

# **“Does Fornication Ruin Your Life Forever?”**

I recently had a child outside of marriage. Upon being brought up inside the church with a family who have strong Christian beliefs, I found pregnancy to be the most unhappy time of my life, with family sicknesses making me more stressed.

I knew what to expect from my family, with feelings of disappointment all round, but they have grown to be supportive and love my daughter. Although they seem to have accepted the new lifestyle I will lead, I myself cannot come to terms with things.

I constantly go over my mistakes, wishing I could rewind time. I would have done so many things differently. I've been going out with my boyfriend for a long time but I feel we have made so many mistakes. I love my boyfriend to bits and couldn't lose him after nearly four years of going out and don't want to make things sound like he is a mistake. Even more so, when I say I wish this situation had never happened, I feel like I am saying that I wish my daughter wasn't here, which isn't true because I love her to bits too!

I can't rid the shame I feel and felt throughout pregnancy. I read so many magazines that talked about happy expectant mothers-to-be and how to enjoy pregnancy and the blooming process. I cannot say I felt the same way. Right now I hate everything I have done and feel I have let my family down. I feel all the respect I built up over the years has amounted to nothing.

Not only that but my personal dreams have been affected. By now, I always imagined I'd have a big house, be well into my career and be married with a good Christian man. Instead everything is the total opposite and I feel I no longer have a

purpose to serve or way to enjoy life. I feel I've ruined everything. I'd never have thought I'd have ever been in this situation. I saw it happen to friends of mine also in church previously and had deep sympathy for them. But going through it yourself is 100 times worse.

I feel alone, hopeless, depressed, and unloved. My boyfriend wants us to get married, go back to church and get our lives back on track but I don't know how to because all I feel is constant pain and reminders of what I've done. After all, the baby has to be a reminder and I can't forget her. I feel like my mistakes will affect my life forever.

I also feel a slight anger in all of this with myself, my boyfriend and certain friends. I can't understand why I had to be made to be everyone's gossip and selected out of all the girls in the world to be made an example of. I feel so hard done by, especially more so as I was trying ever so hard to change and that was when I was hit with the news. I still hear a couple of my friends talking of their fornication and can't help but feel angry that they are not being frowned upon by the church as people are none the wiser of their goings on, which I know is bad for me to feel, but I am full of all kinds of emotions right now.

When will the sun shine for me? I can't take much more of these cloudy days?!

Very unhappy.

You have touched my heart with your letter. I am so sorry for the pain you are going through, but I have *such* good news of comfort and HOPE for you! I have a dear friend in our church who was in your exact shoes. God is using Ellen so mightily now, and blessing her life so much, that when people make a list of who is most used by God in our church, she's right up near the top—and that is no exaggeration. I asked her to write a response to your letter, which follows my remarks.

One thing I want to share is that a mark of maturity is the ability to distinguish between a bad choice you have repented of, and the grace of God giving us good things even as a result of that bad choice—like your precious daughter and your boyfriend. You can say that you sinned, that you made a bad choice, and still embrace the goodness of God in giving you two wonderful people who love you, and they don't cancel out each other. That's what grace looks like: God continues to bless us even though we don't deserve it. He's such a good and loving God! He is inviting you to enjoy His blessings with a smile on His face—all you have to do is decide to “turn your cup right side up” to receive the joy of those blessings.

Also, I strongly encourage you to forgive yourself. That's really about embracing God's forgiveness, which He has already given you if you have trusted Christ, but 1 John 1:9 says God not only forgives us, He *cleanses* us from all unrighteousness. Make a decision to “turn your cup right side up” to receive His cleansing, which will wash away the guilt and, in time, the shame you carry.

Enjoy the letter that follows from someone who is praying for you and absolutely understands you.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin

Dear friend,

When I read your email today I could truly sense the sadness and hurt in your heart. I have prayed for you many times today already. I am deeply sorry for your heartache. But I have a message of hope for you: God loves you desperately and He is a God of second, third, and fourth chances. His arms are outstretched to you, just waiting for you to accept His love and forgiveness.

I could understand your pain because my story is similar to

yours. I, too, grew up in a strong Christian home. I trusted Jesus as my Savior when I was five years old. I remember that night clearly, my Mom and Dad had shared with me in God's word that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). That included me. I was a sinner. But, God loved me so much that He provided a way for me to spend eternity in Heaven. He sent his only Son, Jesus, to be born of the virgin Mary, live a sinless life and then die on the cross for all the sins I had (and ever will) commit. Then He was raised from the dead on the third day! The Bible says in Ephesian 2:8-9, "For by grace are you saved through faith, it is a gift of God, not of man, so that no man can boast." By placing my faith in Jesus alone, not counting on anything that I could do, I could spend eternity in Heaven. If you have never made the decision to trust Jesus as your Savior, you can do that right now. It is not enough to know the information, you must receive it as your own.

