happen, but I want his heart and soul to be exclusively mine. That is a kind of holy and entirely appropriate jealousy.

Sinful jealousy is the desire to have something that *doesn't* belong to us; another word is envy. When we want something God has not given to us, such as other people's fame, or material goods, or a job, or favor, or a spouse, that is a sin. Sometimes we see this in a jealous person who wants *all* the attentions of their loved one to be directed to themselves. I have seen people who fly into a rage when they learn that their spouse or significant other has talked on the phone with anyone, or had any kind of conversation with a third person. Such a jealous person desires to have a level of exclusivity that doesn't belong to them.

God exhibits holy jealousy because our love and adoration rightfully belong to Him; He is jealous with a holy jealousy when we love and worship false gods in idolatry. His kind of jealousy is not sinful because we belong to Him and He created our hearts to belong to Him as well.

For a fuller description of these ideas, check out these articles at GotQuestions.org and Bible.org:

**Why Is God a Jealous God?**  
[[www.gotquestions.org/jealous-God.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/jealous-God.html)]

A Jealous God [[bible.org/seriespage/jealous-god](http://bible.org/seriespage/jealous-god)]

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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# **“Homosexuals Are Going to Hell!”**

Dear Mrs. Sue,

I really enjoyed Blue School at Super Summer Arkansas and I had a blast. Unfortunately, I highly disagree with the answer you gave from the Ask Box question about if homosexuals are going to hell. From what I understood, you said that homosexuality is not a heaven or hell issue, and that homosexuals proclaiming to be Christians will still go to heaven if they have a “relationship with God.” The Bible says in Romans 1:26-27, “for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even the women did change the natural use that is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working with that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.” And it goes on to say in verse 32, “who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” (KJV)

Would Jesus have sex with another man?

In the amplified version, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians

6:9-10, "Do you know that the unrighteous and wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality, nor cheats, nor greedy graspers, nor drunkards, nor foul mouthed revilers and slanderers, nor extortioners and robbers will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God."

You only get saved once, however, you can stray away into sin and lose your salvation, but you can gain it back by rededicating your life whole heartedly and I truly believe that if you are a homosexual, you are not truly saved.

I hope you don't hate me for my views because I don't mean to put you down or anything close, I was raised up different. I hope you understand where I'm coming from and I hope you don't take it wrong.

Hi \_\_\_\_\_,

I think there are two parts to your comments, one about if homosexuals can be saved, and the other about losing our salvation.

First, about homosexuals. I am very glad we are having this conversation because at some point you will know someone who loves Jesus AND is attracted to people of the same sex. If you try to tell them they're going to hell because of their feelings, it will cut off all chances of having a relationship with them. People who are attracted to their same sex don't choose those feelings, they don't want them, and most of them pray and pray for the feelings to go away. When [God doesn't answer that prayer](#) (because He answers it in other but harder ways), they often either turn their back on God or they buy the lie that God must have made them that way.

Those who identify themselves as homosexuals embrace their feelings instead of their true identity. They are deceived and wounded. All of us are deceived by the enemy in one way or

another. The problem is, we don't even know when we're being deceived, which is why it's so important to follow the Bible instead of our feelings. I know several people who identify themselves first as Christ-followers and secondly as gay; I pray for them, because they are swallowing a lie. They have truly put their trust in Jesus, but they are tired of fighting their feelings and tired of waiting for God to take their attractions away. The ones who are buying the lie also don't want to do the hard work of looking at the causes of their attractions and addressing the problems that caused them, grieving the pain of their wounds and forgiving those who hurt them in various ways. They want the easy way out, and God doesn't have an "easy button" like on the commercials.

One time a lady called me whose son had come out to her as a homosexual. She had said to her son, "I thought you were a Christian! I thought you prayed to receive Christ when you were a boy! You can't possibly be a Christian and gay!" He answered, "Mom, I AM a Christian. I'm a Christian with problems."

As am I.

As are you, sweet \_\_\_\_\_.

As are all of us Christ-followers.

It's not OK to act on homosexual feelings. God disciplines those He loves, Hebrews tells us. And those who pursue their feelings instead of who God says they are—His beloved child who needs to depend on Jesus for the strength to stand against their temptations—will experience the hard consequences of their sin. Some are HIV positive. Some are unable to have healthy friendships with others of the same sex because they haven't learned to depend on Christ for their deepest heart-needs, and insist on expecting others to be what only God can be for them. Some have lost their family relationships because of choosing their gay relationships over all others. God lets

that kind of pain happen in order to discipline those He loves and draw them back to Himself.

Yes, Romans 1 really does say what it says. It describes the downward spiral into degradation when people refuse to accept God's right to rule in their lives. But there is a difference between those who identify with their sin, saying that "homosexual" is who and what they are, and those who identify with Christ but who still experience the strong pull toward sinful behaviors and relationships. In the [re:generation recovery ministry of our church](#), people say things like "I'm a believer who struggles with homosexuality" or "I'm a believer who struggles with anger and control" or "I'm a believer who struggles with alcohol" or "I'm a believer who struggles with perfectionism" or "I'm a believer who struggles with idolizing food." Their identity is that they are a Christ-follower, but they are also honest about their struggles. Some of them stumble and fall in the process of becoming like Jesus. I certainly stumble in my walk. The stumbles have become fewer over the years of walking with Jesus, but I still do stumble. And I will continue to stumble my way toward heaven, as do all Christians.

Those who identify with their sin instead of identifying with Jesus are described in the 1 Corinthians 6 passage. But then, when we repent of identifying with our pet sins and identify with Jesus instead, as Paul says, "That is what some of you WERE."

I want you to consider the possibility that someone can be a Christian and still experience the same temptations that they had before becoming a Christian. That's what I'm talking about when I say that being a homosexual is not a heaven-or-hell issue. When someone puts their trust in Christ, they don't get a lobotomy—their brain and their history are not changed. They bring all their baggage with them into their relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit. And Jesus invites them to release their pieces of baggage into His hands one by one. Some refuse

to relinquish their baggage, their sin habits, to Him until later when they experience His loving discipline. But it doesn't mean they're not a Christian. It means they are a Christian still in process.

As am I.

As are you. <gentle smile>

About the issue of losing your salvation, I invite you to look through some short articles on our website, starting here: [www.probe.org/articles-on-losing-salvation.htm](http://www.probe.org/articles-on-losing-salvation.htm). When Jesus said, "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand," (John 10:28-29) the "no one" includes us. We are secure in His hand; eternal life is forever, and it's permanent. We will not lose our salvation when we sin, but we *will* experience a loss of fellowship with God and He will discipline us because He wants what is best for us. In fact, I have heard a number of people who gave up struggling against their homosexual feelings and dove headfirst into the gay lifestyle thinking it would give them life. . . but they came back saying, "It was death, not life. And I missed Jesus. He seemed very far away when I was pursuing my sin. I couldn't live without Him. So here I am, ready to struggle again. But this time, in His strength and not my own."

OK, I know that's a *lot*. I hope your heart is open to what I have to say. I LOVED having you in Blue School this year and look forward to next year!

Hugs,

Mrs. Sue

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# “Are There Biblical Solutions to the Issues Self-Help Gurus Address?”

People like Wayne Dyer offer some interesting answers to everyday problems, like moving on with your life, overcoming excuses, etc. Are there Biblical answers like these self-help gurus offer?

Drs. John Townsend and Henry Cloud, writing and speaking partners who wrote the *Boundaries* books, are exceptionally wise men whose perspective is drenched in scripture and biblical thinking. In fact, Dr. Townsend earned a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, which means he REALLY knows his theology. Between the two of them, who have written a number of books together and separately, there is a wide range of “self-help” resources, but which are really about plugging God’s principles into our needs. (And then, the reader discovers, it’s actually about plugging *ourselves* into God and His principles—first things first!) I would especially recommend *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* (Townsend and Cloud) and *Changes That Heal* (Cloud). Here’s a link to their website: [www.cloudtownsend.com](http://www.cloudtownsend.com)

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

*Addendum: My colleague at Probe, Heather Zeiger, sent this follow-up email:*

Just for reference to the Biblical Self-help question. One can

be encouraged that many of the Puritans have written on these self-help issues, so Christian authors have actually been publishing in this area for a while. I wouldn't necessarily direct someone to the Puritans right off the bat, but I think it is encouraging that back in the 1600s, Jonathan Edwards wrote about procrastination (one of his selected sermons in book form is entitled "Procrastination or The Sin and Folly of Depending on Future Time") and about those things (affections) that we love more than we should. I'm reading John Owens' *Of the Mortification of Sin in Believers*. Basically he applies it with addictions. He wrote in the 1700's.

Two recent books written by psychologists/counselors also with theology degrees are *How People Change* by Timothy S. Lane and Paul D. Tripp, which is the modern-day version of Jonathan Edwards' *Religious Affections* – learning how to get over the gospel of works and accept grace. And deals with how people handle when tough things happen in life and what they turn to in order to cope. The other book that is really good is *When People are Big and God is Small* by Edward T. Welch, which is all about people-pleasing and co-dependency.

The theme in all these books is exactly what you said in your email – not some program or steps to make yourself better in the world's eyes, but understanding what God thinks of these things and how through Him we can be free.

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**“Does God Love Us All**



# Differently?"

**Does God love us all differently? I always thought He loves us all equally, but what about Scriptures like “Jacob I have loved, Esau I hated” and how John was the beloved disciple? Does God love some of us more or less than others?**

Great question! It would seem that certain verses would indeed support the idea that while God does love everyone (John 3:16—“God so loved the world. . .”), there are also degrees of love and favor. In Deuteronomy 7:6 Moses tells the children of Israel, “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, His treasured possession.” Drawing on several Old Testament passages, Peter makes a similar proclamation to the Church in 1 Peter 2:9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession.”

And then there are individuals, as you have pointed out. In Malachi 1:2-3, God does say, “Jacob I have loved, Esau I hated.” It’s important to understand what God means here, because God talks about hating individuals in the Old Testament, and the Lord Jesus calls us to hate our families in the New (Luke 14:26). These biblical uses of hate means “to love less.” [For a compelling argument and explanation, see this article on Bible.org, “How To Hate Your Wife” at <https://bible.org/seriespage/49-how-hate-your-wife-luke-1425-35>.]

John does describe himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” but do note that Jesus never calls him that. Jesus loved *all* His disciples. John reveled in being loved by Jesus, and gave himself that anointed description, a description we can all ascribe to ourselves. It is a stunning light bulb moment when a believer realizes, “Wow! I too am a disciple whom Jesus loves!”

In Jesus' high priestly prayer in John 17, He tells the Father that He has "loved them [the disciples], even as You have loved Me" (23). The idea that the Father loves the Church as much as, and in the same way as He loves the Son is amazing. I can find no such statement about unbelievers. I think that God's love for all people is outrageously powerful and huge, but there seems to be a special component to the relationship between God and His people. Maybe that's because there IS an actual relationship. . .?!

One more thing. Acts 10:34 says that "God is no respecter of persons," but this does not mean he loves everyone equally. It means (and this is made clearer by checking the origin of the Greek word for "respecter") that God is not impressed by anyone's position, wealth, power or beauty. These things do not affect the way He judges with fairness and justice, the way a human judge can be "a respecter of persons."

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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## **"You Anti-Abortion Doctor Killers Are Hypocrites!"**

So since obviously you say the religion is against abortion and abortion is evil and wrong. . . What is god going to do about the guy that murdered a man in church since he was an abortion doctor?

So murdering a baby is wrong. . . . and getting your anti, "you don't have a choice" word across no matter what happens

is OK?

It's OK to bomb clinics and murder doctors and harass people. . . I must have missed that passage in the bible. That must be in the book of "I'm a Hypocrite" verse 12.

So let's say your beautiful wholesome daughter was raped by a psychotic crazed madman and he got her pregnant. You would welcome that half-crazed child into your life? Or going off of anti-abortion tactics, obviously you would just kill her and say it was in the book of Hypocrite, or wait. . . you would put the baby up for adoption and not tell the parents that this is a child of a rape.

You see the problem here don't you? But of course it's not a problem in your eyes until it hits home isn't it.

Oh I guess you anti-abortion activists will continue to bomb buildings, murder people and harass people in the name of god. Wow. . . you know what. . . that is rather hypocritical isn't it.

Murder is OK, it must say so in some part of the bible that I missed too. . . and bombing. . . does it say anywhere there "And the lord, place a bomb in the building to blow it up"? Man, I musta skipped over that section.

Dear friend,

I'm glad you wrote so we can provide a different perspective. Before responding to the points of your email, let me state unequivocally that *we condemn the use of all violence in the struggle to end the violence of abortion*. As a ministry, and all of us individually.

*So since obviously you say the religion is against abortion and abortion is evil and wrong. . . What is god going to do about the guy that murdered a man in church since he was an abortion doctor?*

My guess is that He will respond the same way as to any other murderer.

*So murdering a baby is wrong. . . . and getting your anti, "you don't have a choice" word across no matter what happens is OK?*

We would say no, it's not okay. God tells us to show respect and honor to everyone, even those we disagree with.

And we disagree with those who believe it is acceptable to use violence to stop abortion. "The end justifies the means" is not a biblical philosophy; it is actually the fruit of Darwinist thinking that says the fit will survive by whatever means they can get away with. Those justifying their unbiblical actions because they believe that abortion must be stopped regardless of the methods used are dishonoring God.

*It's OK to bomb clinics and murder doctors and harass people. . . I must have missed that passage in the bible. That must be in the book of "I'm a Hypocrite" verse 12.*

:::wince::: Your point is well taken. However, please consider the possibility that people who bomb clinics and murder abortionists and harass people are acting on their own choice instead of taking their orders from what God has said in His word. The Old Testament property laws show that God wants us to respect other people's property, and bombing clinics is a violation of that. Murdering doctors is a direct violation of the commandment "Thou shalt not murder." Harrassing people is a violation of God's command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

*So let's say your beautiful wholesome daughter was raped by a psychotic crazed madman and he got her pregnant. You would welcome that half-crazed child into your life? Or going off of anti-abortion tactics, obviously you would just kill her and say it was in the book of Hypocrite, or wait. . . you*

*would put the baby up for adoption and not tell the parents that this is a child of a rape.*

Let's go one step further. I'm a woman; during my childbearing years I lived with the possibility that it could have been me getting impregnated through a rape. I did think about what we would do. Because there's a big difference between pre-deciding a response to a hypothetical situation and actually living it, we had two choices: welcome the baby into our family as a continual reminder of what grace (undeserved blessing and favor) looks like, or giving the baby up for adoption. There is a growing number of infertile couples who would give anything to bring such a life into their home, regardless of how he came to be. The baby would be an innocent party who had nothing to do with his or her conception. (And even if the father were a "psychotic crazed madman," that doesn't make his offspring crazy.)

*You see the problem here don't you? But of course it's not a problem in your eyes until it hits home isn't it.*

It would be a *very big* problem. Our response is that we have an even bigger God.

*Oh I guess you anti-abortion activists will continue to bomb buildings, murder people and harass people in the name of god. Wow. . . you know what. . . that is rather hypocritical isn't it.*

Yes, it is hypocritical to do things in the name of God who forbids us to do those things. I'm curious, though, why you wrote to Probe Ministries, since none of us are anti-abortion "activists." Not a one of us has ever bombed a building or murdered doctors or harassed people. I'm also curious. . . are you able to consider the possibility that people who cross God's lines, no matter how well-intentioned they are, are a tiny minority of those who are passionate about this issue?

We think it's interesting that in today's culture, it's not

okay to blame all Muslims for the actions of extremist Muslim terrorists (and of course it's not). . . but it's acceptable to blame all Christians for the actions of a handful of extremists? Isn't that what you're doing here?

*Murder is OK, it must say so in some part of the bible that I missed too. . . and bombing. . . does it say anywhere there "And the lord, place a bomb in the building to blow it up"? Man, I musta skipped over that section.*

You're right. Murder and bombing other people's buildings are not instructed in the Bible. In fact, the Bible tells us to do the opposite of those things. The people choosing to resort to their own methods in hopes of achieving their goals are not basing their choices on biblical values or principles. They do what they do *in spite of* what the Bible says, not because of it.

Thanks for writing.

Sue Bohlin

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## **“How Do I Talk to My Friend About Her Son's Homosexuality?”**

My very dear Jewish friend and mother has a gay son. She insists that she knew from age 5 forward, that he was different and going to be homosexual. She loathes Christians who say that being homosexual is not genetic, but learned behavior, and is sinful. How can I best respond to her

**biblically, about homosexuality? Or to anyone I meet with this perspective?**

I'm so glad you asked! I see several issues in your email.

*She insists that she knew from age 5 forward, that he was different and going to be homosexual.*

If she was sensitive to her children, it is not surprising that she noted he was different from very early in his childhood. There's nothing wrong with being different. But it's sad that she "knew" he was going to be homosexual because it didn't have to turn out that way.

I believe there is a [spectrum of masculinity](#) in boys, and they are born at whatever place on that spectrum that is God's choice, and gift, to them. On one end is the rough-and-tumble physical, athletic, emotionally insensitive boy. Our culture would deem him "classically masculine." He loves to play ball or engage in various sports, to get dirty, and to play with other boys. On the other end of the spectrum from the athletic boy is the aesthetic boy: gifted in music, art, poetry, performing, enjoying reading and other quiet activities, and emotionally sensitive. Songwriter and musician Dennis Jernigan, himself a former homosexual, calls these boys the "Davids" of the church.

Unfortunately, our culture has too narrowly defined masculinity, labeling the sensitive, artistic boy different and gay. One man I know, provided with this perspective, exclaimed, "If someone had explained to me when I was 17 that I wasn't gay, I was gifted, that would have changed everything!"

When a boy's father, especially, gives him warm attention, affection and affirmation, supporting whatever kind of boy he is, he usually grows up accepting and comfortable with his particular kind of masculinity. When a boy knows that his

daddy believes in him and is his #1 cheerleader, he can connect with the world of males and continue to develop without incident. But when a boy doesn't receive the masculinity imprint from his father that makes him feel like he belongs in the world of boys and men, he can remain stuck at that place. (If he DOES have a great relationship with his dad but doesn't make the connection with other boys, the arrested development can happen a few years later.)

How do I know this? From being in ministry to hundreds of men whose stories are heartbreakingly similar. There are a few wild cards, such as sexual abuse, that can produce same-sex attractions even when a boy has a great relationship with his dad and his peers, but most of the time it's a very similar story.

[Incidentally, I see a similar spectrum of femininity for girls, ranging from the foo-foo girly-girl on one end, to the tomboy jockette, allergic to dresses, on the other. Our culture also too narrowly defines femininity, just as it does masculinity.]

*She loathes Christians who say that being homosexual is not genetic, but learned behavior, and is sinful.*

Well, being homosexual is NOT genetic. There is not only no evidence for a genetic cause for same-sex attractions, there is strong evidence for certain pre-conditions that characterize the histories of those who eventually take on a gay identity: the sensitive temperament, a lack of warm, affirming connection with dad, a lack of affirming connection with other boys, and a resulting lack of self-confidence in being male.

And yet it can feel like people were born that way.

Maybe this analogy will help. My friend grew up in the south where everyone in his family was prejudiced. It was just the



culture of his family and pretty much all the people his family ran with. As long as he can remember, he always hated and feared black people. Everyone he knew hated and feared black people. He didn't know there was any other way. But he wasn't born prejudiced. He was shaped that way because of countless interactions and modeling. He told me, "You grow up being taught and thinking that black people are bad and evil and you believe that until the Lord reveals something else. Then you change and you were not what you once were—what felt 'normal' to you."

No one chooses the feelings of a lack of confidence in one's masculinity, of not belonging to the world of boys and men. Then, once the sex hormones start flooding his body in adolescence, no one chooses the resulting sexual/romantic attraction to a guy who possesses what a boy wishes he had or were. The feelings are not learned, but the resulting choices and behaviors are. The Bible, including the Old Testament passages, does not condemn the feelings, only the chosen behavior. (And sexual sin is always a choice.) So I would make a distinction between the feelings and the actions.

So homosexual feelings are not chosen, but acting on them is, and it's sinful. It's not a sin to be tempted (what same-sex feelings constitute), but it is a sin to step over the line and give in. You might mention to your friend something like the fact that it's not a sin to be tempted to shoplift, but it is a sin to give in and steal. I would imagine she could get that.

*How can I best respond to her biblically, about homosexuality? Or to anyone I meet with this perspective?*

The first issue is to determine if they're even open to hearing another viewpoint. It's not a good idea to try and "correct" someone's values and beliefs when they are content in them, but Jesus told us to be salt and light. So we need to

be careful with our words and offer another viewpoint with respect and gentleness, as Peter tells us (1 Pet. 3:7). You might say something like, "You know, there are lots of former homosexuals who see things very differently than what we usually hear in the media."

I would suggest simply stating what God has said in His word: that His plan for sexuality is within the bounds of marriage between one man and one woman. Anything outside of His intention is not only sinful, it's harmful, and that's why he tells us to avoid it. God's rules for sexuality are rooted in His love for us, and He knows that when we insist on doing things our own way, trying to meet legitimate needs in ungodly and illegitimate ways, we will suffer from negative consequences. We can point out that the biology of sex shows that God designed it for male-female coupling. (This argument holds true for an evolutionary perspective as well.) And when people who have been immersed in a culture of anything-goes sexuality insist that homosexuality is a viable option, gently ask what would happen if a group of gay-identifying people populated an uninhabited island. What would happen over time?

All you can do is respectfully offer God's truth as revealed in His word, and trust God with the results. We live in a culture that has been shaped by a definite agenda designed to normalize and legitimize homosexuality, and suggesting people think differently than the culture demands can be like asking a fish what it's like to be wet. A fish doesn't know the meaning of "wet" because it doesn't understand the concept of "dry." And people don't realize there's a legitimate, though politically incorrect alternative view.

And it's probably worthwhile to mention that someone whose child is gay can easily react very defensively to the offensive idea that homosexuality is preventable and changeable, because that would indicate they played a role in it. And that just hurts too much to consider. Parents usually beat ourselves up with guilt anyway; this issue can push the

guilt factor to an unbearable weight. So I think it's wise to be aware of that dynamic.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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