

“It’s Unfair for God to Put Children in Muslim Families”

If salvation is free for anyone who receives Jesus Christ as his personal saviour, then how about a child who is born into a Muslim family. He or she will not have a chance to receive salvation because of the traditional faith from their parents. So it is not fair for God to put this child in the Muslim family.

The timing of your question is one of those “God things” that make me smile. I was ready to reply with what I know to be true, that God is bigger than and not limited by the circumstances of someone’s birth, when I had the pleasure of sitting down to talk with a man who grew up in Iran, the son of devout Muslim parents, but who became a Christian. Let me tell you his story.

Ibrahim (not his real name) was very depressed, assaulted by what he calls “evil thoughts” pushing suicide as his solution. One night he lay in his bed, looking at the ceiling and said to God, “What have I done to You? I’ve lost my wife, my children, my business, my fortune. I’ve lost everything. What did I ever do to You to deserve this mistreatment?”

Immediately, he heard God’s voice inside his head: “Don’t you see? I rescued you from that woman. She was trying to take your life.” (And indeed, he found out later that this same woman, before taking him to the cleaners, had poisoned her first husband.)

Ibrahim knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he had heard from God, and he sat bolt upright in bed, swinging his legs onto the floor. At that moment, a single drop of sweat trickled from the back of his neck down his spine, and as it traveled down his back he felt all the energy and power drain out of

him. He was a limp dish rag, unable to stand, much less walk or do anything else. He was suddenly aware that he was physically as powerless and needy as he was spiritually.

He prayed, "I need help! Send me angels!"

Within days, as an answer to his prayer, he met a Christian woman who befriended him and shared her faith with him. She basically tutored him in Christianity, explaining that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for Ibrahim's sins and was raised from the dead three days later.

One night, he had a dream. He was standing in a room with several other people when Jesus walked in and stood about 12 feet away from him, radiating strength and love and acceptance. Ibrahim was so excited! He said, "Jesus! What are You doing here?" and Jesus said, "I came to talk to you." All Ibrahim could think about—in his dream—was that he wanted Jesus to hug him. So he asked Jesus if he could hold Him and hug Him, but Jesus disappeared. . . and Ibrahim woke up.

The moment he awakened, he knew he was washed. He opened his heart to Jesus and became a Christian. He told all his friends of his experience, and they laughed derisively at him. But the reality that he had met Jesus and had become a new man—"a new, *joyful* man," he told me—was so much stronger than his friends' ridicule that it truly didn't matter to him.

Ibrahim delighted to tell me the differences between Christianity and Islam, how Islam is a "religion of the sword," full of force and fear, but Christianity is a religion of relationship, of receiving and returning God's love and delight. He loves the freedom that we have as Christians, freedom to make choices that are absent in Islam. He loves how Jesus has changed his heart, enabling him to forgive the people who hurt him deeply and love the people God brings across his path.

This is an illustration of how and why a child who grows up in

a Muslim home is not hopeless. God tells us in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that He has planted eternity in our hearts, and in Romans 1:19-20 He tells us that men are without excuse because He has given us clear evidence of Himself, both within ourselves (per Ecclesiastes) and in His creation.

So people are aware that there is a God to whom we are all accountable, and that God reveals Himself to people directly, through His children, and through His word.

In the Muslim world, we're hearing more and more stories of people coming to faith in Jesus through dreams and visions. Praise God!

Sue Bohlin

© 2008 Probe Ministries

“How Do I Fill the Void of Loneliness to Fight Sexual Temptation?”

When I saw the question: [“My Wife is Seriously Ill: Does That Mean No More Sex Forever?”](#) and the answer, it touched me deeply and filled me with great resolve to be celibate as God commands. When I read “when God has made it off limits for some people,” I knew that was speaking to me and it was a great blessing but it brought up a very important question.

I've lived a life of service and have come to accept that it is not in God's plan for me to be married. But I've only recently come to understand that it was my deep loneliness that was instrumental in bringing me to sins of a sexual

nature. Sins of masturbation, homosexuality and cross-dressing.

My question is: How can those of us who have sinned by doing things of a sexual nature fill the void of loneliness so we may better break free from the acts of homosexuality, masturbation, and other sexual sins?

You know, men like you are my heroes for your willingness to face the dark corners of your soul and invite God to be the God of Light in those dark corners so that you can bring glory to Him in every place of your being!!

What I have learned from years of ministry to those dealing with unwanted homosexuality is that the aching void of loneliness is addressed by developing emotionally healthy relationships with other people (especially godly, non-erotic same-sex relationships) in the Body of Christ. God's plan is for us to experience connection with other believers, such as David and Jonathan, who experienced a deep, real, God-glorifying same-sex friendship (and of whom we are told, their hearts were "knitted together"—by God, presumably). If there is a men's ministry in your church, or if you can find a place to make connection with other men especially, and with other believers in your church, that will help with the loneliness issue.

At the same time, it's important to have a plan for something ELSE to do when your flesh is raging (and you will experience greater temptation during times of stress). The key is to pre-decide on an activity that is incompatible with masturbation, cruising and cross-dressing—something like going for a run. It makes a huge difference to have a plan PLUS an accountability partner that you can call when you're struggling with temptation. I pray you will find one.

Are you familiar with Joe Dallas' excellent book *Desires in Conflict*? He can help you understand the dynamics of the

homosexual struggle and how God brings healing.

Also, there is a free online support group at Living Hope Ministries You can find connection with other men who are learning to be overcomers in the same struggle. Most are not cross-dressers, but all struggle with homosexual attractions. It's a safe place to be real and find strong support.
<http://forums.livehope.org>

The Lord bless you and keep you today!

Sue Bohlin

© 2008 Probe Ministries

“Did I Commit the Unpardonable Sin?”

I have read your answers to others who fear they have committed the unpardonable sin, but they do not seem to satisfy my fears for the same. I was raised in Christian home and had Bible teaching all of my life. In my junior year of high school, I had a conversation with a boy about the virgin birth of Christ.

For some foolish reason, I had never “caught on” to what it really meant that the baby Jesus was put into Mary’s body by the Holy Spirit. My words to him were, “Mary and Joseph had to do something.” To which he replied, “But, I thought that was the whole idea, that they didn’t *do* “anything?” (referring to fornication)

Is this denial of the work of the Holy Spirit? Is this the unpardonable sin? I stated to him that Jesus was the Son of

God, but I just didn't understand how it could have come to pass without "something"(fornication) taking place. I know you have probably never heard of someone being so ignorant of the scriptures, but it had never been explained to me fully.

I am 40 years old, and I still struggle with this. I have discussed it with my husband ONLY, and he assures me it is not blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. I fear to not know and I fear to know, but I need someone's honest opinion who has no attachment to me. Please be frank, it is hindering my life and possibly the reflection of the church to the world. If I cannot be saved, then God does not need me around hurting the reputation of the saved. If I am, I need to get past this so I can bring Him glory. I would appreciate your honesty.

I promise, you did not blaspheme the Holy Spirit, which involves a hardness of heart and a wicked unbelief which you did not and do not have, *or you wouldn't be asking*. When you were in high school, during that momentous conversation, you were just asking the same question Mary had when Gabriel came to her: "How can this be?"

Do you have children? Let's assume you do. Don't you make all kinds of allowances for them because they're kids and not adults? Especially when they were very young?

Why would your heavenly Father be any different? He completely understood then, as now, that it just took you awhile to catch on to the breathtakingly miraculous. He doesn't hold it against you that you were young and still working through this "God stuff"!! <smile> He fully understands and LAVISHES grace on you.

I send this with a prayer that God lets you hear His loving and tender voice in your spirit saying, "She's right, beloved _____. . . just relax in My love, and let go of this doubt once and for all."

I truly hope you find this helpful.

Hurricane Ike and God's Commands

Hurricane Ike barreled down on Texas a few days ago, leaving millions of our neighbors without power or safe water, causing huge amounts of wind and water damage, and forcing countless numbers from their homes, some permanently.