I did that when I was young, but as I got older, I began to drift away from the Lord.

I, too, got pregnant outside of marriage. I, too, felt like it was unfair that all the other girls who I knew were sleeping with their boyfriends didn't get "caught." I felt the course of my life was altered forever. It wasn't the way I had planned my life. But, I can tell you, I know now that it was a situation that God allowed for my life so that He could be glorified.

I say that because what I came to understand was that I was living my life according to how I thought it should go and doing whatever I wanted. I know now that getting pregnant was God's way of shaking me by the shoulders and saying, "OK, you did it your way, but I have a better plan for your life. Follow Me now." I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that my precious daughter was a gift from God, not a punishment, to gently push my life back on track. All children are special, but I feel that she saved me from even more

potential bad choices had I not become a mother when I did.

I now want to fast forward my life for you eight years. I did marry my boyfriend and we will celebrate our 8th wedding anniversary next month. Our daughter is 7 1/2, and our son is 2 1/2. We are very involved in our church where we serve in the High School ministry. I have shared my testimony several times with many girls. My story, by the grace of God, has been beneficial to many people. I have girls who ask me to keep them accountable for their behavior with their boyfriends. They ask me advice, and God speaks to them through me. Not everyone knows my story, not everyone remembers how my husband and I started out, but, for some, it is a blessing. Maybe God allowed this in my life so I could share my story with you. Maybe there is another girl who you will be able to bless with your story some day.

Satan is the father of all lies and would have loved for me to think that I messed up, so why bother with church, God, or anything like that. He wants you to believe that as well. All your negative thoughts about yourself and situation come from Satan, not God.

God, on the other hand, is the Father in Heaven who loves you so much and wants to pour out blessings on you. Choose to accept His love. Choose to live in His forgiveness. He wants the absolute best for your life. His plan for your life is perfect. While it is hard to understand why He allowed this in your life, focus your attention on Him. Get to know Him. Listen to praise music and praise God. Allow Him to fill you up. Let God fill the void in your heart. After all, He is the only one who can. Although my husband is a wonderful, fun, sweet, caring man who loves the Lord, if I look to my husband to fulfill all of my needs I will be disappointed. Only God can fulfill my deepest needs and desires. He made us that way.

My story did not turn out great because I married the father

of my baby, my story turned out great because I let God lead me and love me. Not all girls in our situations end up marrying their boyfriends, and they can still have a wonderful life and relationship with God.

Some women who have had sex outside of marriage end up with so much guilt that they can't enjoy a sexual relationship when they do get married. That is not what God intends. Sex is a gift to married couples, and God meant for it to be enjoyed, guilt-free. Pray that when you do marry, you will let God take away your guilty feelings so that you can enjoy an intimate relationship with your husband as God intended. I would encourage you to abstain from sex until you do marry. You can start over.

I would also encourage you to go back to church. Hold your head up high when you walk in the door. God loves you. The creator of the universe cherishes you! He is proud to be your Heavenly Father.

While changing your thinking will not be easy, it can be done. Trust God, pray that you can believe the wonderful things about yourself that He thinks about you. Pray with your boyfriend. Thank God for your precious daughter. Thank God that he shook your shoulders, too! This can be a turning point in your life. Choose to let yourself be loved by God and His people.

I will continue to pray for you, your boyfriend, and your daughter. May the Lord bless you abundantly. If you would like to correspond further, I would be happy to.

By His Grace Alone,

Ellen

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# **“What’s a Good Book to Give to a Seeker?”**

My coworker seems to be searching about religion in general. She is a single mom and I want to provide her a book to gain insight into Christianity and how it will change her life. Something that is simple and easy to read. Do you have any recommendations?

Yes!! Lee Strobel’s excellent book *The Case for Christ*. Your coworker doesn’t need Christianity. . . she needs Jesus. Strobel was a hardened atheist, a journalist for the *Chicago Tribune*, who chased down experts who could talk to him about Christ. It not only is very convincing, it’s a wonderful way to walk through his steps toward placing his faith in Christ himself.

I’m glad you asked!

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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# **“Why Do We Pray at All if God Already Has a Plan?”**

For as long as I can remember, I’ve always thought that God has a purpose for everything. Everything happens for a reason, whether this event is good or bad. Is this a good assumption?

