

“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]

A Jealous God [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. 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

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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“How Do I Know the Bible is True?”

How do I know that the Bible was true, since I base my faith on it? Why weren't some books canonized?

Great question! We have several articles that will help you with answers.

Are the Biblical Documents Reliable?

www.probe.org/are-the-biblical-documents-reliable/

Authority of the Bible:

probe.org/authority-of-the-bible-a-strong-argument-for-christianity/

The Inspiration of the Bible:

www.probe.org/the-inspiration-of-the-bible/

The New Testament: Can I Trust It?

www.probe.org/the-new-testament-can-i-trust-it/

The Christian Canon:

www.probe.org/the-christian-canon/

You will be especially interested in this answer to email:
“How Did the Church Recognize Which Books Were Inspired By God?”

www.probe.org/how-did-the-church-recognize-which-books-were-inspired-by-god/

So glad you wrote!

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries Webmistress

Youth Transition Network Presentation

April 28, 2009

Beloved brothers,

Here are the links to the files from the Powerpoint Ray shared Monday night. I zipped up the PPT along with the four videos in one large file. If that proves to be tricky for your internet connection, I also uploaded each file individually.

Just make sure they are all in the same folder in order for the videos to work.

Blessings,

Sue

YTN Presentation — Zipped:
<http://www.box.net/shared/42jzyykui1>

YTN Powerpoint: <http://www.box.net/shared/leecgt5jlp>

Laurie Short.wmv: <http://www.box.net/shared/0epmam79i0>

Dual Life.wmv: <http://www.box.net/shared/kl4a6v354s>

Parents WM.wmv: <http://www.box.net/shared/v5rdxm90mv>

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“Why Is God Allowing Me to Suffer?”

I don't know what to think anymore. I am a Christian (or thought I was a child of God) and go to church weekly, tithe weekly and try to live my life according to God's Word.

I was downsized by my company last June, I have gone thru my severance and my retirement money, I am losing my home and my life. I am just weeks away from being a homeless person because I will have to walk away from my home and possessions. I have applied to over 140 jobs with nothing panning out. I have a college degree and a medical certificate and was at my company for over 12 years—I am not a slouch by any means.

I just don't know how to think about God anymore. I have talked to Him daily, confessed all known sin, studied until I am cross-eyed, I have asked daily for His help, what He wants me to learn from this, what He would like me to do for Him while I am waiting, etc. I am at a loss here and it appears He is going to allow me to be taken down and die this way. I have never been so discouraged in my life and have even considered taking it because it would end all the pain and misery. I only haven't because I am too scared of Him to do so. So where is the loving God I have been worshipping all these years? I really don't think I was saved after all because I don't think He would do this to a child of His. I have seen other Christians in my community go thru job loss and He has helped them through it all and they are back to their lives, but not me. What is wrong with me that He won't help me?

Discouraged and alone,

I am so very, very sorry for what you have been experiencing in this huge trial. It sounds like you are so discouraged and hopeless that you are questioning if you are actually saved at all because God seems to be treating you differently than what you've seen with other Christians. You sound frustrated and panicky because God appears to be allowing everything to go down the drain. And who can blame you for feeling this way? I am so sorry.

It's especially hard in our culture where we tend to equate God's goodness and love with Him keeping us comfortable. So when we lose the things that have made our lives comfortable and livable, we question if God is still loving and good. And then we're open to the enemy's suggestion that God is neither loving nor good, and that He owes it to His children to keep us comfortable. Then, when we focus on a resulting sense of entitlement, it's easy to let a spirit of anger and bitterness grow inside.

You are not alone. Job had the exact same feelings and the exact same questions. And that is why I am so grateful for that book, because it provides a perspective we couldn't possibly know through our reason or our experience. When you've done everything right, when you've sought to examine yourself to see if there is any unconfessed sin, when you've prayed and submitted to God and still things don't change, there may well be a drama unfolding in the spiritual dimension that you can't possibly see right now. Satan was the source of attacks on Job, but God allowed it for His glory and for Job's ultimate benefit.

I don't know what God is doing in you, _____. But I do know that He is good, and that He loves you, and that He has a plan for these horribly difficult times in your life. Even if it entails losses you could never imagine. A hundred years from today, when you are with Him in heaven, it will make sense. This is not the end, even if it can feel like it.

I think more and more Christians will find themselves in similar situations, where we become dependent on other members of the Body of Christ to survive difficult financial seasons in our lives. I believe this is why the Word says that it is important to stay connected to the Body in community, because community helps us with both discouragement and the isolation of aloneness. The Body of Christ is His “aloneness-fighter” for each other. And I pray you will be able to find resources for support in your church, or a church in your area that follows the Bible’s pattern for taking care of each other.

I wish I had a solution for you, _____. All I know is that God is still God, and love is still driving all His dealings with you. I know that He wants to bless you and glorify Himself, even if His definition of blessing is not what you would choose right now. I send this with a prayer that you will experience His provision and His love in new and deeper ways, regardless of how He provides for you, and regardless of how He shows His love for you.

With sincere concern,

Sue Bohlin

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