Government officials ordered Galveston residents, along with other coastal cities and towns, to evacuate. The National Weather Service tried to express the seriousness of their warning, promising “certain death” to those who stayed. People who lived in one- or two-story homes were told to pin their names and social security numbers to their chests to make identifying their corpses easier. Thousands decided to ride it out, wondering just how bad it could really be.

They found out.

Hurricane Ike left many parts of Galveston a broken, crumpled mess. The aftermath is much worse than residents imagined: no water, no power, no food, no phones. The smell is awful as sewage backs up into waterlogged streets. With no running water, people can't shower, much less flush toilets or even wash their hands after using one. A fetid smell rises from the sludge that's everywhere, a disgusting concoction of mud, sewage, asbestos, lead and gasoline. Not only are officials concerned about the health problems from the stuff, but gigantic bugs are emerging from it. Adding insult to injury is

the growing number of mosquitoes.

One woman said, "Next time they should warn people about this, not the storm itself."

There are many reasons officials did everything they could to persuade people to evacuate. And this was one of them: the aftermath of a devastating storm is at least as bad as the battering winds and rain of the storm itself. The desire to spare residents from having to live in the post-hurricane nightmare was part of why officials urged residents to obey the evacuation order.

Surely this must grieve God's heart with pangs of familiarity. He sees every day—every moment!—the awful aftermath of our disobedience. Behind the gift of His commands is His desire to spare us from the pain and heartbreak that comes from disobedient independence. Behind the gift of His commands is a brilliant mind that knows every possible scenario about what would happen if we obeyed and if we disobeyed. He doesn't tell us on the front end what our disobedience will cost us; He doesn't owe it to us.

Government officials can't see the future. They could only assume the worst, given the computer models and even a rudimentary knowledge of the power of hurricanes. But God can.

May the awful post-hurricane stories remind us that God's rules and intentions are given to bless us, not because He's some sort of cosmic killjoy.

There are two truths He seems intent on wanting us to learn by heart: He is good, and He loves us. And that's why we can trust Him when He tells us what to do and what to avoid.

“Is It Biblical for a Woman to Lead a Nation?”

In view of John McCain’s pick for Vice President [Sarah Palin, Governor of Alaska]: Is it biblically sound for a women to be in charge of a nation? I feel very sound on the fact that the husband should lead the family and in a church structure a man should be in charge of the church. Can a woman lead on the national scale?

We are in total agreement with you that God’s plan is for men to lead in both the church and the family. But the Bible does not prohibit women from exercising leadership in civil governments. Note that the references to the Queen of Sheba and Queen Esther contain not even a hint of anything negative. It does seem to be understood that men will generally be the ones in authority, but there are no restrictions for systems and hierarchies outside the church and the family. So there’s nothing intrinsically wrong or evil about women ruling in civil matters.

The created order, before the fall, makes Adam and Eve co-regents and co-stewards of the earth:

Gen 1:26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Gen 1:27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Gen 1:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and

over every living thing that moves on the earth."

God's plan for the future is that believers who endure, both men and women, will reign with Christ (2 Tim. 2:12). So the idea of women reigning is biblical within a certain context.

I do feel compelled, however, to note the sadness of Isaiah 3:12 where women ruling over God's people is a sign of judgment. However, the context is that of a theocracy, and that makes a difference. The United States is definitely not a theocracy, with our strong lines of demarcation between church and state!

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

Shortly after this answer was posted, we received this email:

Re: Your article "Is it Biblical for a woman to lead a nation" – Why was Deborah never mentioned when she is a prominent figure all through Judges?

I addressed the issue of Deborah in the answer to email "Should Women Be Pastors?" here: www.probe.org/should-women-be-pastors/

By the way, there are 21 chapters in Judges, and Deborah's story is in only two of them, chapters 4 and 5. She's a major player to be sure, but not all through Judges.

Thanks for asking.

Sue Bohlin

“Are Single Women Purposeless Beings?”

You have biblically and honestly tackled the question of the roles of women in your articles.

But I have a question concerning the meaning of women's lives. What does the Bible mean when it says that God intended to create a woman to help man? Does it then reduce single women to purposeless beings who have nothing to do on earth? I mean not the widowed, but the never marrieds.

No, the Bible does not reduce single women at all. I believe God's design of women means that when we operate in our strengths and giftings, we are helping other people in a variety of ways. People have many needs on many levels: physically, emotionally, spiritually, aesthetically. When women bring our God-given beauty and sensitivity, nurture and compassion, intellect and leadership skills to our communities, I think we are contributing in ways that matter. Please note, none of these have to do with marital status.

I think of single friends who are teachers, helping children and adults learn and grow.

I think of single friends who are medical professionals, compassionately treating the sick and helping people get and stay healthy.

I think of single friends who are interior designers and decorators or work for them, bringing beauty and order to homes and offices.

I think of single friends who are counselors, helping people deal with pain and problems and restoring them to functionality.

I think of single friends who are serving in ministry, pointing people to Jesus and helping them grow spiritually.

It's true that God created Eve as a helpmate for Adam, but not all women are called to marriage. Some women are called to help others in their singleness. Many of the women I know, regardless of career or calling, delight in helping others in a variety of ways. And lest anyone think being a helper is an inferior status, may I respectfully point out that God is glad to be our helper? The Psalms are rich with references to God as our helper, our rescuer, our protector. And that's just the beginning. He created us to need help, to need Him and each other, so there is nothing "lesser than" about orienting one's life in terms of helping others.

I hope this helps. <smile>

Sue Bohlin

© 2008 Probe Ministries

"Which Is It: Man's Free Will or God's Omniscience?"

A friend of mine posed this question to me. I would like to pass it along for your reflection:

When we say that God "knows the future", are we saying that He possesses knowledge of all future events? My premise is that in order for free will for Man to exist, then it is impossible for God to know all future events. In other words, these concepts are mutually exclusive. If that is true, then which one exists – free will in humans, or knowledge by God of all future events? (Or is my premise wrong?) My opinion is that free will exists, and therefore God cannot know all future events. Furthermore, Christians should not be troubled

by the concept of a God that does not possess knowledge of all future events. They should rest assured that – one way or another – He will execute His plan and carry out His promises.

Thanks for any insights that I could pass along to him.

This is a big issue in theological circles today—sort of the “God version” of the “what did he know and when did he know it?” question. The debate over the extent of God’s foreknowledge is called “open theism.” (Check out Rick Wade’s article called [“God and the Future”](#)).

But I can tell you what we believe. God does, indeed, know every single detail of the future, which is why the Bible contains accurate prophecy of future events—because not only did God know they would (and will) happen, but because He is sovereign, He superintends them.

I think many people misunderstand the concept of “free will,” which is not a biblical term. The reality is that while we have the ability to make truly significant choices, we don’t have truly “free” will. You cannot, for example, choose to wake up tomorrow morning in China when you go to bed in Chicago. Or wake up speaking Chinese when all you know is English. You cannot choose to be a different gender than what God made you. (Yes, I’m aware of sex-change operations and know people who’ve had them—we’re not even going there! <smile>) But we can make choices that make a difference: for example, in our attitudes, in who we marry and most importantly, which God we serve. We have limited freedom in our choices, and God does not force us to choose things His way; He respects our choices. But we do not have totally free will.

I think your friend misunderstands the concept of God’s sovereignty (“one way or another – He will execute His plan and carry out His promises”) if he thinks that God can have a

plan and execute it if He doesn't know everything that's going to happen. You can't have it both ways. A God who is not omniscient cannot be sovereign. A sovereign God MUST be omniscient.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Where Do I Find Biblical Support for the Trinity?”

I'm having a hard time with the issue of the Trinity in terms of finding support for this concept in the Bible. I am searching your website and other sites to get a handle on this doctrine. I need to be well versed on this issue as I am in a discussion with two Jehovah's Witnesses where we will be addressing the explanation of the Triune nature of God. All of the other issues I can address and I'm doing okay, but the Trinity has got me a little stumped right now. Can you help me?

I'm so glad you wrote!! I can imagine why you would be having a hard time with the concept of the Trinity if Jehovah's Witnesses are talking to you. And that's why I'm doubly glad you have access to the Probe website to help you be grounded in the truth, as well as equipping yourself to answer their faulty arguments.

The scriptural support FOR the Trinity is so strong that you have to work hard at finding proof texts AGAINST the Trinity! We have several excellent articles on the Trinity, written by a staff member (Pat Zukeran) who has extensive experience in

dialoging with Witnesses. Start here:

[Why We Should Believe in the Trinity](#)

then go here:

[Jehovah's Witnesses and the Trinity](#)

If you have further questions, we are available to answer them through e-mail (info@probe.org) or telephone.

I am sending this along with a prayer that the Lord will show you clearly and with the peace that accompanies His truth, His triune nature. (Consider, for example, the baptism of the Lord Jesus, where all three persons of the Godhead are present: the Father speaking His approval of the Son from heaven, the Son standing in the water in human flesh, and the Holy Spirit appearing as a dove Who came upon Jesus.)

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Dr. Laura is an Unsaved, Hypocritical Fool”

I read your [webpage on Laura Schlessinger](#) and I totally disagree with what you said. Laura is an unsaved, hypocritical, fool. The devil has more use for her than does the Lord. She should be at home with her child and under her husband's authority just like the Word of God says so. Amen...

God Bless

Well, I thought I had explained that Dr. Laura is Jewish but not a believer. You are right, it would seem that she is unsaved. But she is having quite an impact on the culture, which is why I wrote an article examining what she says from a biblical perspective.

At Probe Ministries, we are big believers in helping people to develop discernment. My hope is that those who read my article would be able to sort through the good things she says from the unscriptural things she says. When she says things that are true, the reason is that she's agreeing with God. After all, even a broken clock is accurate twice a day. . .

I hope you will join me in praying that the veil will fall away from her eyes and she will see the glory and majesty of the Lord Jesus, to know Him as her Messiah.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“What is the Purpose of a Painful Death?”

I know that the Bible tells us that man is appointed to die. That from dust we came, and to dust we return.

My question relates to what purpose a painful, terrifying death serves in God's plan. I realize that illness and tragedy can affect anyone at any age, but what purpose would God have (for example) for someone being trapped in a wrecked car and burning alive? I could give other examples of terrifying deaths that we all hear on the nightly news, but my question

is: what is the purpose of the “way” we die? Why some die painlessly while others suffer a lonely, frightening death?

I don't think I have the definitive answer, but as a person who has experienced various kinds of pain in my life, I know a little bit about the kinds of things God accomplishes in us during times of great pain.

A painful death is really just another life experience, so it doesn't belong in a special category. One of the things that we unfortunately can't know, because death prevents any communication with the departed, is the testimony of God's faithfulness and power and glory in that horrible experience. His grace, presence and aid is available to those undergoing awful deaths if they are willing to receive it.

It seems to me that because pain can serve to develop character and deepen the heart, it's entirely possible that a difficult death can be the final experience of pruning and preparation for life after death.

Those who “suffer a lonely, frightening death” are in a particularly wide-open position to experience the compassion and presence of the God who promised “Lo, I am with you always” (Matthew 28:20). Just as even the smallest light is more appreciated in the deepest dark, I would suggest that the light of God's presence and love might be more apparent in a horrible death.

The testimonies of many of the martyrs who died excruciating deaths for the love of their Savior yet radiated God's peace and grace in the midst of great pain, is one of the things that leads me to this conclusion.

Granted, this would be about the death of believers. What is the purpose of a horrible death for unbelievers, I cannot say, but I still believe it has something to do with the light of God contrasted with the darkness of the heart.

The bottom line is that it is a mystery, I think, but this is the best I can do.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries