

“How Do I Overcome My Hurts and Disappointments From My Church?”

I have been a Christian for over 14 years. I love God very much, but I have become truly discontent with church. I have suffered from many hurts and many disappointments. I know this may sound childish but I have been badly hurt by people who say that they are trying to be more like Jesus.

When my husband and I lost our 4th child at 11 weeks, I was accused of having an abortion. I was told to “stay in my calling.” When I asked for the youth leader position I knew my call, my children (I have six) knew my call, but my pastor refused to acknowledge it. Over the next several years, more than a dozen different people took that position, and I cried each time the position went to someone else. I was told that I was not faithful enough.

I always was ready and willing to help where needed but was pushed aside. I am very outspoken and speak when God says to, which produces a lot of friction. I have been lied about, talked about and pushed aside. I have cried over so many lost hopes and dreams.

I left that church, but am still suffering from the things that I endured. I feel like I don’t fit in anywhere I go. I live in a small town and feel that no matter where I go my “reputation” precedes me. How can I overcome this? Or should I just wait and not go back to church? I can’t move from this area.

I have been told I will do great things for God. That I am called. But I can’t do it here. I am always under someone’s microscope. Is there hope for me?

I am so very sorry to hear your story! My husband and I know personally how the wounds from one's church weigh heavily on the heart. You have my complete sympathy. I hurt for you, and I am asking the Lord to bring comfort and peace to you.

You ask, "How can I overcome this? Or should I just wait and not go back to church?" Not going back to church is not an option if you want to walk in obedience, since God's word tells us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25). The only way to overcome this pain is to forgive those who hurt and disappointed you. I suggest you make a list: ask the Lord to show you every person you are still hurting over, every person you are still holding a grudge about. Write down his or her name, along with everything they said or did to hurt you—or that you took as hurtful. (Sometimes, our perception is different from what people intended, but we can't know that unless we do a reality check with them. For your purposes, though, if you are still hurting, you are still harboring unforgiveness, and you need to deal with things as you perceived them.)

Before the Lord, remember that Jesus was tortured and crucified for every single one of those sins and hurts. He paid for them all. In His strength, release each of those offenses to the Cross, and let go of them. Forgiveness means choosing to let go of our desire to make the other person hurt or pay for what they did, and the reason we can do that is because Jesus both hurt and paid for what our offenders did.

Sometimes, people hesitate to release the offenses because they so deeply want the other person to *understand* how much they hurt us. We have no control over making another person understand; but we can know that Jesus understands. He was there, receiving into Himself, everything that happened to us. (Remember what He told Saul on the road to Damascus? Every time he persecuted Christians, Jesus said he was persecuting HIM.) Not being understood, not receiving compassion from One with a full knowledge of what happened and how much it hurt,

is not an obstacle to us forgiving because Jesus does understand, and His heart is filled with compassion.

I do hope you will get before the Lord and forgive those who hurt you. Otherwise, you will be stuck in pain and the temptation to wallow in self-pity.

One other thing that I wanted to mention, which I wonder might not be a major cause of your difficulties: you said, "I am very outspoken and speak when God says to, which produces a lot of friction."

Uh-oh.

I understand the importance of obeying God. However, people who see themselves as outspoken can be blunt to the point of being needlessly insensitive and abrasive. I'm not saying this is true of you, since I don't know you—but I am just making an observation based on years of watching people. Since you say your outspokenness produces a lot of friction, do you think it's possible that you have set yourself up? Is it possible that you have been prevented from serving where you feel called because the friction you cause disqualifies you as a leader? Consider what the Word commands us about what we say and how we say it:

Speaking the truth in love. . . (Eph. 4:15)

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. (Eph. 4:29)

There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Prov. 12:18)

She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. (Prov 31:26)

Let me just ask you: as the mother of six children (bless your heart!!), how prone are you to give a lot of responsibility to a child who causes friction among his or her siblings? Why would it be any different for those in church leadership?

I am praying as I type that God will soften your heart and enable you to receive this letter, since I know it must be painful to hear that you might be responsible for some of the pain and disappointment you are experiencing. (Again: I do not know this is true since I don't know you.) I do pray that you will have grace to hear my words as coming from a sister who longs to encourage and bless, not to inflict more pain. Please invite the Lord to give you His perspective on my answer and ask Him for help to lay down any defensiveness and sort out what is true.

The Lord bless you and keep you today, _____.

Cordially,

Sue Bohlin

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“How Can I Make It to Heaven If My Boyfriend and I Play House?”

Do you think you will go to heaven if you and your boyfriend stay together like married people? I mean everything, from having sex to going to church? Being faithful to one another? All I'm trying to do is see how can I make it to heaven.

I see married people everyday, getting a divorce. The Bible says "until death do us part." Does a piece of paper matter when you love someone? Pastors, teachers, preachers, etc. marry people everyday and half of the time they're doing wrong, trying to tell us right from wrong.

I am SO glad you wrote!!

There are really two issues in your question: first, how can I go to heaven, and secondly, will "playing house" with my boyfriend when we're not married keep me out?

So let me address them both.

The heaven issue has nothing to do with being "good enough." It has everything to do with Jesus Christ. See, the problem is that all of us are born separated from God. We are sinners and He is a holy God. (God is not responsible for our separation from Him; that's the result of the first man, Adam, choosing to rebel against God. Ever since, all of Adam's children were born as enemies of God.)

But God creates us for Himself and He hates our separation from Him as much as He hates our sin. So He provided a way to solve the separation problem. He sent His Son, Jesus, to earth to live as 100% God and 100% man. After living a perfect, sinless life, Jesus allowed Himself to be crucified to pay the penalty for our sin. He is God-the-Son, but He was willingly separated from God-the-Father to take all of our sins on Himself. He died because of our sin, and then three days later God raised Him from the dead because the debt of our sin was paid in full. And He is alive today—unlike the founder of any world religion.

This is where you come in. You need to decide if you will pay the penalty for your own sin by being separated from God forever—here on earth and then forever in hell when you die. . . or if you will trust in Jesus because He loved you so much He paid for your sin. If you put your trust in Jesus instead

of in yourself, your separation from God will be over and you will continue your friendship with God forever in heaven.

When Jesus was here on earth, He asked His followers, "Who do you say that I am?" He's asking you the same question today. (If you want more information, I invite you to read my story of how I became a Christ-follower [here](#).)

Your second question is about marriage. There is a big problem: every day, as you have noticed, people say "do the right thing," and then they turn around and do wrong. I think this breaks God's heart. But I also think God understands that we are broken and weak people who desperately need Him to live right, but we desperately don't want to surrender our wills to follow Him. We are often like rebellious, disobedient children, spoiled brats who constantly throw temper tantrums because we want our own way and don't want to obey.

None of this detracts from the fact that God's rules for marriage and family are the ones that will keep our marriages and families intact. And one of God's rules is that we enter into marriage, which is where that "piece of paper" becomes important. It's the ceremony before witnesses of making promises and becoming a new family unit that transforms two single people into a married couple. If you talk to those who lived together before they got married, most of the time they will tell you that, even though it surprised them, things were just *different* after the wedding. It really does make a difference. (See also our article "[Is a Marriage Ceremony Necessary?](#)")

I'm glad you wrote. Feel free to ask any further questions.

Sue Bohlin

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“Does the Bible Say Man Will Live Forever on the Earth?”

Does the Bible Say Man Will Live Forever on the Earth?

I'm afraid you heard wrong. The earth will not last forever. (Have you been visited by Jehovah's Witnesses lately?) From www.crossroad.to/heaven/contents/earth_destroyed.htm:

The earth will pass away. Revelation 21:1-4, 1 John 2:15-17

The earth will be burned up. 2 Peter 3:10-13

God will shake and remove the heavens and the earth. Hebrews 12:26-29

The earth will be shaken, broken up, and split apart. Isaiah 24:17-23

The earth will perish like a worn out garment. Psalms 102:25-28, Hebrews 1:10-12 (quoting Psalm 102).

The people God destroyed were evil. This is the same reason a cancer doctor uses surgery, radiation and chemotherapy to kill cancer cells: they are harmful and destructive. See:

Genesis 6:5 (the world before the Flood)

Genesis 18 (Sodom and Gomorrah)

Deuteronomy 5:13; 17:12, 17; 19:19; 22:21-14; 24:7 (God calls for capital punishment to “purge the evil” in His nation of Israel)

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

“Is Pole-Dancing for Exercise Okay for Believers?”

Does Probe Ministries have anything in writing about not doing “pole dancing” like strippers do? A friend wants to do this (just for exercise, she says) but like [yoga](#), I think this is something that is far from Christianity. She refuses to believe it’s anything other than “just exercise” but the whole format is sexual. Please help?

Great question! Let’s think about what the purpose of pole dancing is: pure eroticism. The point of it is to arouse the watcher. If anyone pole dances alone, I would think, it would be in preparation for doing it for an audience, right?

So is there any scenario in which that is acceptable? Absolutely! By a wife, for her husband, in total privacy. There is a biblical precedent for erotic dance of a wife for her husband in Song of Solomon 6. The privacy of a married couple is also, by the way, the only appropriate place for sexy behavior and clothing that would be immodest if worn out in public or for anyone else’s eyes.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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“Help Me Stop Verbal Abuse of My Boyfriend”

I am in a relationship with a wonderful man but I am verbally abusive to him. I become easily frustrated and angry with him when he doesn't know how to get somewhere or when we can't agree on what to eat. I seem to make him feel stupid and not wanted because we have different educational backgrounds. I hate that I am destroying his spirit and, in turn, destroying mine. I know I am verbally abusive but I am having such a hard time stopping and keeping my mouth shut. I don't want to even think the way I do.... I just want to change and love him deeply because now I am just snide and mean.

I am a Christian and a.) I know this is wrong; b.) I want to change, and; c.) I want this relationship to work because he is a sweet, gentle, kind man, marriage material. Do you have any suggestions as to what I can do? I already see a therapist.

The fact that you are aware you are being so unloving and destructive in your relationship is the most important first step to changing it. Good for you!

What occurs to me is that deeply profound truth the Lord Jesus said: “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.” What comes out of your mouth is generated from what's in your heart. Which sounds like [bluntness warning ON] pridefulness, disrespect and self-centerednessfruits of the flesh (see also Galatians 5:19-21).[bluntness warning OFF] I think the problem isn't as much your behavior, but a heart desperately in need of transformation by Jesus. (Please understand: there isn't a single one of us who doesn't desperately need a heart transformation! I was recently asked, “What's your best evidence for the existence of God?” I replied, “He changed my whole life!”)

I'm glad to hear you're a Christian, since your heart issues can be solved by cooperating with the Lord in the sanctification process. And that is usually a process of Him:

1. *Convicting us of sin so we can repent*
2. *Giving us power to change the way we respond to life's challenges, as we depend on Him to do it*
3. *Identifying lies we believe, and helping us replace them with the truth*

I suggest that you make a solemn decision to choose humility before the Lord and with your boyfriend. Pray daily about this, asking the Lord to show you your sin from HIS perspective. Ask Him to break your heart over your pride and arrogance so that you will deeply WANT to repent, and will work hard at changing your bad habits.

At the same time, ask your boyfriend for help in changing the habits you are ashamed of. Choose a code word or phrase that he can say when you are being judgmental, impatient, and frustrated. Give him permission to say the code word/phrase, make a solemn promise that you will not get angry and will instead say, "Thank you for helping me get better." (And pre-decide that if your ego rises up in ugliness, you will tell yourself the truth: "You are being unkind, prideful and ugly. Shut up, flesh. I choose love and kindness instead.")

I have learned that when we are easily frustrated and angry, that is usually the result of harboring unrealistic expectations. (I recently came across a word of wisdom on that: "Expectations are the mother of resentments.") When you find yourself erupting in frustration and anger, pre-decide to ask yourself, "What am I believing about this?" It could be unrealistic beliefs such as, "Men should always know how to get anywhere." "Other people should want the same things I want since I know best." "Men should always have education

levels higher than or at least equal to women." With the Lord's help, work at being more self-aware about what drives your self-centeredness. Ask Him in your prayer times, "Lord, what do You want me to know about myself? Give me grace to hear what You have to say without being defensive."

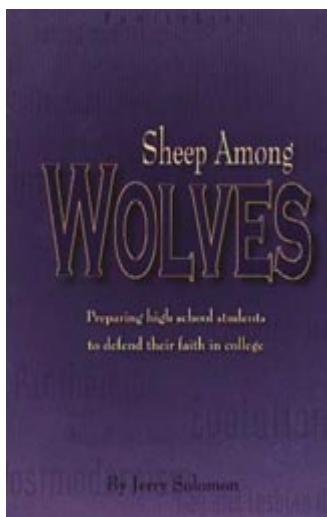
This kind of internal turnaround works best when you "put it on project status," as Dr. Phil says. You have to make it a primary intention and put a lot of mental and emotional and spiritual energy into it. And every time you think about it, give it back to the Lord and invite His help, confessing your desperate need of Him to make you more Christlike. He has all the power you need for exactly what you want.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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Sheep Among Wolves Audio Set



The creator of the Mind Games conference, the late Jerry Solomon, was featured on a week-long series of broadcasts on Family Life Today in 2001. Jerry brought with him into the studio two students, one who had attended Mind Games, and one who did not. He role-plays a hostile [professor](#) antagonistic toward Christianity, and you can hear the effects of Mind Games training on both students. Listen to these broadcasts and you'll understand why it's so important to equip students for the challenges to their faith they will face in a world increasingly hostile to Christianity. . . and why you'll want to send someone you love to [Mind Games](#).

[Audio file: Part 1 of 3](#)

[Audio file: Part 2 of 3](#)

[Audio file: Part 3 of 3](#)

[Sheep Among Wolves article](#)

“I’m a Christian in Love With a Hindu”

Hi, I’m a Christian girl. I’m in love with my friend who is Hindu. I’m much worried for my future. I’m praying for his salvation, so that my marriage goes smooth and we can lead a Christian family life. If I ignore him, also, it would mean I had made a sin. Please give me a helpful guidance, so that I should not sin.

God is very clear about this kind of situation in 2

Corinthians 6:14 (King James Version): “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?” The context of the passage is marriage. If you marry anyone other than a Christ-follower, you cannot and will not have a smooth marriage. This is especially true when the people come from such strongly different worldviews and belief systems. Do pray for your friend’s salvation, but do not date him. We marry people we date and fall in love with; I strongly suggest you distance yourself from him because he is not safe for you spiritually.

If you ignore him—or even withdraw from him—it is not a sin. That is obedience and wisdom, not sin.

I hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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“Your Ministry Is Devoted to Exclusion”

It is amazing that your ministry devotes so much to exclusion.

We are very aware that our views are not popular, but much of what Jesus claimed and said wasn’t popular either. And what we believe and teach is based on what He said. Such as “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except by Me.” That’s about as exclusivistic as anyone can get.

Yet, He also said that after He was crucified, He’d come back

to life three days later, and He did. So that's a pretty convincing argument for believing that what He said was true. About God, about the nature of man, about heaven and hell, about other religions, about sexuality, about philosophy, about ethics. . . the whole ball of wax.

Thanks for writing.

Sue Bohlin

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“Accepting Jesus as Your Savior Means You Won’t Have to Suffer Bad Karma Anymore?”

I have friends who believe that people will suffer bad karma from past lives and it will be carried over to this life. Now, I read in the Bible that if you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior and ask him for forgiveness with a sincere heart, He will wipe away your imperfections and you won’t have to suffer “bad karma” anymore. Is this correct? If not, then what’s the point of asking for forgiveness? Isn’t this what Christ died on the cross for? I need the truth because it will set me free.

What Eastern religions call karma is the Bible’s principle that “a man reaps what he sows” (Galatians 6:7). God created a cause-and-effect universe where our choices have consequences.

In the Eastern systems, each person has to work off his own bad karma. . . over and over and over, through as many

lifetimes as it takes. In contrast, the Bible offers the marvelous gift of forgiveness and grace (God's blessing that we don't deserve) through Jesus Christ. You are right that Jesus takes away the guilt of our sins and the eternal punishment of being separated from God forever. However, although forgiveness takes away the obstacle of sin that separates us from friendship with God, it does not take away the consequences of our choices. In the same way that a parent disciplines his child because he loves him, God allows us to suffer the consequences of our choices so that it builds character and helps us to grow and mature and become wise.

Christ died on the cross to reconcile us to God, but He does not take away the effects of our choices. For example, let's say I steal something from a store. Stealing is a sin, and I then confess it to God, who forgives me because Jesus paid for that sin on the Cross, but He will still let me experience the shame and humiliation of being arrested and having to go to trial and then jail. My relationship with God has been restored, but I still have to experience the consequences of my actions. In the process, He will develop my character and help me to grow from this painful experience, making me more mature and less selfish, preparing me for this life and my life in heaven. But once I die, it's all behind me, forgiven and never to be suffered again.

Does this make sense?

Sue Bohlin

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“Can Cheaters Remarry Without Living in Adultery?”

I want to know is oral sex adultery? My friend's husband cheated on her. She divorced him, but before she divorced him, she had sex with another man. She is now divorced and wants to marry the man she later cheated with. Is this ok? Or since they both cheated, can they remarry without living in a continual state of adultery?

First question: Yes, oral sex is adultery. Oral sex is sex. Having sex with a person when you're married to someone else is adultery. So oral sex is adultery. (Here's a question that moves this question from the hypothetical to the real world: Ask anyone who's married how they would feel about their spouse having oral sex with a third party, and if it constitutes cheating. Most people [those without seared consciences, at least!] would quickly assure you they wouldn't want their spouse even *kissing* another person, much less getting far more intimate than that!)

Second question: It's not so much the living in a continual state of adultery, but the permanent stain of having been adulterers that can never go away. Both people would be marrying people who have demonstrated that they are cheaters. Second marriages have an extremely high failure rate, but it's even higher for those that begin in adultery.

What a sad question. It makes my heart hurt. But I'm glad you asked.

Sue Bohlin