Although rarely do I pray for gifts or anything to happen, it occurred to me that this is a pretty common practice. Last night my Bible-study group prayed for the safe trip of a

friend to a missions trip in Europe, but lately, I've been wondering this... if indeed God has a purpose for everything, then if my friend didn't have a safe flight to Europe (really worried about my friend here), then God willed it and there's a larger purpose for that. This, for me, answers "why good things happen to bad people," and I can accept that, but my real question is why do we pray at all? Why do we pray for certain events to steer a certain direction if God has a plan for it to go either way and it'll happen according to plan anyway regardless of what we ask? Does that make sense? .. or am I looking at this completely skewed? Please help.

*For as long as I can remember, I've always thought that God has a purpose for everything. Everything happens for a reason, whether this event is good or bad. Is this a good assumption?*

Yes, it is, because the Bible teaches us that God is sovereign—He is in control over everything that happens. Things may not be God's first choice, for example when we sin, but He is powerful enough that He can make good come out of evil.

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If we look at what the Lord Jesus taught us about prayer, we see that it's about aligning ourselves with God's kingdom, with His values, and with His character. I like the word



“align” because I think it accurately reflects what we need to do in light of the effects of the fall, when we were all plunged into a state of sin. This means we are out of alignment with God and prefer instead to indulge our own desires. Just as we sometimes have to take our cars into the shop to get our wheels realigned when they “want to” go in a different direction than the designers’ intent, prayer is about submitting ourselves to God, aligning ourselves with Him and His purposes. So prayer isn’t mainly about telling God what we want so He can give us our heart’s desire, it’s supposed to be about submitting to His will even as we share our desires with Him, with the understanding that if He wants something different and better than what we want, we acknowledge that He has the right to do whatever He wants because He is God and we are not.

We pray to communicate with God, because communication is an absolutely essential part of maintaining a relationship. And Christianity is about relationship with God, not rules and rituals. We pray because He invited us to ask Him for whatever we want, just like He invited Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted, and hopefully that kind of divine generosity and open-heartedness will call us to ask thoughtfully, like Solomon, with an awareness of how big and powerful and loving God is. We pray because we are and can do nothing without God and we need Him desperately. We pray because it reminds us that we are completely dependent on God like American astronauts are dependent on NASA to keep them alive up in space. We pray because it reminds us of our relative size and position before God.

*Why do we pray for certain events to steer a certain direction if God has a plan for it to go either way and it’ll happen according to plan anyway regardless of what we ask? Does that make sense? .. or am I looking at this completely skewed? Please help.*

Well, if you read the prayers of the apostle Paul in the New Testament, you see that he didn't spend a lot of time praying for things to go a certain way. He certainly prayed about his hopes and intentions, such as his desire to go into Asia to preach the gospel, but the Holy Spirit told him no, which he humbly accepted (Acts 16) because he lived his life in an attitude of submission and obedience. I think the wisest course of action is to lift events and concerns into God's hands, telling Him what we would like and then yielding to Him about the whole thing. Which is the pattern we see modeled by the Lord Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane the night before He died. He poured out His heart to the Father, asking Him if there was ANY way to escape the cup of suffering before Him, but yielding by saying, "Yet not My will, but Thine be done." I think that cultivating an attitude of "Thy will be done" is the most important part of prayer. That goes along with Paul's admonition of how to pray in Philippians 4:6 when he says to "let your requests be made known to God." We don't demand, we offer our requests, leaving them in the hands of a God who knows what is best and loves us perfectly.

God is sovereign and yet when we pray it makes a difference. Jesus invited us to take His yoke upon us, which makes us not only His companions but co-laborers in the kingdom. I think that praying keeps us connected to our Source, Jesus, so it is a way to keep on abiding in Him and allowing Him to abide in us. So we pray not to get what we want out of God like some cosmic vending machine, but to keep us connected to and dependent on Him, which is what we were created for in the first place.

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

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# **“I’m Depressed; What Causes Happiness?”**

I am depressed right now and so is my friend. What causes happiness? I don’t want the chemical description, but what stuff, like situations and actions, causes happiness? I know that the Bible says that just because we are Christians, doesn’t mean we won’t suffer. But how would I get out of depression? I don’t want an answer like read your Bible and pray, because I do that every night, and here I am still depressed. There’s no fun in life anymore, and somewhere along the line, I lost the fire of the Spirit. I wish I could get it back.

I realize yours is a very serious question, and having walked through deep depression with our son several years ago, I would be the LAST person to give you the cliché of “read your Bible and pray more.”

Sometimes, depression is caused by a brain chemical imbalance. In that case, medications are the best way to adjust the brain chemistry. Sometimes, depression is caused by unconfessed sin. That needs to be faced, repented of, and confessed, both to God and to other people. Sometimes, depression is caused by loss and sorrow. The way out of that kind of depression is to embrace the grieving process. That means facing and feeling the pain of loss and grief so that you can let go of it. (That also means crying, yelling, journaling one’s feelings, or all of the above.)

One very wise person has said that an intrinsic part of happiness is having something to look forward to. I have found this to be true.

So what causes happiness? Generally speaking, it's:

- cultivating a positive attitude (This is admittedly harder for people with melancholy temperaments.)
- not having anything sad going on
- the presence of something worth anticipating
- having friends; healthy relationships is an important part of happiness

And probably the most important thing I have to offer you is the suggestion that you cultivate a grateful heart. People who get in the habit of looking for and expressing gratitude for the small and large blessings of life find themselves in better physical and emotional health. One of the best things you can do for yourself right now is to invest in a small notebook and write in your "Gratitude Journal" every single night before going to bed. Write down ten things you are grateful for, things in which God showed you He loves you, things that went well during the day. Things like parts of your body that work and aren't in pain. Things that are easy to take for granted but which you would REALLY miss if they went away tomorrow, like your bed, running water, electricity, heating and air conditioning, having transportation, paved roads, lungs that breathe for you without having to think about it. . . you get the picture?

Usually, I suggest people write down three things, but if you're really struggling with depression, ten will help more. It will help you focus on the many, many good things in your life instead of focusing on the flatness and darkness of your depression.

Let me know several months down the road how you're doing, OK?

Sue Bohlin

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# **“There Is No Evidence for God or the Bible”**

I read your article about the [evidence for God's existence](#). Although it was an interesting article, I didn't really see any evidence of God's existence in the article. I am a believer in God's existence. However, my belief is strictly faith based. I suppose it is possible that God does not exist. I choose to believe that he does. There are many things in the world we live in and our Universe that are truly amazing and unexplainable. But just because something is strange, amazing, awesome, mind boggling or unexplainable, does not mean it is evidence of God's existence.

Just like the existence of God cannot be proven, the Holy Bible itself can not be proven that it is the inspired word of God. There simply is no evidence. It is faith that people have in that it is the word of God. It can never be proven. This is very hard for many Christians to accept, but it is the undeniable truth. You believe because you choose to believe and for no other reason.

I think perhaps you misunderstand the difference between evidence and proof. I agree with you that we do not have proof of God's existence or that the Bible is the Word of God. However, what we do have is very powerful evidence that choosing to put our trust in God in His word is a reasonable choice.

Recently my husband was up on the roof of our house putting up Christmas lights. From inside the house, I heard noises above my head that sounded like footsteps. And when I looked out the window, I saw a man's shadow on the ground that indicated there was a person on the roof. Since Ray had told me he was

going up on the roof, I believed he was up there. Could I prove it from inside the house? No, but it was completely reasonable for me to look at the evidence and conclude my husband was putting up Christmas lights.

Sometimes people look evidence full in the face and then deny it. Our founder, Jimmy Williams, is fond of telling the story of the man who went to a psychiatrist convinced that he was dead. The psychiatrist was unsuccessful at talking him out of his illusion. Finally he asked him, "Do dead men bleed?" The patient said no, they don't. The psychiatrist pulled out his Swiss army knife, reached over and nicked the man's finger. Amazed, the patient exclaimed, "Well, how about that! Dead men DO bleed!"

See the difference between evidence and proof?

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

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## **"Why Wouldn't God Let Me Commit Suicide?"**

Hi Sue,

I just read your article [Do People Who Commit Suicide Go to Hell?](#). I believe everything you say to be true and biblical...and then I get stuck.

I have bi-polar depression, I thank God that I am now stable, but last year there were many times when I seriously considered suicide. I believe in God, His grace, and Christ's death for all sinners, and I believe, like Romans 8 says that

we can never be separated from Him – but my one question is, “Why am I still here? Wouldn’t it have been/be much easier to die and be with Him in His glory for eternity?” I mean I’m not sure that the suffering is worth it...

I believe God kept me from suicide...but I still wonder if it’s so easy to be with Him (in death) then where’s the catch?

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Bless your heart. I have friends who are bipolar and we have gone through some DEEP depression with our son over this.

What’s the catch, you ask?

