

“Teen Rebellion is Just Individuality”

I read your article on teen rebellion [When Your Teen Rejects Your Values](#). What you call “rebellion” is actually called individuality, not wishing to conform to society’s opinions. Don’t get me wrong, some people just like to go with the flow, nothing wrong with that. It’s just that I don’t think parents should inadvertently squish their son/daughter’s individuality by believing that there is something wrong with them and therefore punishing them for simply being who they want to be and believing what they want to believe. My name is _____ and I’m a High School Student.

Dear _____,

You’re right that some parents define any individuality as rebellion, and that is incredibly sad. The teenage years are a time for you to find out who you are and who you want to be, and it requires people to pull away from their parents in order to do that healthily.

However, the point of our article isn’t to have parents squash individuality, but to deal with truly harmful rebellion. Taking drugs is something more than simply finding out who one is. It causes harm to body, mind and soul. If a girl whose parents have taught her to respect her body and wait for marriage sleeps around with boys, or even “services” them with oral sex in junior high (something which has become an epidemic), that’s not expressing her individuality, that’s being rebellious. (However, it may also be an expression of her need for her daddy’s affection and approval that she didn’t get when she was younger.) And if a teen raised in a Christian home declares herself a Wiccan, that’s way more than individuality, that is rebellion.

Expressing individuality is saying “I want to wear my hair long and green,” which is something our son did when he was in high school. It may be uncomfortable for parents, but there’s no harmful after-effects. Rebellion can be (and usually is) harmful, either to body or soul or both. Rebellion also tends to be disrespectful toward parents and other authority figures, and that is very painful and destructive to the relationship(s).

I just want you to know I DO hear your request that parents honor their teens’ desire to be different from them, but please don’t dismiss the heartbreak of true rebellion as something innocent and necessary for emotional growth.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Should a Woman Work or Stay Home with Children?”

Dear Sue,

I was wondering if you could help me to understand more about your studies from the Bible on the lies of the church. From my understanding from Titus women are called to be at home and bring up the children. Of course some single mothers have to work. But, when the husband is the bread winner, the woman is called to bring up the children, and maintain the home. Of course our society tells us for a woman to be productive she must work to be fulfilled. Can you explain a little bit more about what the implications are from the Bible. Thank you. Because I don’t know what to think? My mother has taught me to work, and the church teaches to stay home.

I'm so glad you wrote me!! I can understand why you might be confused since there are MAJORLY conflicting views on the role of women in our society and even in many churches.

You're right, Titus does instruct women with children to be industrious and to take care of our children. It's important for women to keep our "Focus on the Family," so to speak, because God has ordained for the family to be the place where children are loved and taught and raised to become the people He intends for them to be. I think that whenever possible, in whatever way possible, mothers should be the caretakers of their children because no one can do as good a job as a parent.

But feminism has changed the view of the wife and mother. That worldview says that the only work that matters is work for which you get paid money. It says that the only way to be fulfilled is to produce something that has economic value, either products or services. That's because the feminist viewpoint values material things above people. And the feminist viewpoint really disrespects children and the women who care for their own children. For a philosophy that is supposed to empower women, it's actually very disrespectful toward women unless they agree with feminism's very narrow perspective on what is acceptable.

A big reason for that is that feminism is, at its heart, humanistic. That means that they value mankind as the highest thing there is. No room for the God of the Bible or for God's values and commandments, nor for His heart toward women and the family. So feminism doesn't care that God longs for children to feel safe and loved and cared for, and the best place for that to happen is with a mom who's intensely THERE, with and for her children, instead of a daycare center. Feminism also doesn't understand that a Christian woman who invests her time and energies and gifts into her family will receive eternal rewards. The only thing that matters to a feminist mindset is money and the approval of the world.

Should a woman work? I don't know any who don't. Some get paid for their labor in dollars, and others get paid in other ways. Like the joy of creating a well-run, balanced home for a family that's not stressed out all the time because there's never enough time to get everything done.

In Proverbs 31, the "excellent wife" has several home-based businesses. She keeps a well-run home, is a great wife and mother, and she works at a business. The biblical pattern is that godly women are industrious workers (as opposed to busybodies who gossip and chatter all day). There are business women mentioned in the New Testament whom Paul praises as godly women. And then, young women are instructed to be homemakers, taking care of their children and homes. (There weren't many choices for employment for women in that culture.) There is no one-size-fits-all pattern for all women.

God's plan is that we all work. It's a sin to be a lazy do-nothing. The question isn't about working or not working, it's WHERE you work and how you get paid. The other question is, will your children suffer because you work? Or does the fact that you work mean your children will have food to eat and clothes to wear? It's not a cut-and-dried answer. What you need to do is what God leads YOU to do after praying and seeking His face.

I heard a pastor say on the radio recently that a young mother came to him and said, "I would love to stay home and care for my toddler, but I have to work. We don't have enough money for me to stay home." He had occasion to visit her and was stunned; they lived in a large, new home, with two late-model luxury vehicles in the driveway. Their problem wasn't that they didn't have enough money for her to be her child's caretaker; their problem was that they had chosen a standard of living that put things above people. If they moved to a smaller house and older, less expensive cars, they could have done it.

But then, there are people who literally cannot make it on the husband's salary because it really isn't enough. God understands that, too. And in that case, a wife's outside job is His gift and His provision for a family. That's why it's not a cut-and-dried issue.

If you have children, you might ask why working outside the home is so important. Because you can? Because you're smart? Because you're trained? Because Mom thinks you should? It's pretty cool when gifted, smart, capable women pour all those strengths into their children instead of the workplace. The whole family benefits. Especially in the long run. Because, now that my children are young adults, I see the benefits of pouring myself into them, and I am so very glad I did.

I hope this helps. Feel free to write back if I didn't really answer your specific needs or questions.

Sue

“Is It a Good Idea to Marry Someone I'm Not Attracted To?”

I've been dating a long time friend of mine for three years, and the subject of marriage came up. She is my best friend and we are both saved. Both of us have never married and are 45 years old. We enjoy each other's company, and go to church together. But sometimes I don't think she is pretty. I find myself looking at other girls at times. Would this be hindrance to marriage? I realize that beauty and brawn change over time. But I can't date her forever and don't want to lose

her friendship. Do you have any advice?

It sure sounds like the Lord has blessed you with a wonderful friend. It's quite possible you would be better off friends than spouses. If you don't think she's pretty, does that mean you're not really attracted to her? If you're not attracted to her after three years of dating, it's probably not going to happen. And marriage to someone who only makes a good friend can range from empty and colorless to downright miserable when your heart longs for passion.

The fact that you find yourself looking at other girls is not a problem. It would be a problem if you LUST after other girls. And it would be a problem if your girlfriend catches you looking at other girls in her presence because I assure you, women's egos are really just as fragile as men's.

Read the Song of Solomon. Do you experience that kind of intense love and longing for your girlfriend? That's God's intention for marriage. If what you have is nothing more than a comfortable friendship that has been a convenient base for dating, and if it hasn't developed into real romance after three years, then do yourself and your girlfriend a favor and find someone that you CAN feel that kind of passion for. I'll tell you a secret about women: we long to be wanted. We long to be thought of as beautiful. We long to be lusted after with a holy lust. If you can't give that to your girlfriend, you are cheating both yourself and her. And that's no way to treat a friend.

Hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Aren’t We Sidestepping the Question of a Beginning?”

I just read Sue Bohlin’s [Answering the Big Questions of Life](#). I appreciate having this article available, and as an evangelical, I agree wholeheartedly with her perspective. However, there is a concept in the article that needs tightening up. She states pantheism sidesteps the issue of “why is there something rather than nothing” by claiming an impersonal beginning. But couldn’t Christian Theism be accused of the same thing? When asked where God came from we reply that He is the eternally existent one. Why is our answer any less of a sidestep (in their mind) than theirs is to us?

A couple of reasons, none of which I am convinced are enough for those who don’t want to believe them, but that’s the way of faith. <smile>

First, there is a big difference between believing in an impersonal beginning and claiming that a very Personal Being has always existed. The difference between impersonal matter+space+time always “being there” (actually, then, there WAS no actual “beginning” for the pantheist) and an actual “Person with personality” existing before matter, space and time, is a huge one.

Secondly, our belief that God is the eternally existent one answers the problem of “First Cause.” Before anything happened or existed, something else had to be there, causing it to happen or exist. We live in a cause-and-effect universe. Eventually, if you go back far enough, you have to come to what philosophers call the “First Cause,” an “uncaused cause,” who (or that) simply WAS. If there was ever a time when God did not exist, then something or someone would have had to create Him. But that’s not the way it is; God is the “the buck stops here” First Cause where everything starts, except for

Himself. It's logical, but for those who don't want to accept their accountability to God, they can blow it off. It doesn't make it any less true, though.

Boy, you make me glad I'm "preaching to the choir!"

I hope this hasn't clouded the issue further. But thanks so much for writing!!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Your Articles on Intelligent Design Have Given Me Hope!"

Wow! I feel like I have hope! Lately I've seriously been having doubt about the Christian faith. A big reason for this is the creation/evolution controversy. I'm a freshman at Baylor University. I've been working on my research paper on Christians' reservations on evolution. It's a topic I picked. . . I thought it might help me out with my struggle. Thank you so much for the articles that you have posted on the Probe Ministries website. After all the negative things I've read about evolution and even Jesus, denying that He was even a historical person, I feel more hopeful now. I feel like there's something with this intelligent design theory! It's a much better sounding alternative than some of the other stuff I've read.

Thanks again!

“Can You Give Examples of Subtle Invalidation?”

In Kerby Anderson’s article [Why Marriages Fail](#) he writes, “Invalidation is a pattern in which one partner subtly or directly puts down the thoughts, feelings, or character of the other.”

What other examples can you give of subtle invalidation?

I decided to answer your question because it’s helpful to have a woman’s perspective in addition to a man’s (as what you read in Kerby’s excellent essay). Here’s what I came up with:

- *Rolling the eyes at something a spouse says*
- *Ignoring the spouse when they’re talking*
- *A dismissing or contemptuous tone of voice in saying things like “I don’t think so” or “You’re wrong” or “Like you would know anything about that!” (Note: those very words can be used in affectionate banter when said with a smile and in the context of a spouse’s strengths.)*
- *Any form of sarcasm*
- *Making plans without consulting the spouse (which would affect the spouse)*
- *Ridiculing a spouse’s dreams and hopes, even in jest*
- *Continually rejecting a spouse’s romantic or sexual overtures*
- *Choosing to spend time chatting with internet friends (especially of the opposite sex) over being with one’s spouse*
- *Not acknowledging the heart issues behind the words that a spouse shares*
- *Not looking at a spouse when they’re talking*
- *Being critical of or ridiculing a spouse in public, even in jest*
- *In a dispute or disagreement that involves the children, ganging up with them against the spouse*

• *Saying things to one's kids like "Oh, your mother is just being wierd (stupid, illogical, emotional, etc.) again" or "Don't listen to your father, he doesn't know what he's talking about"*

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Evidence for God's Existence? I Think Not!”

I have just read [your article on the existence of God](#). There are SO many mistakes (and assumptions) you have made that I don't know where to begin:

A “Just Right” Universe?

Of course our planet is 'just right' to sustain life. If it were not we would not be here! There are billions and billions of galaxies, each galaxy has billions of stars, and each star has many planets. So although the chances of life occurring are slim, because there are so many opportunities for it to occur, the chances are that it will almost definitely occur somewhere.

The Nagging Itch of “Ought”

This is to do with moral values. Not Christian values, but just plain humanitarian moral values. We know that in order to survive, social chaos is a bad thing. We don't need a Supernatural all knowing God to tell us this. Common sense

tells us to do to others what you would like them to do to you. Do you seriously believe that without God it is impossible to make moral judgements in the interests of mankind? Don't forget that although we evolved from apes, evolution itself is driven by natural selection, genes that enable us to survive live, and those that don't die. Obviously murdering, stealing, cheating etc, will increase the odds of that happening to you. Therefore it is not in a species' interests to have these characteristics, therefore they die out. We have evolved moral values, they were not bestowed upon us by some god!

Evidence of Design Implies a Designer

Have you not never heard of evolution? Evolution is the non-random development of species through time, through random mutations in its DNA. That means that if it mutates in a bad way, the creature dies. If the mutation is beneficial to its survival then it lives and passes it 'new' genes on to the next generation. The process can take millions of years to evolve simple self replicating molecules (which can and do occur) into a diverse range of species. And hence give the appearance of design.

The Reliability of the Bible

HA!

Reliable and Bible are not two words I use together in a sentence very often! The Bible is full of holes and contradictions, it is the most inconsistent book I have ever read. If you don't believe me have a look at the enclosed text file!

Jesus: The Ultimate Evidence

Jesus? The only evidence that can be found to suggest that he even existed. Is yes... in the Bible! Which insistently was written by unknown authors over 150 years after he

(supposedly) died. It was also written in a different language than Jesus himself would have spoken!

Thank you for writing. You asked no questions, but only made statements which show me that you have not done much research, but you do have strong opinions. Therefore, I will not attempt to answer your comments since I am sure your time is as valuable as mine, and I doubt that you're interested in anything that would contradict your opinions.

I did look at your list of contradictions, and they do not trouble me at all since there is a rational explanation for them. The majority of them are like the contradiction my children experienced when my husband called me "Sue" and they called me "Mommy."

But thank you for writing.

In closing, you might want to consider Pascal's wager: Either Christianity is true or it's false. If you bet that it's true, and you believe in God and submit to Him, then if it IS true, you've gained God, heaven, and everything else. If it's false, you've lost nothing, but you've had a good life marked by peace and the illusion that ultimately, everything makes sense. If you bet that Christianity is not true, and it's false, you've lost nothing. But if you bet that it's false, and it turns out to be true, you've lost everything and you spend eternity in hell.

Quite a wager. . . and every one of us makes it, either consciously or unconsciously.

So, _____, since you haven't checked into the things you confidently assert are true (for example: your statement that there is no extra-biblical evidence for the existence of Jesus. Check out the historian Josephus), are you willing to bet your life and your eternity that you're right?

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

Pascal's wager? You are asking me to believe in God, just in case he is real! If that has to be my reason, then I am not really believing in him, am I? I look at the evidence, if it convinces me then I will believe, if it does not, then I do not believe. Going by Pascal's wager I would have to then subscribe to every earthly religion going, (just in case) their god happens to be true, regardless of any evidence! This of course is not feasible.

Asking me why I don't believe in God is like being asked why I don't believe that a giant invisible pink unicorn called Dodo created the universe! While it is possible, I see no reason to assume so. . .

Let me ask you a question:

I have done nothing wrong. I lead a good fulfilling life, I am certainly not 'evil' just because I don't hold a strong belief in any god(s).

If you were god, as in creator of the universe and all life etc, would you condemn me to burn in hell for all eternity simply for not believing in you?

I have done nothing wrong.

By whose standards? Yours, or God's? Even by yours, you're telling me you have never lied, have never done anything that fell short of your own standards of how people should treat each other, have never done anything you needed to say "I'm sorry" for?

If you were god, as in creator of the universe and all life etc, would you condemn me to burn in hell for all eternity simply for not believing in you?

No, _____, YOU would be condemning yourself.

Look at it this way. You are an astronaut and you are doing a spacewalk. You decide you don't like NASA's ridiculous restrictions about wearing a bulky space suit and staying tethered to the space shuttle, so you decide you're going to be your own boss and not submit to them. You break the tether and take off your space suit.

Is NASA condemning you to die from lack of oxygen and the freezing cold of space? No. . .they are the source of life to you out there in space. They're the ones keeping you alive as long as you stay connected to their technology. YOU would be condemning yourself to die.

God doesn't condemn anyone to a hell separated from Him for eternity. He did everything in His power to make it possible for us to be reconciled to Him. But He does not override our choices, and if you choose to cut yourself off from the only source of life, then you are condemning yourself to eternal death. It's your choice, not God's.

You may not want to believe in God, _____, but that doesn't stop me from praying that He will reveal Himself to you in such a personal and intimate way that you will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that He is there and He loves you more than you can imagine.

Sue

He did everything in His power to make it possible for us to be reconciled to Him. But He does not override our choices, and if you choose to cut yourself off from the only source of life, then you are condemning yourself to eternal death.

You are contradicting yourself. God, as you define him is all powerful. Therefore nothing is beyond his ability! Right?

Therefore there is plenty that he could do (if he existed) that would convince me of his existence. For example if he appeared in a puff of smoke and perform a few miracles, etc. I might just believe him. However, I am forced to rely on evidence such as the Bible! Which to me is not very convincing! On top of this, I am faced with another dilemma, there are other religions, preaching their own beliefs, which are all just as equally feasible as yours! This is why I remain unconvinced!

You are contradicting yourself. God, as you define him is all powerful.

Therefore nothing is beyond his ability! Right?

No, that's not true. God cannot contradict Himself. For example, He cannot create a boulder so big He can't move it. He can't create a round square. Those sorts of things are logical contradictions. God is logical.

Therefore there is plenty that he could do (if he existed) that would convince me of his existence. For example if he appeared in a puff of smoke and perform a few miracles, etc. I might just believe him.

You know what? You could come up with any number of hoops for Him to jump through and still not believe. The problem isn't that the evidence isn't good enough, _____. The problem is a heart that refuses to accept the evidence that's already been given. You and Carl Sagan have a lot in common.

Even mentally disabled children can see the evidence of God's existence and believe in Him. The problem isn't intellect; it's a heart issue.

However, I am forced to rely on evidence such as the Bible! Which to me is not very convincing! On top of this, I am faced with another dilemma, there are other religions, preaching their own beliefs, which are all just as equally feasible as yours! This is why I remain unconvinced!

Only on the surface. No other religions explain reality as well as Christianity, but again, until you truly examine them all with an unbiased eye, and not dismiss them unexamined, it will remain a heart issue.

And that's why I pray for you.

Your friend,

Sue

© December 2000 Probe Ministries

“Help Me Know That God is Really There”

I read your article [Evidence for God's Existence](#). I have always believed in God until recently when I read some articles by James Randi known to most people as “The Amazing Randi.” He seems to be able to disprove the divine power of people who claim to be able to talk to the dead and move objects with their minds with scientific proof that they are merely just cheap parlor tricks. I believe he is correct not only because he says so but because the bible tells us that Jesus was the last person on earth who could do such things as tell the future or perform miracles etc. But what if Jesus knew these parlor tricks which are as old as the hills? I saw Siegfried and Roy make an elephant disappear right before my very eyes in front of a thousand people and admit to trickery. Who is to say that Jesus didn't know how to fool the average person in the same way thousands of years ago? Please understand that I am not being a wise guy. I truly have issues with this because I was such a firm believer in God and Jesus

Christ. If God doesn't exist, then I am truly alone and have wasted many hours and prayers on things that would or wouldn't happen anyway with or without my prayers.

Also, I have been talking to myself all these years and I must be crazy. I realize the consequences of my decision not to believe in God if I am wrong. Somehow that seems trivial while I am still alive. I still go to church every Sunday with my wife. I don't let on that my faith has been diminished because my wife is such a good God-fearing woman and I don't want to impose my beliefs on her or anyone else. Especially if I am wrong. What it boils down to is if science can prove that the existence of God is only something that exists in my mind, and the voice I hear inside myself is my own self, then I am guilty of being a fool. For he who teaches himself has a fool for a master. True the earth is a miracle in itself and surely no parlor trick. I can't explain how it all began if there is no God. But we as just mankind can't even begin to explain any theory with our limited knowledge of the universe. If Siegfried and Roy can make an elephant disappear in front of all those people and admit it is a trick, yet nobody can figure out how it was done, than it is understandable that the beginning of the world which must be a far greater "trick" and is something that we as ordinary individuals can never figure out. Bad things happen in this world that I feel shouldn't. I love my family and my pets. I don't want to see them die. But they must die just as I must die. What if there isn't anything after death and you just lie there in the ground. That beautiful gift of life has been destroyed. I can't accept that a loving God would take these things away from me or anyone who hold them so near and dear to their heart. Could it be that God is for the weak minded who need direction and discipline to get through life without going off course for their own good? Is life just a crap shoot anyway where what ever happens, happens whether you pray or not? Please forgive me if I have offended you with my talk of disbelief but I thought if anyone could answer my questions, you could. I

don't mean any disrespect. I need to know that God is really there to hear my prayers and help me to make decisions. I need to know that I am not on my own in this world and my prayers are heard and answered according to his word not just my imagination or wishful thinking.

Dear _____,

Bless your heart! Thank you you SO MUCH for sharing your deep thoughts and fears with me. I have two things to say in response.

1. The best thing Jesus ever did to prove that what He did was true miracles and not tricks was to rise from the dead. How do you counterfeit THAT? The resurrection is the strongest evidence for the truth of Christianity that we have. Consider that the disciples, who had been so disheartened by His death (even though He had promised several times to rise from the dead), were so turned around by seeing Him alive again that they changed the world and were willing to die for their belief in a risen Savior. If it were only a trick, no one would have died for a lie. May I suggest you get a hold of Lee Strobel's book *The Case for Christ* and shore up your faith? I think that book will really help. (Consider also other people—like Strobel the former skeptic—who set out to prove the resurrection false, like Frank Morison, and were so overwhelmed by the evidence that they became believers and wrote books like *Who Moved the Stone?*)

2. I believe that the doubts that assail you are nothing more than spiritual warfare. I think you are being attacked by the spiritual forces of darkness, and I gently suggest you read Ephesians 6 and put on the armor of faith to fight these horrible attacks. I have also been impressed by Kay Arthur's book *Lord, Is It Warfare?* to help deal with spiritual warfare in the form of attacking doubts.

_____, I am completely convinced that this period of doubts

in your life is like being outside on a bright sunny day when the sun disappears because it is obscured by a cloud. . . temporarily. You are not alone—you would not BELIEVE how many e-mails I get just like yours. You have put your faith in an eternal truth, not in lie. I promise.

Cheerily in Jesus,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Help Me Understand Fasting”

The spiritual discipline of fasting is new to me and I have several questions about it.

- 1. When I felt the Spirit move me to fast I was unsure of the direction. I often hear that still small voice and try my best to follow it immediately. Do I need a specific direction in order to fast?**
- 2. I usually fast for 24 hours but I had a pastor suggest we fast for our government officials for half a day. Other than divine direction is there a specific duration that is acceptable?**
- 3. If I fast for a specific desire, not a worldly type but a family type desire, will God honor it if I unconsciously slip and eat then repent and continue fasting?**
- 4. Are there wrong reasons to fast, other than selfish reasons of course?**

1. When I felt the Spirit move me to fast I was unsure of the direction. I often hear that still small voice and try my

best to follow it immediately. Do I need a specific direction in order to fast?

No. But it might be good to be still before Him, in listening prayer, asking, "What more do You want to tell me about fasting, Lord?" Then listen until He gives further word.

2. I usually fast for 24 hours but I had a pastor suggest we fast for our government officials for half a day. Other than divine direction is there a specific duration that is acceptable?

We operate under grace. The Lord is pleased with whatever you give Him, as long as it's His idea and His power and not something you do in your own flesh (in your own power without relying on Him). There is no prescribed length of time for a biblical fast; divine direction is the ONLY way to go! When someone makes a suggestion, go to the Lord and ask Him, "Is this what You want me to do?" The answer will either be a green light, yes, go ahead, or a red light, a check in your spirit, and He has a different answer for you.

3. If I fast for a specific desire, not a worldly type but a family type desire, will God honor it if I unconsciously slip and eat then repent and continue fasting?

I believe so. He judges our hearts and knows our intentions. He wants us to succeed more than we do! There is NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1), so just pick yourself up again and keep on going.

4. Are there wrong reasons to fast, other than selfish reasons of course?

Other than self-centered reasons? Only disobedience. For instance, a person might have good and godly intentions to

fast, but the Lord says don't. He knows that he has a blood sugar imbalance but the person doesn't, and fasting would be dangerous.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Do You Know Why My Dreams Come True?”

I have been searching for a long time for the answer to a very curious question. I'm a 15 yr old boy, and for a long time I have been having dreams that come true. I'm not sure why. I was wondering if you had any educated guesses. On more than one occasion these dreams have saved my hide, and have never led me away from God. On the contrary, they have strengthened my faith in Him. But the only thing they don't "shine a light on" is why. I remind myself every day to be humble, but I can't help wondering if I'm "special." I was just wondering if you could give me some insight. I am SURE it's not Satan, dreams aren't my only specialty. If I concentrate—really hard—I can see through deception. I'm also an empath: I can feel other people's emotions. And finally, I can heal people, but not like they do on tv. It's different. It's more like I feel their pain and fix that, not their body. Anyways, if you have any ideas, please let me know.

P.S.- I'm not crazy, promise.

Hi _____,

First of all, I believe you. You are describing a supernatural

kind of life where the power comes from God and not yourself, and that is the kind of “abundant life” that Jesus was talking about bringing to us.

I have been having dreams that come true. I'm not sure why. I was wondering if you had any educated guesses. On more than one occasion these dreams have saved my hide, and have never led me away from God. On the contrary, they have strengthened my faith in Him. But the only thing they don't "shine a light on" is why.

Concerning your dreams—I think that God communicates to us in dreams all the time, but most of us aren't listening. People in the Bible gave a great deal of weight to dreams, and God spoke to people through dreams fairly frequently. So your experience is within the boundaries of what is biblically valid. Others have written to me about the same thing, by the way. I think that as long as your dreams continue to draw you to God and strengthen your faith and relationship with Him, it's a gift for which you can give thanks and enjoy. The important thing is to continue to ask Him for HIS wisdom and interpretation.

I remind myself every day to be humble, but I can't help wondering if I'm "special."

Are you special? Absolutely—in the same way that God makes all of us special, and gives us special gifts, abilities, talents and passions, so that we can be like stained glass windows for His light to shine through with special, unique beauty. Please remember that God gives gifts to serve Him by serving others and not for our own enjoyment, although the exercise of our gifts IS a blessing to us. So I encourage you to always be looking to see your gifts as a way to serve rather than to draw attention or glory to yourself.

I was just wondering if you could give me some insight. I am

SURE it's not Satan, dreams aren't my only specialty. If I concentrate—really hard—I can see through deception.

That sounds like it might be the spiritual gift of discernment, the ability to distinguish between spirits (1 Cor. 12:10). People with that gift are able to spot phonies and liars, as well as to tell when there is evil present. This is an ability that the Holy Spirit gives, and is not a natural ability. The purpose of this gift is to function like an early warning system for the Body of Christ, so the rest of us—who don't have this gift—can be warned of unseen realities that would hurt us or trick us.

I'm also an empath: I can feel other people's emotions. And finally, I can heal people, but not like they do on tv. It's different. It's more like I feel their pain and fix that, not their body. Anyways, if you have any ideas, please let me know.

The gift of healings is also a spiritual gift (see 1 Cor. 12:9), and again, the purpose of this gift is to bless and serve others. It's entirely possible that God uses you as His channel of blessing to others to heal their emotional pain.

I do want to make sure, though, that you understand it is essential to be *excruciatingly* discerning about your dreams, exposing them and your interpretations of them to the light of Scripture. If God is speaking to you through your dreams, it will always—ALWAYS!—be consistent with what He has said in His Word, and never contradict either His Word or His character as revealed in His Word.

Let me know if this makes sense, and especially if these answers bring you peace. I do believe that God leads us and confirms things through the presence—and absence—of His peace.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries