

“Is Smoking Marijuana Okay for Christians?”

Genesis: 1:29: “And God said , behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth...” My question is, Does this mean that it (herb) is OK for Christians? And I am talking about the herb that you smoke.

Consider the whole verse:

Gen 1:29 Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you.”

God gives Adam and Eve seed-yielding plants and fruit trees for *food*. The herbs are for eating, not smoking.

Consider this also: the eternal principle behind the biblical command not to be drunk (Eph 5:18) is that we are not to become intoxicated with anything that would deprive us of self-control and the ability to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit. Getting high is wrong for the same reason getting drunk is wrong.

Secondly, marijuana is illegal. Smoking weed is also wrong because the government, which is God’s instrument, has laws against it.

Additionally, consider this: smoking ANYTHING harms your lungs. We are commanded to be good stewards of all that God has put in our hands (Gen. 1:28), which includes our bodies. And we are furthermore instructed to glorify God in our body, which is not our own: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor

6:19-20.) 1 Cor 10:31 says, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." If getting drunk is a sin, how does one get high to the glory of God?

So no. Any kind of herb that you would smoke is not OK.

Sue Bohlin

© 2008 Probe Ministries

"Why Uphold the OT Laws Against Homosexuality When We Don't Observe the Rest of It?"

I don't know how to answer this powerful argument against continuing to condemn homosexuality when we don't observe the rest of the Old Testament laws. I got this in an email and now I'm just confused. Can you help?

Laura Schlessinger dispenses sex advice to people who call in to her radio show. Recently, she said that as an observant Orthodox Jew homosexuality is to her an abomination according to Leviticus 18:22 and cannot be condoned in any circumstance.

Dear Dr. Laura,

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from your radio show, and I try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle,

for example, I simply remind them that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate.

I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some of the specific Bible laws and how to follow them.

a) When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord (Lev. 1:9). The problem is my neighbors bitch to the zoning people. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?

b) I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. What do you think would be a fair price for her? She's 18 and starting college. Will the slave buyer be required to continue to pay for her education by law?

c) I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanness (Lev. 15:19-24). The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offence and threaten to call Human Resources.

d) Lev. 25:44 states that I may indeed possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify?

Why can't I own Canadians? Is there something wrong with them due to the weather?

e) I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself, or should this be a neighborhood improvement project? What is a good day to start? Should we begin with small stones? Kind of lead up to it?

f) A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Lev. 11:10), it is a lesser abomination

than homosexuality. I don't agree. I mean, a shrimp just isn't the same as a you-know-what. Can you settle this?

g) Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here? Would contact lenses fall within some exception?

h) Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev.19:27. How should they die? The Mafia once took out Albert Anastasia in a barbershop, but I'm not Catholic; is this ecumenical thing a sign that it's ok?

i) I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?

j) My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev. 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? (Lev.24:10-16) Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Lev. 20:14)

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging. Your devoted disciple and adoring fan.

The "big picture" behind the argument about condemning homosexuality as an archaic, Old Testament rule can be

understood by the fact that there are different kinds of laws in the Old Testament. Civil and ceremonial laws, such as those concerning religious sacrifices and penalties for unacceptable societal behaviors, were time-bound and limited to the people of Israel. They are no longer in force for a variety of reasons: first, all the OT sacrifices and ceremonies were given as a foreshadowing of the Messiah's ministry and of His death, burial and resurrection. They are no longer necessary because they were the preparation for the Reality that has come. Second, the civil laws pertained to a nation of people who no longer exist. (The current nation of Israel is a political one, not the same as the group of OT people God called to follow Him alone as their Ruler.)

Moral laws, such the Ten Commandments and all the laws constraining sexual immorality, are not time-bound because they are rooted in the character of God. Time and culture changes do not affect the importance of not worshiping any false Gods because God is the only true God; of not murdering because every person is made in the image of God; of being honest because God is truth; of not stealing because God wants us to trust HIM to meet our needs instead of taking what we want; of being faithful to one's spouse because God is faithful. And none of the Old Testament laws concerning sexual morality changed in the New Testament because they, too, are based on the character of God as pure and holy. It is always sinful to have sex with someone you're not married to, regardless of gender.

The scriptural prohibition against homosexuality is further underscored by what Paul reveals as the purpose of sex in marriage in Ephesians 5: sexual intercourse between husband and wife is an earthly picture of the spiritual union of two very different, very other beings—Christ and His bride, the Church. Sexual coupling of two same-gendered people can never reflect the deep spiritual significance of sex. Instead, it is really about pursuing pleasure, and pleasure is not the

primary purpose of sex (despite our culture's views). But that's [another topic](#).

This distinction between civil/ceremonial laws and moral laws is seen in just about any family with healthy boundaries. When our sons were small, we had rules about "no TV before homework is done" and "don't leave your bicycle in the driveway." Those rules were time-bound, not timeless, because they were appropriate only for their growing-up years. We don't have those rules anymore because they are both adults, out of the house and in their own homes now. But we still have character-based expectations that they be responsible, honest, respectful, and kind. Those "rules" won't change because they are a different kind from the training rules they grew up with.

I hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

P.S. I have seen this purported letter to Dr. Laura before (by someone who obviously thinks himself very clever). I think it's interesting that Dr. Laura is no longer an orthodox Jew. She is still a God-follower, though. And her views on homosexuality haven't changed because, [for the most part, she has a biblical worldview](#).

© 2007 Probe Ministries

**“Why Don't You Just Let
Homosexuals Live and Let**

Live?"

I find that you are very passionate about your thoughts and personal beliefs. At the same time, I think that the Bible also shares a very clear message that we are not God, and therefore should do as we believe God wants us to do. God never once asked us to become Gods; therefore we should not pass judgments on to others regarding their life styles, or beliefs. We get it, being gay is a sin, but all sin is on the same level. Killing a child and saying a curse word falls into one group of sin, one no greater than the other.

If you want to start a movement, how about protecting those that can not protect themselves? Children are being abandoned by their parents left and right... and even worse neglected, raped and molested. Adults choosing to be homosexual is just that, a choice. Live and let live, go after the helpless and innocent, they need passionate leader to protect them and their rights.

Thank you for writing. I appreciate your compassion for the hurting and those who need a voice. Bless you!

The reason we address the subject of homosexuality is that God does. He knows it is not His intention for the people He made and dearly loves. He knows that homosexual activity is destructive and hurtful. Yes, choosing to act on one's same-sex feelings is, indeed, a choice, but it is not a choice like deciding between chocolate or vanilla ice cream. It is more like a choice between drinking grape juice, or Kool-Aid laced with poison. But the message of our culture about homosexuality is that there is no difference because there is no poison.

But God knows there is.

And the loving thing to do is to take a stand for truth, which we can know because of what God says.

I would respectfully disagree that all sin is equal. While all sin separates us from God, and all sin requires the death of His Son in our place, the *consequences* of our sin vary hugely. It is a sin for me to have an uncharitable thought about someone; it is a very different sin for me to pull out a gun and shoot them. If you really believe that no sin is greater than another, do you really not care whether someone thinks critically of your driving, or if they run you off the road into a ditch? Maybe that idea works better in concept than reality.

We aren't interested in starting a movement. We just want to speak the truth in love, as God calls us to. And sometimes that involves judging that some beliefs and lifestyles are dangerous and destructive and hurtful, and pointing that there is another way to live. (May I respectfully point out the irony that of the fact that in writing your email, you are judging our beliefs?)

One final comment. What I think and write about homosexuality is not mere opinion or philosophy. My passion for this issue is fueled by the pain experienced by people I love who "drank the Kool-Aid" and entered into various kinds of gay relationships, and are now experiencing the hurtful consequences in their hearts and, in some case, their bodies. It is fueled by compassion for the hurting family members of those currently living in a way contrary to God's intention for them. This is more than personal beliefs; this is taking a stand for what God says is right so that others can avoid needless pain, and standing in compassion and understanding (and prayer) for those now in that pain.

I hope this helps you better understand where we're coming from.

Sue Bohlin

© 2007 Probe Ministries

“Will I Go To Hell For My Doubts?”

I have been a Christian my whole life. I have been struggling with faith lately. I am mostly intellectually convinced in Christianity, however I have a lingering doubt based on a few intellectual things. One is the battle between old earth and [young] earth [creation] and the other is the age of the book of Daniel—which online resources I have read seem to prove that it was written after the fact. (I have seen the Christian responses and they do not deal with all of the facts.) Anyway, none of these doubts would bother me except that Hebrews 11:1 and James 1:8 imply that any doubt might be cause for exclusion of me from heaven. I can't even sleep at night because I am so afraid of going to hell. Is there any hope for me?

I would suggest that Hebrews 11:1 and James 1:8 do not imply that at all. In fact, doubt isn't even mentioned. Hebrews is about the nature of faith, and James simply says that the double-minded person—one who continually wavers back and forth between trusting and not trusting—is inherently unstable in his thinking.

See, the Lord understands that we see through a glass darkly, as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians. He understands that we are trying to make sense of a fallen world through a fallen intellect, and we don't have all the puzzle pieces. He gives much more grace than you know, I think. The issue is not about having doubts, which usually just means we haven't figured things out. God's indictment is on those who refuse to trust. They are not the same thing. The Lord Jesus said to love God with our minds, and wrestling through the hard, meaty issues

of apparent contradictions and complications is one way we do that. The very act of pursuing truth to attack our doubts and questions is a kind of worship!

Let me encourage you that there are answers, even if you haven't found them. For instance, Probe's position on the age of the earth question has brought great peace to my husband, Dr. Ray Bohlin's spirit; he's been diligently studying this issue for 30+ years. He has looked at the evidence for a young earth and universe, and an old earth and universe, and found compelling evidence for both. They clearly cannot both be true. So he says he is an agnostic on the age issue. He doesn't know. And can live with that, especially since: 1) the issue is not WHEN but WHO created, and 2) the Bible doesn't tell us, which means it doesn't matter enough to get caught up in it. How long ago God created the heavens and the earth has nothing to do with whether Christianity is true or not.

I just read my answer to him to get his approval, and he added that he would be VERY careful about trusting online resources on the book of Daniel. Why should you believe them? The nature of the web is that anyone can publish anything, whether they have any expertise or not. Are they qualified? Biased? Especially sources like Wikipedia, which are going to reflect the anti-Christian bias of the culture, since the entries come from people whose thinking is pickled in the brine of secularism. I invite you to read another [answer to email at Probe.org about the book of Daniel](#).

I would also spend some time shoring up your understanding of your security in Christ if you have placed your trust in Him. If you became a Christian years ago, you became a new creature, a forever child of God. You cannot lose your relationship with your heavenly Father, no matter how many doubts plague you, any more than you can become unborn from your mother. Our founder, Jimmy Williams, wrote an article "How Can I Know I'm Going to Heaven?" here: www.probe.org/how-can-i-know-im-going-to-heaven/

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

© 2007 Probe Ministries

“Will Jesus Still Forgive Me?” – Did My Sin Re-crucify Christ?

Please help—I'm really worried Jesus won't forgive me. I regressed and viewed a pornographic image. While praying for forgiveness a voice in my mind said it hurt like nails and that I had re-crucified Christ and that there was no sacrifice left for me. I'd heard of this verse but now I'm really worried is there any hope of forgiveness for me. Please, I'm worried really bad.

Sounds to me like you were hearing from a demon who was sending what scripture calls a “fiery dart” at you. Yes, your sin hurt the Lord. (Sometimes the Enemy throws some truth into the midst of his lies.) No, you did not crucify Christ because if you recall, His last words on the cross before He died were “it is finished,” or actually more accurately, “it is paid in full.” Lord Jesus fully paid for your sin of looking at porn 2000 years ago.

And no, it is not true that there is no sacrifice left for you. The verse you are thinking of is Hebrews 10:26, “If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left.” But consider that equally true is the promise of 1 John 1:9, “If

we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

When a born-again Christian sins, God promises to forgive us. What you are exhibiting is the regret and remorse that shows God is continuing to give you the grace of repentance. The people Jesus doesn't forgive are the hard-hearted ones who refuse to ask for it.

Concerning Hebrews 10:26, listen to what theologian Dr. Wayne Grudem says about this verse:

“A person who rejects Christ’s salvation and ‘has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him’ (Hebrews 10:29) deserves eternal punishment. This again is a strong warning against falling away, but it should not be taken as proof that someone who has truly been born again can lose his or her salvation. When the author talks about the blood of the covenant ‘that sanctified him, ‘the word sanctified is used simply to refer to ‘external sanctification, like that of the ancient Israelites, by outward connection with God’s people.’ The passage does not talk about someone who is genuinely saved, but someone who has received some beneficial moral influence through contact with the church.” (Bible Doctrine, p 343.)

Be encouraged, brother. Receive God's forgiveness and cleansing according to the riches in Christ, which he has lavished on you (Eph. 1:8).

Blessings, Sue

© 2007 Probe Ministries

“Can I Seek God and Not Believe Only in Christ?”

Hello, I have a question about faith. If I am seeking God and doing his will in order to see and know the Truth, what should I do if I'm not led to an exclusive belief in Jesus Christ. I know what it is to seek God in sincerity. If I am seeking God sincerely and still not able to make a resolute decision on Jesus or am even led to decide certainly that there are other paths to salvation, what should I do? Should I listen to God speaking to my heart or should I listen to the apostles of Jesus who wrote the New Testament. I feel the typical Christian answer would either be to say “Listen to the Bible because your heart can deceive you, and the voice of God you hear could be the deceiver” or to say “If you are really seeking God sincerely, then you will definitely be led to Jesus.”

. . . Like I said, I know what it is to sincerely seek God. This is something I know instinctually, the way I know how to walk and breathe. I have sought God sincerely and consistently for short spans of time, usually last no longer than a few hours sometimes days at best. I find that it takes an extremely supply of focus and energy to do so, I often become weary and lose heart.

. . . Is the answer then only to DO? To take action? To seek until I find, Knock until it's opened? Ought I to give up speculating altogether about who will meet me at the door until I have met him face to face? The hardest thing for me about Christianity is that it seems to say that I must decide to accept and follow Christ before God reveals himself to me, and then as a reward for accepting Jesus by the testimony of others God will eventually reveal himself. Shouldn't it be the other way around? Shouldn't I be perfectly content and justified in the eyes of God and all Christians to seek with

all sincerity and earnestness, waiting patiently for God to open the door and reveal himself to me? I believe the promise of God that he answers those who knock. I want to knock until God answers.... I feel like in the past I have knocked until I became impatient and went to the neighbors house to ask them about God. Perhaps that's what I'm doing right now for writing all of this. Anyway, thank you for reading my question, I know that I must pray.

Dear _____,

I've been thinking about your question much of yesterday and today.

I'm curious what is the obstacle to putting your trust in Christ alone. There has to be something other than logic and reason. I sense you have pursued truth and have enough information to know, but you just don't want to. I mean, I guess you already know Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by Me," and then He promised to rise from the dead and delivered on the promise.

If He's not the only way, why did He come? Why did He die? What's the point of the resurrection?

And if He's not the only way, how would you know?

But I don't think that's the issue. I think there may be a heart issue that is keeping you from putting all your eggs in the "Jesus basket." Want to tell me what it is?

And if I'm wrong, let me ask you this. Have you ever simply asked, "God, if you're there and You want to have a relationship with me, would You please let me know in some way that I'll know it's You?" And then taking your hands off the timing issue? Is it possible that you have been spoiled by this microwave, instant culture we live in, and you gave up waaaaay too soon?

The God you want (I know you do!! That is AWESOME!!) is the same God who said, "Be still and know that I am God." It doesn't say, for a few hours till you give up and decide I don't want to talk to you. This is the same God who said, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." He wants a relationship with you, _____. But He wants your full attention and He wants you to wait expectantly for him.

Sue Bohlin

Dear Sue,

Thank you so much for your reply.

Those are very good questions that you asked me. You are right about there being something other than logic and reason keeping me from putting my trust in Christ alone and also about there being issues in my heart preventing me.

A couple of my more surface issues are these; I have so much trouble separating Christ from Christian doctrine. There is so much conflicting Christian doctrine and Rhetoric, and so much man-made bologna being taught in the church that it's hard for me to see Christ himself, apart from all of that. Many times when I read his words, I am blown away by how absolutely contrary his doctrine is to that which I hear in the churches. Sometimes when I read his words I really do fall in love with him and believe in him, but then at other times I become confused.

Another problem I have is an intensely deep fear of being deceived. I look at our world today and see how utterly deceived the whole world is. I even see good upstanding, moral Christians that believe many, many lies that have been told to them by the government and the media. . . . I know that I have done more evil in my life than I could ever understand and I am terrified of the judgment. I know that I am far from where I ought to be in my spiritual progress. I know that I need to be born again!!!

I think that the problem in my heart is fear. I am so afraid of being wrong. I know that if I truly make a leap of faith, there are many people who will be hurt and offended by it. I also know that I will be despised, and I am afraid of that. I know that walking the fence is much worse than making any decision. I know I need to make a decision. I've already decided many times to dedicate my life to Jesus Alone. But every time I've come to places of enormous doubt. Part of my reason I feel it's difficult to accept Christ alone, is I wonder how he could possibly take me seriously... I can't take myself seriously because I made such sincere promises and commitments to Christ in the past, only to doubt and lose faith months later...

I'm glad to be writing about all of this and forcing myself to really think about and intensely question these issues. This has been a great help to me, to closely consider my real reasons for my lack of faith... I'm sure the deeper I investigate, the more I'll find my reasons aren't really what I thought they were.

Thank you again for your time.

_____, you are SO CLOSE!!!

Please let me encourage you: forget about the doctrine (though it is important). Forget about the disconnect between church systems and the Savior. Forget about your fears. For right now, focus on Jesus alone. He IS Christianity. He IS life! Please hear me: just focus on Jesus alone for right now and ask Him to show you Himself as truth.

I understand your fear of deception. The enemy wants to deceive you. But deception can only flourish when people discard the truth. I can sense you PASSIONATELY want to know truth, to embrace it, to be transformed by it.

So embrace Jesus, who said He IS the truth.

Allow me to pray for you:

Oh Lord Jesus, I come before Your throne on behalf of this precious man who is so very dear to You. Thank You for dying for his sins and coming back to life so _____ could know real, abundant life in every molecule of his being! He is confused and muddled but You offer him the peace he longs for. Allow him to hear Your voice calling him. Allow Him to sense Your call to trust You completely. Clear away the mists that keep him from falling at Your feet and calling You Lord and God. I know his heart wants to, Lord Jesus. He wants so much to be wooed and captured by Your love that will make him the man he longs to be, a man after Your own heart who will be strong and courageous because he not only knows WHO he is, he knows WHOSE he is. Give _____ grace to relent from his strong-arming, keeping You at bay, and surrender to the joy and peace and RELIEF that awaits him. I do pray for him, Lord, that You would give him what he needs to turn the corner. Let him hear You whispering how much You love him and want him today.

Blessings to you, dear one.

© 2007 Probe Ministries

“Can Demonic Powers Read Minds?”

Question: Someone said in Sunday School that Satan and the demons can't read our minds. Where does it say that in the Bible?

There really isn't a scripture that proves this, just the

logic: demons are finite creatures, as we are. They are not omniscient like God. (Consider this: if Satan could read people's minds, he certainly would have been able to read Jesus' mind to know how abysmally he would be trounced at the Cross!) Jesus spoke scripture out loud to Satan during His temptation in the wilderness so he could hear it. In the spiritual armor passage of Eph. 6, we are told to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (*rhema*, the spoken-out-loud word) of God.

Randy Alcorn has answered this question in an excellent way: ["Can Demons Read Our Thoughts?"](#)

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

© 2007 Probe Ministries

"My Son Came Out As Gay"

My son has told me he is a homosexual, which I believe is not true. He went to a Gay Pride parade this past weekend. I'm asking for your prayers because I don't know how to deal with it. I've put up barriers between us, which I shouldn't because he's my son. I ask God to help me with this but I don't know where to even begin or how to talk to Him.

I am so glad you wrote! For the past 8 or so years, I have been working with a ministry (Living Hope Ministries in Arlington TX) that helps people deal with unwanted homosexuality and the family members of those who identify as gay. I do send this with a prayer that you will allow this trauma to drive you closer to God and closer to your son, who desperately needs your respect, your attention, your

affection, and your affirmation. He needs to know his dad loves him and wants to be a part of his life. Putting up barriers is the exact opposite of what will help your son. Invite him places. . . invest in what is important to him. . . ask him about himself. . . spend time just being WITH him so he gets the all-important message “my dad cares about me. I’m important to him.”

There is a free, anonymous, confidential, online support group for strugglers and family members like yourself at www.livehope.org. In the “Family and Friends” support group, the executive director of Living Hope and I collaborated on a welcoming post called “So Your Loved One Just Came Out to You.” I hope you find it helpful.

Sue Bohlin

Welcome to the Family and Friends forum. We are so glad you’re here. . . and we’re so sorry you have to be here at all. The Lord has been gracious in bringing you to this place of acceptance, warmth, understanding and prayer support. You are now a part of “The Fellowship of the Broken.” That’s why we’re all here.

So now you know your loved one experiences same sex attraction (SSA). It’s usually a horrible shock. You may feel like Alice, having just arrived at the bottom of the White Rabbit’s chute. . . but this isn’t Wonderland, is it? You’d prefer to be anywhere but this new reality that’s been forced on you.

Most people, arriving in this place, have two questions: How can I fix my loved one? And, how do I get my old life back, before the disclosure?

Second question first: “How do I get my old life back?” Well, welcome to your “new normal.” We are so sorry—but you can’t go back to the place of not knowing. Praise God, though: He

lavishes grace on us in times of transition, even (and perhaps especially) this adjustment to your new, post-disclosure world. We pray for you to experience “acceptance grace,” that you may receive His empowering to live in this new and unwelcome reality.

Back to the first question: “How can I fix my loved one?” (Or a variation of this question: “Where can I send my loved one to be fixed?”) You can’t. Only God can. And He usually works on a timetable and with a methodology that is different from ours. Your loved one is not a broken car that you send to the shop, and he or she will resent being viewed as a problem or a project.

The best thing you can do is entrust your loved one into God’s hands and leave them there. What you CAN do is wear out your knees in intercessory prayer. The most effective prayers are scripture prayers. May we suggest reading through Paul’s epistles and writing down his prayers for his beloved friends, which you then adjust on behalf of your loved one? For example, we have learned that grasping how much God loves us is a huge part of emotional healing, because God’s love is the healing agent no matter what plagues us. Consider praying Ephesians 3:17-19 (NLT) on behalf of your loved one:

And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in his/her heart as s/he trusts in him. May his/her roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love. And may s/he have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love really is. May s/he experience the love of Christ, though it is so great s/he will never fully understand it. Then s/he will be filled with the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

That’s #1. But in our ministry, we have learned over the years that when family members come for support and assistance, the greatest need they have is to work on their own “stuff.” Every

one of us has garbage and scars from living in a fallen world. Every one of us grew up with imperfect parents in an imperfect family. Every one of us has been the recipient of countless “fiery darts” of the Enemy in spiritual warfare. And we all tend to hide our baggage and our scars, all the dark and hurting places of our souls. One wise counselor calls this “Christian denial,” and defines it as “denying God access to those places He wants to heal for His glory, and our benefit.”

God has brought you to this place in your life where you are ripe for God to do some wonderful, amazing work in your heart. Your loved one’s homosexuality is the method He used to invite you to this place, but it’s not the issue He wants to deal with in you. He wants your heart; He wants your vulnerability; He wants YOU.

So what do you do next?

Give God permission to work. Open your heart to Him: “Lord, what do you want to do in ME? What do you want me to know about my own heart, my own stuff, that I have been avoiding?” It will be tempting to keep your focus on your loved one—it’s much less threatening!—but you need to keep your focus on Jesus. Expect Him to show you things you’ve been in denial about, but also expect that He will lavish His grace on you to see what He wants to show you. He will never expose the dark and hurting places of your heart to you but that He’s not holding those places in His own loving and safe hands.

Spend daily time in the Word, expecting God to meet you there and speak to You through His Word. You may find the Psalms especially meaningful because they are so comforting.

It will be helpful for you to journal this “adventure with God.” Many people have reported that it is far more satisfying and helpful to use an actual book (or at least paper) journal instead of a computer. The multi-sensory experience of handling paper—seeing it, hearing it rustle, feeling it in

your hands, smelling its fragrance—makes a stronger impression on your brain. Write what's happening and how you feel about what's happening. Write what God is showing you in your time with Him, both in His Word and in prayer. Many people find that they are better able to process what God is doing internally through journaling than any other method, because wrapping words around thoughts and feelings helps us to sort through our jumbled confusion.

Remember and practice Psalm 46:10—"Be still and know that I am God." God wants to soothe and comfort you, but you have to be quiet and still for Him to do that. You may find that listening to praise music may be helpful at times, but there is a time to turn off the music and the TV and the mp3 player and just be still before your God. Let Him love you in those moments.

We tell the SSA (same-sex attracted) strugglers who come to our ministry that the way God will bring healing and change to them is through intimacy with Christ. Many of them learn to also enjoy intimacy with their heavenly Father. That's the goal of all discipleship, which is what God invites you to as well. We're really a discipleship ministry, and whether people are here as overcomers, as strugglers, as family members of strugglers, or those with a passion for those in the struggle, God has the same goal for all of us: spiritual maturity. Abiding in Him is the way to grow more like Jesus, no matter which door into this place of growth and healing you came through—even a rabbit hole.

We are glad you're here, and we pray that you will allow God to do such a deep work in you that at some point, you will be able to look back at this time and say, "It was horrible, it was incredibly painful. . . and it was the best thing that ever happened to me."

With prayer for rich blessings in your journey,

Sue Bohlin (Living Hope Board Member)

From Ricky Chelette, Executive Director of Living Hope Ministries:

I AMEN to all that my wise sister has shared. I see so many parents, particularly of teens and young adults, that look at this struggle like a bad case of acne. They often think, "Well, this is a phase and after a bit of counseling, some more Bible study and rededication to Jesus, maybe even a conference or two, my kid is going to be fine." I wish it were that easy but you have to remember that we are dealing with relational brokenness. This is not making a bad decision to stay out past curfew, this is thinking the wrong things about who you are and believing those wrong things as truth.

As a result, God has to do some major work in the heart and life of those who struggle. You are not God. Therefore YOU can't do anything but love and encourage your son/daughter to seek wise counsel, Godly advice, and more of Jesus. I really wish this didn't sound as "churchy" of an answer as it does, but the fact remains that we are broken and once broken, we forever carry the scars of that brokenness in our lives. Yes, Jesus does bring healing, that is His promise to us on Calvary, but the process of sanctification and total relational healing will likely not happen until He comes again to redeem and reclaim His creation at the end of time.

St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria in 297 wrote, "That which Jesus has not assumed (or taken upon himself), He cannot heal."

He assumes our sins as WE are willing to confess our sins and bring them to Him. We can not confess sins for others, only for ourselves. Your son/daughter has to get to that place and what it might take to get them there is only God's knowledge. You cannot create contrition. That is the work of God's

Spirit.

Also please understand that the problem your child has is not homosexuality (though that is what we label it), it is sin. Sin is sin and it always deceives, kills and destroys. It does that in your life, my life and it does it in your child's life as well. They have to grasp the sin problem and the ONLY one who can convict us of sin is the Holy Spirit (notice mom, that I've said that twice! <smile>). Therefore, pray that God would use His Holy Spirit to convict and convince the heart and mind of your son/daughter so that they might see the error of their way and return to living for the Lord.

Despite what I sometimes hear from evangelical Christians, homosexuality does NOT keep a person from heaven any more than cheating, stealing, or telling "white lies." All those things are sin and all are bad and separate us from God, but they are also all covered by the blood of Christ on the cross. Granted, as humans, we tend to categorize sin and make some much worse than others. God doesn't do that. He says that what keeps us out of the Kingdom of heaven is not trusting in Him with our whole heart as our Savior and Lord. A person who thinks he/she is gay can be a Christian. They won't be a happy Christian, or truly intimately related to Christ, but they can be a Christian. I believe that God, in His incredible mercy and grace, will continue to reach out to them, woo them to Himself and draw them until that day when He calls them home. So never ever, ever give up! God will hear your prayers for He fights for the souls of those who have "wandered from the way" (Matt. 18:12-13). God loves them more than you do—so wow, that's a lot!!

Keep in mind too that your task is not to "save your kid," but to show Jesus to them in everything you do. That is such a hard order for everyone and especially if your child has a partner. Do you allow the partner to come to your house, participate in your family activities, hang out with the rest of the family? Of course this is a very personal choice and

one that you need to make with lots of prayer and discussion with your spouse. That being said, the question remains: How do you show Jesus to your child and their partner? Is kicking them out of family gatherings the way to do that? Personally, I don't think so, but maybe others here will feel differently. Remember, however, that your child loves this person and rejecting the partner will be akin to rejecting the child even though that is NOT what you are trying to communicate. I DO think it is perfectly reasonable to ask them NOT to show public displays of affection, not to sleep in the same room/bed, etc. Those are things that you would ask your child to do if they were in a heterosexual relationship and you were trying to uphold Biblical standards in your home. If there are small children around, you might have to think about the implications of that as well and if/how you want to talk to the children about it. I use to think that it was not good to expose them to such things, but with the popularity of homosexuality in our culture and media (need I say, "Brokeback Mountain" or "Will and Grace"), I think it might be best for them to hear the TRUTH from you rather than an interpretation of truth they would get in the streets.

We all know that this journey can be overwhelming, confusing and at times, even debilitating. Do not allow the devil to steal from you the hope that is in Christ Jesus. Do not be worn down by the familiarity and insistence of your child that this is "normal" so that you redefine Truth. Come here and post your frustrations, concerns, joys and victories. We have seen many make it out, hundreds of thousands in fact, and we have seen God do amazing things in the lives of the struggler as well as their family members. If you will allow it, this can be the greatest thing that has happened in your family. I am convinced that God wants to use it for good if you will let Him.

“Your Position Against Women Pastors Is Outdated”

Question for Sue Bohlin regarding [women pastors](#):

It seems like your reasoning centers on one verse: 1 Tim. 2:12. [But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.] My question about that verse would be: Is it a timeless teaching? Wouldn't you agree that there are some culturally relevant areas of the Bible? Is the particular application of the principles of this passage timeless or are they culturally relative? When I study the Bible, to determine whether the teaching is timeless or culturally relative, I ask, was the teaching taught uniformly throughout the Bible. If it is a timeless teaching, then there won't be any variations on it. If it is culturally relative issue, sometimes it might be there and sometimes not. For example, throughout the Bible you hear differing views on drinking wine, but there is a consistent message about getting drunk. The view that states that women cannot be in leadership in a church context is drawn mainly from 1 Timothy 2:9-13. Due to the pagan religions in Ephesus in Paul's day this prohibition was necessary to distinguish Christianity from other religions. However, that cultural context is no longer applicable to the church today.

If you think that 1 Tim. 2:12 is timeless, then what do you do with the fact that women wrote parts of the Bible? Luke 2:38 (Anna); Luke 1:42-45 (Elizabeth); Luke 46-55 (Mary); Exodus 15:20-21 (Miriam); Judges 5 (Deborah—was leader of Israel). What do you do with the fact that woman are prophets? Ex.15:20-21 (Miriam); 2Kg 22:14 (Huldah), Isa 8:3 (Isaiah's wife); Luke 2:38 (Anna); 1 Cor. 11:5 (others). Another thing

to consider is that many women are described as having authoritative roles, over men and women in the Bible. Deborah (Judges 5), Anna (Luke 2:38), Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3), Aquilla and Priscilla (Acts 18:26) and others to name a few.

Women were not only recorded as being prophets but also judges and apostles (Rom. 16:7). The cultural restriction of women in leadership roles is not a timeless principle. This restriction denies women who are called into leadership from fulfilling their unique role in God's kingdom. Also, women not being allowed in leadership denies the church from the benefit of half of its leaders, pastors, visionaries, prophets and so on. Men and women are different but together in leadership they can complement one another by bringing out different characteristics of God's character. Not all women, just as not all men, are called into leadership roles in the church. Each person should follow their personal calling. However, women can be free to follow God's call into roles of leadership if God chooses to gift, equip and call them into that role. How can all this be ignored? I am a conservative Christian, but I use my mind to study issues like this to learn the truth. Can you explain how all these references can be ignored?

I completely agree that we must seek to separate timeless principles from cultural, time-bound issues. That is an essential part of reading and interpreting the Bible accurately.

I believe the pivotal verse of 1 Tim. 2:12 is but one link in a chain that teaches male headship and leadership because of the way God reveals Himself through the teaching that men are to assume the mantle of leadership for the church and the family: the husband as the head of the wife; male elders in church leadership; Jesus choosing twelve men as the foundation of his church (even though He was constantly flying in the face of the anti-female culture of His time, elevating and

honoring women in a way no one had seen before). I am particularly struck by Eph. 3:14-15, which can (and I think should) be translated "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every *fatherhood* in heaven and on earth derives its name." I am struck by how, as a woman, I am unable to represent the Fatherhood of God, which is why male leadership (who can manifest the Fatherhood of God) is so crucial. (There are other aspects of God that I and all other women are able to represent particularly well, such as His beauty, compassion, nurturing, comfort, relational sensitivities—but not His Fatherhood.)

Then what do you do with the fact that women wrote parts of the Bible?

I would respectfully disagree that women wrote these parts. Luke and Moses wrote the verses you cited, quoting these women. Which is awesome, considering the cultural value of women at the time. It shows that God speaks and blesses through women, and the Holy Spirit made sure godly women were credited with being the conduits of praise and blessing that they were. But they didn't write those passages.

What do you do with the fact that woman are prophets?

I thank the Lord for using believing women in this way. A prophet is a servant, the mouthpiece of God. A conduit. This is a separate issue from being a pastor or elder or serving in leadership over men.

Another thing to consider is that many women are described as having authoritative roles, over men and women in the Bible. Deborah (Judges 5), Anna (Luke 2:38), Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3), Aquilla and Pricilla (Acts 18:26) and others to name a few.

Deborah: Indeed, she did serve as a judge. But note how she led—not as a man would. She called herself “a mother in Israel.” Her role was more one of advisor and counselor, the way a mother would counsel her children, and making judicial decisions. She used her “authority” in indirect ways to influence, as opposed to the direct kind of leadership as the male judges did. When the need for military leadership arose, she called on Barak to lead the men into war with the Canaanites.

Anna: All scripture says about this godly woman is that “she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. She came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.” There is nothing here to indicate an authoritative role. She served in the temple and testified about God. This does not constitute authority.

Isaiah’s wife: she is described as “the prophetess,” which I understand from Bible scholars may well refer to her role as the prophet’s wife. But even if she were a full-fledged prophet in her own right, she had no authority. She would have been a mouthpiece for God. The authority was in the words that would have come through her, not in the woman herself.

Priscilla, along with her husband Aquila, “took Apollos aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” This doesn’t mean she was in leadership; it means she sat and explained things, in tandem with her husband, peer-to-peer. Not as a church leader.

Women were not only recorded as being prophets but also judges and apostles (Rom. 16:7).

I’m sorry, but we cannot know that Junias was a woman. The argument that Junias was a female apostle is shaped by modern feminist thought rather than by robust Biblical scholarship.

Also, women not being allowed in leadership denies the church from the benefit of half of its leaders, pastors, visionaries, prophets and so on.

Women are not denied a place of leadership in the church. We are restricted from CERTAIN positions of leadership. Some of the most gifted leaders, teachers, pastors (it helps to use the term “shepherds,” which means the same thing) and visionaries in the church are women, and when we use our gifts to lead and serve and teach women and children (which is over half the church), I think God is making a statement about the value of women and children. When we use our gifts and strengths to influence in indirect ways—note the importance of character and maturity in requirements for elders’ and deacons’ wives or deaconesses, 1 Tim. 3:11—we see the complementarity of male and female gifts and strengths combined to glorify God and serve the Kingdom.

For what it’s worth, when my husband served as an elder in our church and it was time to find new elders and deacons, they wisely went to the nominated men’s wives first to ask in private, “Your husband is being considered for this role in our church. Please be honest: is there any reason he should be disqualified?” A wife’s “yes” was a deal-breaker. That’s a powerful position! Not a direct position of authority, but an indirect position of influence. Also, some of the best ideas, and valuable warnings, and concerns borne of sensitivity and awareness of the needs of people, come from women. Wise men in leadership listen to wise, godly women. When men dismiss the contributions and gifts of women, everyone misses out. But that doesn’t mean women should be in all positions of authority and leadership.

However, women can be free to follow God’s call into roles of leadership if God chooses to gift, equip and call them into

that role.

God will not call women into a role that is outside His stated limitations for us. I think it's extremely important that these new ways of attempting to throw off millennia-old understandings of the scriptures only came after feminist philosophy invaded the church.

You write to me because you are aware of my position (which is shared by my colleagues) at Probe Ministries where I have a platform and a voice through our website and radio ministry. I am grateful for this example of how women can use our gifts and callings to serve the Kingdom without transgressing God's order of male leadership. None of the women at Probe are in positions of authority over men, but we are still able to make a difference through our stewardship of influence. And as a woman (and one with an intense personality and pastor-teacher gifts), please let me assure you that this position of influence without authority is not in the least bit demeaning or disrespectful to me.

Thank you for writing.

Sue Bohlin

© 2007 Probe Ministries

See Also *Probe Answers Our E-Mail:*

- [Should Women Be Pastors?](#)
 - [I Have Some Questions About Women in the Church](#)
 - [So Are All Women Pastors Deceived and Going to Hell?](#)
-

“How Do I Help My Friend Get Unstuck From a Failed Relationship?”

I have a friend who has been stuck for about 8 years. She is a 30 year old single parent with an 8 year old daughter. She broke up with the baby's father about 6 years ago. The problem bothering her is that she is still in love with him. She realizes this is not a man she can marry due to his lifestyle and the fact that he is living with another woman. This is the only man she has been sexually involved with. Moving on with her life has been a constant struggle. Her confession to me is, “I feel stuck.” What do you recommend?

I suggest you encourage her to reframe her thinking about her daughters daddy. In our culture, we tend to elevate our feelings to the position of idols, and we feel like it would somehow be dishonest not to follow them. But feelings are just feelings, and they are not equally valid or wise. If she's still “in love with” a man she hasn't had a relationship with for six years, who had made it abundantly clear he doesn't care for her, then it's because she is still feeding the fantasy and the feelings with her thoughts. No wonder she feels stuck! She is stuck because she keeps feeding the feelings.

The problem is that we can't change our feelings by attacking them directly. Feelings are like the caboose on a train; they follow the engines. The engines are our beliefs/thoughts and our behavior. Redirect the engine, and the caboose will follow in a different direction.

I would suggest you help her write out on a sheet of paper two columns: the lies and stuck thoughts she believes, and the truths that would counter the lies. Such as:

Lies and Stuck Thoughts	Truths
I want my daughters daddy to come back	Hes not coming back. That chapter is over.
I have feelings for him	So what, theyre just feelings. I have to deal with reality.
I am stuck	God will help me get unstuck as I follow Him
I need him	Hes not available; I must get my needs met from God, through my support network of friends and family
I love him because I had sex with him	I must confess my sin of sexual immorality and renounce the emotional ties I have to him because of our one-flesh union

I would also suggest that you instruct her to imagine taking a giant roll of Saran wrap to her bundle of feelings and wrapping them up like leftovers that go in the fridge. Then put them on a mental shelf, and purposely engage in some activity that will help her replace her thoughts and feelings with something else. The biblical pattern for lasting change is to replace and displace the old with the new, but first we have to plan on what the new will be—such as a new hobby, new relationships, new habits that dont remind us of the old thing were trying to renounce. She may need some help with coming up with ideas for new things to add into her life.

Its also possible that shell say no, no, no to all that you suggest, giving excuses why none of those will work. Sometimes people dont really want to change, they just want to complain

about their terrible emotional state and suck sympathy and compassion from those they complain to. If you discern that thats the route shes taking, then I would suggest that you tell her, You dont really want to be unstuck. So Im not going to talk about this situation with you. Then always change the subject if it comes up.

Bless you for being a friend! I hope you find this helpful.

Cordially,

Sue Bohlin

© 2007 Probe Ministries