

“Should the Church Give Showers to Unwed Mothers?”

Our church is wonderful and loving. Christ centered with a Godly pastor. Within the past two years we have had several baby showers for unwed mothers. All of their parents are actively involved in our church but not all of the girls. Are we right in honoring these unwed mothers with baby showers within the church setting? I want to help them but what message is this sending to the young people in our church?

I fully understand your conundrum. This question became intensely personal in our family when a beloved niece became an unwed mother. Her Christ-following mother, distraught over her daughter's sexual sin and ashamed by what she perceived to be the implications of her own mothering, had a very memorable conversation with God soon after her daughter confessed she was pregnant.

“What am I supposed to do with this, Lord?” she complained. “I suppose you want me to give her a *shower*??!!!!?”

Then, in her spirit, she heard words of unexpected compassion: *“Every child should be welcomed and valued.”*

Whoa. Suddenly, she realized that the Lord's heart was to celebrate the baby, the circumstances of whose conception were not her fault. She and some dear friends from church held a baby shower, and this young unwed mother experienced her first up-close-and-personal taste of God's grace. Jesus' church provided everything the baby needed, despite how the baby came to be in the first place.

The welcomed, celebrated, and well-loved baby has grown into a little girl who has never once wondered if she is loved. She swims in an ocean of family love. And her grandmother pours truth into her through song and story about Jesus' love for

her.

This young woman became a great mother, married a wonderful young man, has had two more children, and guess what? In part because of her experience of church as a source of grace and compassion, the family is starting to attend one nearby.

I'm so glad you asked, so I can tell you this great story with such a happy ending.

Warmly,
Sue Bohlin

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“My Daughter’s School Wants Us to Welcome a Transgendered Student”

I received a letter from my daughter’s public elementary school that they are welcoming a new family with a “transgendered third grade girl.” This letter is urging us to welcome and accept “her” and treat her the same as any other girl. She will be in third grade and my daughter is in second grade. The letter also informs us that our school district does not tolerate discrimination in respect to gender identity and or expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability or religion.

There is a meeting at the school next week for parents to come and ask questions, etc. about transgender children. The parents of this student, staff, district personnel and the

principal will be at this meeting.

I am really in need of some advice on how to handle this. We are a strong Christian family who believe that God did not make a mistake when He created this child. I am having a very hard time saying I will go along with the school district and tell my daughter to accept him as a girl. I want to be a loving, yet clear witness for Christ at this meeting.

Oh my word! I am so sorry you have to deal with this very difficult situation. I have thought about your question a lot and sought the wisdom of some of my friends who are immersed in ministry to those with gender issues.

I think you have a challenge here to balance the Lord's command to be loving and compassionate to this family in crisis, and the need to disciple your own daughter in truth and love and wisdom.

One thing that really strikes me is the presence of overt spiritual warfare. This confused child and the parents most probably have no idea that they have been attacked and conquered by the lies of the enemy who comes to "steal, kill and destroy" (John 10:10). I don't know about you, but it breaks my heart to think about a child who so despises gender to the point of wanting to change it, and parents that think they are helping by going along with it.

When it comes to the parent meeting, I respectfully suggest that you seek to be overwhelmingly kind in your words and your tone. You might communicate that you are concerned about the ridicule that this child will receive from the other students, regardless of their hope to head it off. Children are still in the concrete stage of operations at this age, and they may not accept that this student is a girl. It's quite possible that this child will be ostracized and marginalized, called names, and whispered about in ways sure to cause pain. It would be appropriate to ask how the school is planning on handling

that. It would also be a good idea for you to be empathetic to the difficult situation that these parents are in. You could say that your prayers are with them during this transition to the new school.

You can't control what a school does, but you have total control over how you talk to your own children about it. Since you are committed to biblical standards of truth and love, that means framing this unfortunate challenge to your daughter in a way that tells her the truth and honors this new student. Something along the lines of, "Sweetheart, there is a new third grade student using a girl's name who looks like girl and acts like a girl, but God made him a boy. He isn't bad, he's confused. We don't know why, but he doesn't understand that being a boy is a good thing, and God makes lots of different kinds of boys. This is very sad, and we need to pray for him and be kind to him."

This means that your daughter may have an opportunity to show kindness and compassion to a hurting child—not by joining into this game of "pretend," but by simply reaching out to connect with a smile, an invitation to sit together at the lunch table (if second graders even mingle with third graders?!). . . basically, showing the love of Jesus to this hurting child. Part of that might include encouraging her not to discuss what mommy and daddy say about this child or their family to other children at school.

This is definitely a sticky situation. It's easy to be broadsided by the fact that in your wildest dreams you never thought this would happen at your daughter's school, and therefore rise up in defense for truth and justice regarding these poor children's hearts and souls. That being said, let me encourage you to see yourself as the ambassador of Christ in this circumstance. Try not to get caught in a debate with non-believers. Speak as Jesus would speak, sharing truth in a way that leaves no room for debate or verbal retaliation.

It is very sad that our children are growing up in a generation where they are exposed to things that are difficult for grown adults to understand themselves. I will be praying for you, your family, the family of this child, and your school at large.

As I am writing to you, I am continually reminded that it is God's kindness that leads us to repentance. Therefore I urge you to trust the fight for truth to the Lord. In the meantime, pray for the lost souls that are at your daughter's school, and look for opportunities to communicate the gospel to those who have not trusted Christ, starting with compassion.

I hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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See Also *Probe Answers Our Email*:

["What is a Biblical View of Transgendered People and Hermaphrodites?"](#)

["How Does the Bible Support Your View That God Intends for Males to Grow into Masculinity and Females to Grow into Femininity?"](#)

See Also Staff Blog Posts:

[The 3rd Grade Transgender Bus Driver](#)

[DWTS and the T in GLBT](#)

“What About Abortion in the Case of Rape or Incest?”

Dear Sue,

I just read your article on [abortion](#) as a source to prepare a message on abortion. Thank you for a well written, well documented work. Many of the sermon reviews I have done so far lack documentation for the claims being made in the sermon. I am curious to know more regarding your point when you touched on the issue of abortion because of rape or incest. What you would say to women in those situations, and do you leave a little more room for personal decision there?

Thank you for your kind words about my article.

Since I am a woman, I've definitely thought about the possibility of pregnancy resulting from rape: what would I do if it happened to me? As traumatic and life-altering as rape is, I would still need to pass it through my Christian worldview filter, and I come to these conclusions (which also apply to incest):

1. God is still in control, even when He allows unspeakable evil into our lives.
2. Because He is good, that means He has a purpose and a plan to redeem even unspeakable evil, which means we can trust Him.
3. Pregnancy resulting from rape or incest brings an innocent child into existence, who has a right to life because God has made him or her in His image. He loves them and He has a plan for their lives, or they would never have been conceived.
4. Aborting a baby conceived by rape or incest doesn't make the pain go away, and it doesn't make the problem go away.
5. It makes it worse because the lingering guilt of abortion

is horrific. A woman will often start to think of her life as divided into BA/AA (before the abortion/after the abortion).

6. In addition to the trauma of being raped or incested, a woman is then further burdened with post-abortion syndrome. (See my article "[The Dark Underside of Abortion](#).")

I understand that from a human standpoint, giving "more room for personal decision" to abort in the case of rape or incest makes sense. But from an eternal, biblical perspective, it still violates God's command not to murder, and it still incurs the consequences of one's own sinful choice. When a woman is victimized by rape or incest, she is not responsible for what was done to her, but she is responsible for her response to being sinned against. Sinning against her unborn baby and against herself is not justified, even though we certainly understand why she would do it. The need for compassion is excruciating. Which is why, if I were were talking to someone pregnant as the result of rape or incest, I would gently and lovingly give her the bigger picture of what is at stake.

Thank you so much for asking for clarification on my position on this important question. I am grateful for the chance to explain what I have hammered out concerning this very difficult issue.

Sue

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"How Do I Get My Parents and

Pastor to Understand Not All SDAs Are Alike?"

I read Kris Samons' answer to e-mail about Seventh Day Adventists and I just want to say thank you. I'm a devout Baptist and my long time boyfriend is an SDA. It has bothered me for a very long time. I asked my pastor and he said the Adventists he knows don't believe people who go to church on Sunday are Christians because God commanded us to keep holy the Sabbath. It's been hard trying to find a middle ground and making things appear as simple as it really is. The fact is we both love God and firmly believe that through Jesus we are saved. It is just very hard for people like my parents who are 45 and up to understand that SDA people and congregations vary. You did research and you concluded that people need to take every SDA on a case by case basis. This was wonderful news to read. I just hope my pastor will accept my boyfriend for the Christian that he is: a Christian that just happens to worship on Sunday. It's like John 3:16 has less value nowadays. Before belief was all that was needed to be a real Christian. But now I feel like we have to leap through hoops and do X amount of things to really prove it. What do you think? Are my boyfriend and I "unequally yoked" like Paul writes in Corinthians? How should I go about getting my parents and pastor to understand what you researched?

You are not alone in being frustrated that people attach works (AKA "hoops") to salvation, trying to make it harder to enter the kingdom than Jesus does. That is part of the essence of legalism. Spiritual fruit—Christlike character—isn't enough of an evidence of true spiritual life for those holding their cherished hoops, and how sad is that?

If I were you, I would ask my boyfriend to tell my pastor and my parents about his relationship with Jesus and about his understanding of how one becomes a Christ-follower. There is

nothing in the Bible about “Follow Me and go to church on Saturday,” and if he gets that, I would hope he would be able to communicate it to the “gatekeepers” in your life. Since you are a college student, my guess is that your boyfriend is too, which means he’s still very much under the influence of his family and his church. It’s possible he isn’t as strong in his personal convictions as he will be, Lord willing, several years from now when he’s out of school and living an independent adult life. I think that is an element of your situation that can be brought to the table—that he is still in the process of forming his spirituality. Is he absolutely committed to SDA theology and to staying in the SDA church? Or is it just a matter of comfort and habit for him? Can he ever see himself worshiping with you on Sunday? If he can’t, then you would have to be the one to do all the adjusting and the concession-making. That would be a deal-breaker for me, totally apart from the unequally yoked issue. (No, I don’t think you are unequally yoked spiritually, but you could be mismatched if the issue of where and when and how to worship becomes non-negotiable for both of you. Which could be considered a type of unequal yoke.)

Concerning how you get your pastor and parents to see what Kris wrote about: you can print off his article and give it to them, asking them to consider another perspective. But the bottom line is, no one can make anyone else see things they don’t want to see. You can offer evidence of another perspective, but if someone doesn’t want to see it, they won’t. I’m sorry life is like that, but it just is. <wince>

I hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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“It’s Not Fair for God to Judge People For Sins They Didn’t Know Were Wrong”

How is it fair for God to judge an unsaved person’s sin on Judgment Day if that person did not know “specifically” that their action was a sin? If an unbeliever is taught sex outside marriage is morally OK and no one ever shows him in the Bible that it is against God’s laws, how can he be judged guilty? Don’t you have to be taught the law in order to be punished for it?

Thanks for your letter. This is a very good question. Briefly, here are some important points to bear in mind.

First, carefully read Romans 1:18-32 and 2:1-16.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and

tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.

For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for it is not the hearers of the Law {who} are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

These passages strongly suggest that all men (with the exception of [infants](#) and the severely mentally retarded) have an inherent knowledge of God (through the things that He has made) and of basic morality (for God has “written” the law on their hearts in some sense). This knowledge of basic morality, though not perfect because of the darkening of our intellects due to sin, comes through our conscience. Thus, in this sense,

all men have some knowledge of God and of their morally guilty status before Him—all men are therefore without excuse.

Second, God has graciously provided the Holy Spirit to convict unbelievers of their sin and (hence) their need for a Savior. Please see John 16:7-11 in this regard:

“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

“And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;

concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;

and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;

and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

Thus, not only has God made His existence and basic morality clear to man through creation and conscience, but His Holy Spirit also convicts the world of their sin and need for salvation in Christ.

Finally, we must remember that God is perfectly holy, just, and fair (Deuteronomy 32:4, etc.). For this reason, we can be absolutely confident that on Judgment Day no one will be able to look God in the face and honestly complain of being treated unfairly or unjustly. God will be perfectly just and completely fair in His judgment of each individual. We can therefore safely rule out any sort of unfair or unjust judgment of any particular individual. Everyone will be treated fairly; no one will be treated unfairly. God is all-knowing and completely good. We can trust that He knows perfectly well just what an individual did—or did not—know about His moral standards. And we can trust that He will judge that individual fairly and with perfect justice.

I hope this helps.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“I Need a Response to ‘The God Delusion’”

My atheist friend is a tough atheist to talk to, because he’s read so much philosophy and anti-God literature. He’s really into *The God Delusion*. I wondered if you are familiar with it, and if you know a good response to its assertions.

We don’t have an article on our website, but I can recommend several online responses to Richard Dawkins’ book:

Is God a Delusion?

www.gotquestions.org/God-delusion.html

William Lane Craig’s Q&A: “What do you think of Richard Dawkins’ argument for atheism in *The God Delusion*?”

www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5493

Flew Speaks Out: Professor Antony Flew reviews *The God Delusion*

www.bethinking.org/science-christianity/flew-speaks-out-professor-antony-flew-reviews-the-god-delusion.htm

Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf? Richard Dawkins’ Failed Rebuttal of Natural Theology

www.arn.org/docs/williams/pw_goddelusionreview2.htm

(this one is long but thorough for a web-length article)

To treat someone like your friend with respect, this means

familiarizing yourself with the responses to Dawkins' arguments so you can speak to him personally about specific issues in the book rather than handing him an article or a book. (I put myself in your friend's shoes: if a committed atheist wanted to disabuse me of my silly belief in God and the Bible and handed me *The God Delusion*, telling me to read it, I wouldn't do it. I have enough to do without reading something I'm not motivated to do. And in fact I have books on my shelf still unread because that method doesn't work! But if this person met me for coffee and talked to me about specific issues, that would make a difference. I'd make sure to do my homework to be able to "give an answer for the hope that is within" me [1 Peter 3:]).

Hope you find this helpful. The Lord bless you and keep you today!

Sue Bohlin

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"I Believe Every Bad Thing I Hear"

I am the person who unfortunately believes the bad things anyone tells them. I am also the person who will take one minute detail and suddenly base that as evidence of something that I am.

This all started about 4 years ago during worship. The pastor was singing, "Who the Son sets free is free indeed," instead I heard, "Who the devil sets free is free indeed." I ignored it, but then I started thinking, "You are hearing that because you

were never a child of God." And I believed it. I believed that I was predestined for hell and that it must have been because I committed the sin of blasphemy. This took a lot of willpower to not let it take over my life. It came to the point of me only believing that I was only sincere in my life when it came to evil things, that that was who I really was and not a child of God. I am still unsure till this day which is true, and which is a lie.

Unfortunately I walked away from God, and now that I am trying to come back I feel like I can't. In school, I hang around with a lot of homosexual friends. I never thought anything of it until a friend of mine asked all of us who are straight, "Which of us do you think is gay?" and being the way I am, I immediately thought, "Am I?" And I am now battling over my sexuality. I know that it's wrong, and I never had any desire for a woman before, but after that conversation with those friends, I find myself attempting to think and act like a lesbian. It's horrible, but I don't know how to stop it.

Aside from the homosexuality feeling, I feel as though I am a phony, that my walk with God is fake. Everyone always says that "faith isn't mental, it's in your heart and what your spirit knows." But I feel like my heart is totally hard towards God and that no matter how many times I will say, "Lord make me believe, or Lord please deliver me of all of this garbage," that he will never listen because my heart is truly not in it. I don't know if it's a matter of faith or a matter of my emotions, but I don't know how to separate the two and just believe and believe that God can deliver me and forgive me for all of the sins that I've done. I try to pray and read the bible, but I go to sleep feeling worse off than I did before. I don't know how to fix it. I am in a depression that I'm honestly not sure I can get out of.

I don't know where to turn. I am trying to turn to God, but the whole issue of sincerity and insincerity is getting to me and it's prohibiting me from allowing God to really save me. I

don't want to be evil or unsaved or predestined for hell. But I don't know how to take myself out of the equation and focus on God and him healing me.

Why can't he just ignore all of my sins and my unbelief and my insincere feelings and just show me he is God and change me?!?!?

I am so glad you wrote to us! I am so sorry for this place you find yourself. It has to be really hard to be you, at least right now. But I do have an observation and a couple of suggestions I think may help.

The Bible says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). The beliefs you have about yourself and "the way you are," constitute a filter through which you interpret everything you see and hear. From what you describe, your "flesh filter" (flesh is the human part of us that operates apart from the Spirit of God; it's broken and unredeemable, which is why it needs to be crucified with Christ) is exceptionally susceptible to suggestion. You easily believe things whether they are true or not simply because the thought is in your head. It doesn't matter if it came from your own heart or from the outside as a spiritual attack, your filter tags all thoughts as valid and true. (Which is also a problem in college, where you hear things that are not true all the time but you don't know they're not true!)

Where does that come from?

From not being grounded in truth. You don't know what is true, so you can't identify what is a lie. Lots of people try to make faith a warm fuzzy emotion of the heart, but that's not the kind of biblical faith Jesus called us to. Faith is radical trust based on evidence that God is trustworthy. That's one reason Jesus calls us to love God with our minds: we need to actively engage with the evidence for His existence and evidence of His love for us. And that's why your prayers,

as well-intentioned as they are, aren't being answered. God doesn't want you to passively sit back and let Him do all the work, because He will not do for us what He calls us to do for ourselves. Asking Him to make you believe is like showing up on the _____ campus and expecting the school to educate you while you stay in your room without going to class or studying. Does that make sense?

Making
Your Faith
Your Own



TERESA TURNER
VINING

I want to recommend an excellent resource to you that will help build your faith by wrestling with the truth that will allow your faith to rest on the fact that it's TRUE and not some warm fuzzy feeling. Teresa Vining wrote *Making Your Faith Your Own* after having some similar struggles to yours while she was in college. www.ccel.us/makingyrfaitth.toc.html and www.amazon.com/Making-Your-Faith-Own-Guidebook/dp/0830823263/

Concerning your struggle with your sexual identity: it's important that you speak the truth to yourself. God made you a female, designed to connect meaningfully with both women and men in different ways. The erotic/romantic connection is intended to be strictly between men and women. You are not a lesbian, you are being tempted with same-sex feelings that are coming from outside you (spiritual warfare). They may be strong, but they are not true. Truth is reality as God sees it, and He made you a heterosexual woman. This is the same line of thinking (helping people see and commit to what is true rather than their feelings) that we teach in the [ministry](#) I serve with that helps same-sex-attracted people deal with unwanted homosexuality.

I hope you find this helpful. I send this with a prayer that you will know that God loves you, He is for you, and there is hope for getting out of this dark place as you walk into His light.

Warmly,
Sue Bohlin

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“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

* * *

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) 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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