Well, to make what’s probably a weak analogy, are you familiar with the NBA draft that has signed young basketball players just out of high school? Oh wait, I see you are in another country. Oh well—I bet you can appreciate it anyway. . . There is a promise of money and fame and glory for these young athletes, so why “waste” their time in college when they could be making big bucks playing basketball? Sounds good—only, they are too young to appreciate the maturing process that happens in college. So often, they crash and burn once they turn professional because they’re not ready. The trials of being a college student, it turns out, are deeply beneficial for maturity and character development; they prepare students for life as professional athletes.

Our life on earth isn’t a holding tank or a detention center where we impatiently wait out our time until we’re given a “green light” to die and go to heaven. (I know, it’s easy to think of it this way, particularly for sensitive people who really hate living in a fallen world.) God’s purpose in leaving us on earth once we are saved is to grow holiness and maturity and strength in us, a process that would be short-circuited by an early death. It would mean we enter heaven in a state of “arrested development,” so to speak. Since the scriptures speak of being given power, authority and

responsibilities in heaven, the only place and time we have to develop our stewardship is here on earth.

I understand your feelings of not being sure if the suffering is worth it, but that's because of not having an adequate view of God and of heaven and of your future, not to mention not understanding the value of suffering. (If I may be so bold as to recommend my own article on that subject. . . it's the best thing I've ever written: ["The Value of Suffering."](#))

Yes, it would be a lot easier to be in heaven than to continue to live in a fallen world and a fallen body on earth, but God isn't into "easy," God is passionately committed to fashioning us into the image of His Son. I'm afraid there are no shortcuts, but you can be assured that every difficult day you endure, every trial and every heartache, is being used to achieve that "weight of glory" in you (2 Cor. 4:17). God never wastes suffering, not a scrap of it. He redeems all of it for His glory and our blessing. Every single tear you have shed is so precious to your heavenly Father that He has them stored in a heavenly bottle. He hasn't turned away or forgotten you.

\_\_\_\_\_, I pray you will know His comfort and peace like a warm blanket enveloping your soul.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

*(Follow-up e-mail from Sue)*

I have continued to think about your question and my answer, and the Lord put it on my heart to send you a P.S.

I have a young friend (early 20's) who attempted suicide several years ago but survived. She couldn't understand why God didn't just take her to heaven, either. Why wouldn't He honor her (seemingly) reasonable request to be with Him in glory?



Well, not too long after her suicide attempt she met a wonderful man, got married, and just had a precious little baby. On both her wedding day and then especially when she first held her newborn infant in her arms, she was overwhelmed with thanksgiving that God DIDN'T take her home to be with Him when she wanted it. She realized that God still had blessings to lavish on her that couldn't come in heaven. As a cystic fibrosis patient, she understands that she also has certain trials and pain ahead of her, but the joy far outshines the darkness.

This brings up one of answers to the question, What is the purpose of life? –For God to bring glory to Himself by lavishing His love and grace on us. All of creation, including the unseen realities in the heavenlies, is given the opportunity to see evidence of God's character and heart as He pours out His blessings on the people He made in His image. And that's one of the reasons why so many people who have been tempted to kill themselves are prevented from doing so—because God still has blessings in store and we need to be HERE on earth to receive them.

Warmly,

Sue

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## **“I Need Resources for My Porn Addiction”**

I need help with a problem. I need a number I can call—to a ministry that doesn't exist—from what I have been able to research. It might also be that I am, well, a little crazy to expect a match for myself. Is there a ministry that you all

are aware of for people to get, like a prayer partner, when you are basically a sex(porn) addict? I can not deny my Lord, but I can't seem to control myself with this sin, without compounding it into a greater sin. I hope that doesn't sound too odd. Any help would be appreciated.

I do have some suggestions for you, and bless you for asking. Praise God, there IS help!!

Online, may I suggest these sites:

My favorite is Setting Captives Free, which has a blow-your-socks-off excellent online 60-day Bible study course (that is FREE!!) called "The Way of Purity." This Christ-centered course not only addresses the core issues that contribute to a porn addiction, but they provide online mentors for every student:

[www.settingcaptivesfree.com](http://www.settingcaptivesfree.com)

Dr. James Dobson provides resources here:  
[www.drjamesdobson.org/pornography-resources](http://www.drjamesdobson.org/pornography-resources)

Every Man's Battle has a great book, a great seminar to attend, and online support: [www.everymansbattle.com](http://www.everymansbattle.com)

Help in Breaking Pornography Addiction: [www.freed4life.me](http://www.freed4life.me)

One other resource: Neil Anderson has helped MANY men with sex addictions through his book *A Way of Escape*.

I pray for you, \_\_\_\_\_, that God will show you the way of escape through the glorious truth that your "old man" was crucified with Christ and the new you was raised with Him. . . and that the way out of this addiction is to stop trying harder (which I'm sure you are an expert at) and depend fully on Jesus to live HIS powerful, holy life through you. The way out of sexual addiction is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

I do hope this helps.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin

Posted 2002; revised Aug. 2023

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## **“How Do I Handle My Husband’s Porn Addiction?”**

For the past year or so, I have been recording and watching where my husband visits hardcore porn sites. This has been extremely painful for me. What is wrong with me? He never seems interested in me, I have provided a good sexual relationship for us. He tries to hide this, I have confronted him twice, each time to be told “they aren’t real people”—YES they are! He stays up until 3 or 4 a.m. each night and views this stuff. He sleeps until 2 or 3 in the afternoon. We have a daughter who is four, I wish he would spend more time with us. I have also viewed conversations he has had with coworkers regarding women he works with. I have viewed emails he has sent to online “whores” including pics and descriptions on what he would like to do with them. I am tired and starting to feel a little numb to all this. My doctors have told me to “learn to accept it or just leave.” This is a little more complicated than that. I have asked for counselling once – he is TOTALLY against it. I am about to give up and ask him to leave, do you think this is too excessive and that I should give him another chance? I am tired and don’t want to deal with it anymore. I hate that porn has ruined our marriage. Thank God for my closest friends and for the occasional comment from other men. Help me, please.

I am so very, very sorry that you have to deal with your

husband's addiction. PLEASE KNOW—this is not about you. There is nothing wrong with you. This is about him. You could be as gorgeous as a supermodel with the world's most perfect body and he would still have the addiction, because it's doing something for him that is completely separate from you.

I want to suggest some excellent resources for you to help you cope with a situation you can't change AND to bring glory to God in the process.

Porn-Free.org has a helpful essay, "Help for Christian Spouses of Sex Addicts" at [www.porn-free.org/spousehelp\\_christian.htm](http://www.porn-free.org/spousehelp_christian.htm)

The Covenant Eyes blog has a helpful article, [7 Questions Wives of Porn Addicts Often Ask](#).

[Spouse Healing](#) article from the Sex Addiction Lifeline Foundation.

The very wise, very experienced Renee Dallas has an excellent website called "Wifeboat" with a section for [wives of men with porn addiction](#).

There are several articles on CafeMom.com. Do a search for "wives of porn addicts": [thetir.cafemom.com/search.php?keyword=wives+of+porn+addicts](http://thetir.cafemom.com/search.php?keyword=wives+of+porn+addicts).

Henry Rogers, a dear friend of Probe, has written a wonderful book on this called *The Silent War*. Having researched this difficult topic thoroughly, he says the first thing wives need to know is that IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU.

In fact, in a chapter called "The Wounded Wife," he reprints "Emily's Story":

"I write this out of love. Love for the porn addict, love for his wife, and most of all for the children. I pray this chapter is used for God's glory and honor, that it might somehow prevent families from being destroyed.

"I remember listening to a panel of women James Dobson had on his radio program. They talked about being married for over 20 years and discovering their husbands were involved in pornography. It seemed so unfathomable to me that someone could be deceived for so long. I remember thinking how stupid those women were. Little did I realize I would be one of those women less than a month later.

"It was like a birth process. Pain, agony, sweat, tears, hours of intense hurt, and finally truth. My husband is a porn addict. I heard it. I reacted. For two weeks I was numb. Numb to after 20+ years knowing something was wrong, but not knowing what. A relief to finally know the truth. A relief to now live in reality in light and truth rather than the unreality of darkness and deception. My husband would never tell me the secrets of his past before our marriage. I always thought if I loved him enough some day he would tell me. If I loved him enough. . . .

"We always had a difficult marriage. My husband was always withdrawn and quiet. I thought I could help him. I was outgoing, attractive, and spontaneous. In our marriage I could never do anything good enough. I was constantly criticized and put down. I thought it was me so I started a self-improvement program, more counseling, more seminars. I learned more was never enough. My world stopped, knowing something had died in me.

"My husband always seemed to be "tuned out" in another world. He worked long hours and often fell into bed at 2 a.m. I missed him. I begged him to come home. I raised the kids as he pursued his career. I told myself I needed to help him. I poured my heart and soul into his endeavor supporting and encouraging. There were still problems. When he was home he would go into his office and read his books, newspapers, and reports, and again I would cry myself to sleep. I had others confront him. I gave this man every chance to tell me about his pornography addiction. Lies

weave other lies. Secrets kill. Comparisons kill. I feel every time he looked at an image and masturbated he took away a part of me that God intended to be mine. I remember seeing him masturbate and he was in his own world, set on his own pleasure, stimulated and excited by images of women he didn't know. It was a feeling of betrayal and heart-wrenching emptiness that a woman feels when she learns that her husband is living a lie.

"Pornography tears at the very thread of a woman and her femininity. My heart was ripped and uprooted thrown somewhere into a desert with no place to find refuge. It's as if I wasn't enough. Not sexy enough. Not beautiful enough. Not thin enough. Not exciting enough. Women get significance from their relationships with their husbands and when he turns to another for satisfaction it cuts her deeply at the core.

"I started buying sexy nighties, acting sexier, and suddenly I realized I was bowing down to an idol. It hurt that he chose not to tell me ... to not allow me to come alongside him as his helper. To this day he refuses to see the pain that he caused. It amazes me as a wife how we are involved in every other area of a man's life his profit margin, his ability to manage, everything but when it comes to pornography, it's hidden in deception. A man's way seems right to a man. Porn addiction is very selfish. It takes and takes and doesn't give back. It's all for the user's pleasure.

"Another lie is that porn does not hurt anyone. Such a web of deception. 'And they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness' (Eph. 4:19). There are consequences and the stakes get higher. It takes one lie to cover another. It saddens me how men can compartmentalize this sin. He has the little wife over here with precious children and this nasty sin over here for his private time,

justifying it because he still loves his wife and children. You can't walk simultaneously in the darkness and the light.

"I'm a wife. I'm a wife of a porn addict. I'm relieved to know what it is, though I always knew something was wrong. Tears. Pain. Disgust. Betrayal. To face the death of a husband would be better than this. A widow has the support of the church. A porn addict leaves shame and divorce. It would be easier if he were dead. We wouldn't have to face the public humiliation and shame.

"Today is a new day. It's early morning and I must get breakfast for my children. I take each day as it comes now. Just for today. My husband still chooses his sin and refuses to take responsibility for it. I have to let him go and let the Lord deal with him. I can no longer be his excuse, his enabler. It's a new day and I'm moving on and my Deliverer is by my side. He is faithful. He will never leave me nor forsake me. He will never break His promise. To a woman who has been betrayed, this is my comfort. Hear my cry."

The Lord bless you as you seek Him on this. Again, I am so sorry.

Sue Bohlin

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## **"Why Is There a Hell?"**

I was in a discussion about heaven and hell. My agnostic friend looks at free will and states that if God truly loves all humans unconditionally, then that kind of negates any concept of hell.

I know from a Biblical and Christian standard you can lay down the facts but is there an earthly standard/concept that can

**explain why there is in fact hell and heaven? Or can you not separate the two—Christianity—heaven and hell—and does the freewill factor have anything to do with it?**

I think your friend's understanding of God is skewed. I was really helped by the way C.S. Lewis explained heaven and hell. A prominent disciple of his, Peter Kreeft, wrote this on his website ([www.peterkreeft.com/topics/hell.htm](http://www.peterkreeft.com/topics/hell.htm)):

*Heaven and hell may be the very same objective place – namely God's love, experienced oppositely by opposite souls, just as the same opera or rock concert can be heavenly for you and hellish for the reluctant guest at your side. The fires of hell may be made of the very love of God, experienced as torture by those who hate him: the very light of God's truth, hated and fled from in vain by those who love darkness. Imagine a man in hell—no, a ghost—endlessly chasing his own shadow, as the light of God shines endlessly behind him. If he would only turn and face the light, he would be saved. But he refuses to—forever.*

Dr. Kreeft (one of my favorite authors) also says this in the same essay:

*Hell follows from two other doctrines: heaven and free will. If there is a heaven, there can be a not-heaven. And if there is free will, we can act on it and abuse it. Those who deny hell must also deny either heaven (as does Western secularism) or free will (as does Eastern pantheism).*

You might want to check out this essay to help you think through the issue of hell.

Blessings,

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries



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# **“A ‘Just Right’ Planet?”**

**Sue:**

I enjoyed reading your article entitled [“Evidence for God’s Existence”](#) on probe.org. I found it to provide interesting insight.

I found your comments regarding a “just right” earth particularly intriguing. You stated that our “just right” planet is clear evidence that it was created by “a loving God.” As someone who has witnessed the fury of mother nature more than once, I am compelled to ask – do you include volcanic eruptions, floods, tidal waves, and earthquakes in this “just right” view of God’s creation of the earth?

I find it very hard to believe that this planet we live on is as “just right” as you portray. I have seen massive landslides that buried charities, churches, and brothels side by side without regard. I have seen so many God-fearing people struck by flood and other natural disasters that I cannot help but fail to understand how the earth can be so “just right.” Think about how many innocent children suffered for days, even weeks in immense pain and agony, buried under rubble in an earthquake, before finally dying. Are such tragedies really part of a “just right” design?

I recently read a research paper from the American Oceanographic Institute regarding some really cool bacteria – they live 2 miles deep in the ocean near hot thermal vents in the ocean floor where no light has ever penetrated. The water temperature there reaches 800 degrees or more and contains highly toxic and poisonous chemicals (well – to humans at least). These conditions are not so different than you might find on other planets in our solar system. I know that one day

we will land spacecraft on other planets and find, in the most hostile environment imaginable, living organisms thriving in places we never thought possible.

Like you, I marvel at the intricacies of the world (and universe) we live in – it truly is a wondrous place. William Paley is well-known for his “watchmaker” theory – he, too, marveled at our universe and was so overwhelmed at its complexity that he said that someone MUST have engineered it – for it could not possibly exist without a designer.

I offer you this challenge, then – let’s apply Mr. Paley’s own logic to God himself. Surely you will agree that God himself is far more complex and intricate than the universe is. By Mr. Paley’s logic, something so complex MUST have a creator. Therefore, someone or something MUST have created God, since such complexity cannot exist without a designer. I submit that Mr. Paley is simply a victim of someone in need of a reason – we all want to have a reason. Some of us can accept the fact that we don’t yet know where the universe came from. Others, like Mr. Paley, are so desperate to explain things that they will simply make something else up which is immune from question to explain that which they cannot.

I say these things not to inflame you or attack you. I simply seek knowledge, thought, and interaction with people of differing viewpoints than my own. Perhaps one day I will come to agree, perhaps not. But I find that speaking to everyone I can, becoming their friend, and agreeing to disagree to be very fulfilling in my life.

Hopefully you will take a few minutes to talk with me and we will both go our ways with a little more knowledge and insight than we started with.

I have received quite a few e-mails from people who disagreed with me in this article, but none that were as gentle and reasonable and sweet-tempered as yours! It says something

about your character, methinks. . . . <smile>

Two answers. First of all, concerning the horrific destruction that gets unleashed in nature: according to the Bible, which gives us information we couldn't know otherwise because it's information from "outside the box," this world is in a state very different from the one God originally created. After sin entered the world courtesy of the first human beings, the whole world was plunged into a state of corruption, decay and destruction that spawned natural disasters like hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and droughts. (And then you add the HUMAN disasters that are a result of moral corruption and decay that spawned atrocities like the Holocaust and Sept. 11!—But that's another story.)

At the risk of belaboring the point, allow me to offer an illustration. My sister-in-law is an extraordinarily gifted cake decorator in Chicago, and I live in Dallas. She wanted to share one of her creations with me, and was told by a mentor that if she packed a cake with the right precautions, she could FedEx it to me and it would arrive intact. Apparently, the folks at FedEx didn't know that, and when I opened the box it was a mess of crumbs and broken sugar flowers. It still tasted wonderful, and evidence abounded for its original beauty and glory, but it got ruined between Chicago and Dallas. Her heart sank when she learned what had happened to it, not only because of the waste but because her hopes for pleasing me with the cake's original condition were dashed. I think it's an illustration of how it grieved God for His beautiful earth to be ruined by the mishandling of the people into whose hands He had placed His creation to be good stewards, because their sin caused all manner of destruction not only between people but also on the earth itself. The fact that the cake was ruined after it left my sister's hands didn't detract one bit from the gifted design and skill that went into creating it in the first place. I still contend that God's design is "just right," even though the world doesn't

function as perfectly as it did when He first created it.

Secondly, concerning the idea that someone or something must have created God: as you move backward in discerning cause and effect, there must eventually be an Uncaused Cause in order for anything to exist at all. At some point there has to be something or someone who has always existed who is responsible for causing other things to come into existence, because nothing comes into existence on its own. Thus, at some point there had to be an Ultimate Causer (or Ultimate Cause) that has always been here. Because if you can go "beyond God," so to speak, to a time when there was nothing and no one in existence, then there would be no way for God to come into existence without a cause. There MUST be an Uncaused Cause.

Hope this helps you to understand where I'm coming from!

Most respectfully and cordially,

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries