

Worldproofing Our Kids (commentary)

A mother camel and her baby camel are talking one day when the baby camel asks, "Mom, why do I have these huge three-toed feet?" The mother camel answers, "So when we trek through the desert your toes will help you stay on top of the soft sand." A few minutes later the baby camel asks, "Mom, why do I have these great big long eyelashes?" The mother camel says, "To keep the sand out of your eyes on trips through the desert." After a little while he says, "Mom? Why do I have these big old humps on my back?" "To help us store water for our long treks across the desert, so we can go without drinking for long periods." The baby camel answers, "That's great, Mom. So we have huge feet to stop us from sinking in the sand, and long eyelashes to keep the sand out of our eyes, and these big humps to store water, but Mom?" "What?" "What are we doing in the San Diego zoo?"

We parents have a similar challenge in today's culture. Our kids come equipped for an eternal, supernatural, transcendent kind of life—but they live in a world that doesn't recognize it. We have the important task of worldproofing our kids—preparing them to be in the world but not of it, helping them avoid being squeezed into the world's mold.

One way is to raise some basic questions that Lael Arrington suggests in her book *Worldproofing Your Kids*. One question is, Who makes the rules? We need to help our kids understand that there are only two answers to that question. Either God makes the rules, or man makes the rules. We can point out the orderliness of traffic patterns because someone else has decided that red means stop and green means go. We can talk about what it would be like if everybody made up their own traffic rules. We can watch videos together like *Alice in Wonderland* and *Lord of the Flies* that show what happens when

anybody and everybody can make the rules.

Another important question is, Where Did We Come From? This isn't about sex and the stork, but about creation and evolution. Either God made us because He loves us, or we are nothing more than an accident in an uncaring universe. My pastor has a routine with his kids. He asks, "How EVER did I get so blessed to be your daddy and get you for a son? His kids answer, "Because God gave me to you!" Jeff's kids know God made them, and that they are God's gift to their father.

A third question to talk about with our kids is, Why am I here? We have the awesome privilege of casting a vision for them for their part in the larger story of life, one that involves a planning and purpose for their lives, a calling from God to play their specially designed and gifted part. We can tell our kids that there isn't anybody quite like them in the whole world, and God has a part for them that will bring joy and fulfillment because they're doing what they were created for.

Our privilege as parents is to teach our kids that they were created for God and for heaven, not for this world. Just like camels were created for the desert and not the zoo.

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5 Lies the Church Tells Women

[Note: This article is taken from J. Lee Grady's book *Ten Lies the Church Tells Women*. I do not subscribe to everything in this book, particularly the author's belief that there are no restrictions to women in the church. I do not agree that the office of pastor and elder are open to women, though I believe

God has given many women, including me, the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher (which some find easier to receive when it's called "shepherd-teacher"). At Probe, we exhort people to be discerning in what we hear and read. Mr. Grady's book is firmly in the egalitarian camp, but as a complementarian who seeks to be discerning, I can recognize the truth of some of what he says without embracing what I believe is unbiblical. Please see the end of this article for other articles on the role of women I have written for our Web site.]

In this article I look at five lies the church tells women, inspired by the book by J. Lee Grady called *Ten Lies the Church Tells Women*.^{1} I'm not saying all churches say all these things, but there are certain pockets of Christianity where these lies are circulated.

Lie #1: God Created Women as Inferior Beings, Destined to Serve Their Husbands.

The first lie is that God created women as inferior beings, destined to serve their husbands. Those looking for Scripture to back up their beliefs point to Genesis 2:18, where God makes a "helpmeet" for Adam. "See?" they say. "Helpers are subordinate to the ones they help, which proves women are here to serve men." This ignores the times in the Psalms (10:14, 27:9, 118:7) where God is praised as our helper, and He is certainly not inferior or subordinate to us!

Lee Grady points out, "[I]t is a cultural bias, not a spiritual or scientific principle, that women were 'made' for the kitchen or laundry room. This is the most common form of male chauvinism, a burden placed on women by selfish men who want someone to wash their dishes."^{2}

This view that women are inferior to men is not biblical, but it has infected the church from the beginning.

The Greek culture into which the early church was born viewed

women as “half animal,” unworthy of education, to be kept quiet and kept locked away, obedient to their husbands. In Jewish culture it was considered inappropriate for a man to even speak to a woman in public—including his own wife. A woman speaking to a man who was not her husband was considered to be giving evidence that she had committed adultery with him, and could be divorced. You can imagine the scandal Jesus caused when he regularly sought the company of women and talked to them, and taught them, just as he did men. Or when he allowed prostitutes to talk to him or pour perfume on his feet. {3}

Eve was not created to be Adam’s servant, but his honored and respected wife and co-regent, fashioned to rule over creation with him. We see another picture of God’s intention for the first Adam and Eve in our future as the church. The bride of the Second Adam, Christ, is created and is being fashioned to reign with Him forever. {4}

Lee Grady says, “Jesus modeled a revolutionary new paradigm of empowerment by affirming women as co-heirs of God’s grace.” {5} Paul continued this completely new, respectful view of women by inviting women to share in the ministry of the gospel and the church, and by teaching the equality of husbands and wives in the marriage relationship (although there is a biblical distinction of roles).

When God created woman, He didn’t create an inferior being, He created what He delights to call “the glory of man.” (1 Cor. 11:7)

Lie #2: A Man Needs to “Cover” a Woman in Her Ministry Activities.

The second lie is that a man needs to “cover” a woman in her ministry activities. “In many cases, leaders have innocently twisted various Bible verses to suggest that a woman’s public

ministry can be valid only if she is properly 'covered' by a male who is present. Often women are told that they cannot even lead women's Bible studies or prayer meetings unless a pastor, deacon or some other man can provide proper oversight." {6}

One woman was told that she could not start a backyard Bible school class in her neighborhood during the summer unless her husband agreed to be present at each session and teach all the Bible lessons. Her church elders said she could plan each day's crafts and make all the snacks, but a man had to conduct the "spiritual" aspects of the outreach since he is the proper "covering." {7}

It is disturbing to think of the implication of this belief. When we, as women, use our spiritual gifts and respond to God's call to minister in various ways (within the biblical restrictions for women) without a man present, is our ministry less legitimate and valid than a man doing the same work? What if a woman with the spiritual gift of evangelism senses the Holy Spirit directing her to speak to the cashier at the gas station, and there's no man around? On a personal note, when I am speaking at one of Probe's Mind Games conferences, do my lectures lack legitimacy or truth because the male Probe staff members are busy teaching in other rooms?

Ephesians 5:21 says, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Out of respect for our own weaknesses and limitations, I believe that all of us who wish to minister to others should pursue an attitude of humble submission to the body of Christ. We need to submit our beliefs and methods (and content, if we're teaching) to trusted believers who can provide support, direction, and, if needed, correction. And anyone engaged in ministry needs prayer support, which some have called a "prayer covering;" although that is not a biblical term.

But there is no verse that says, "If a woman teaches My word,

make sure a man is present so she will be covered properly.” Paul’s instruction that older women teach the younger women doesn’t include making sure that someone with a Y chromosome is present! What underlies this erroneous idea that a man’s presence somehow validates any woman’s ministry is, intentional or not, a profound disrespect and distrust of women.

Lie #3: Women Can’t be Fulfilled or Spiritually Effective Without a Husband or Children.

The third lie is that women can’t be fulfilled or spiritually effective without a husband or children. Some churches teach that God’s perfect plan for every woman is to be a wife and mother. Period. Sometimes Christian women successful in business or some other professional field are made to feel unwelcome at a church, as if they are an unhealthy influence on “purer” women.

In some places, single women are prevented from leading home fellowship groups because they’re single.[{8}](#) Others have been discouraged from running for political office or pursuing a graduate education because God’s plan was for them to marry and keep house—even when God hadn’t brought a groom into the picture!

Lee Grady says, “We must stop placing a heavy yoke on unmarried and divorced women in the church by suggesting that they are not complete without a man in their lives or that a husband somehow legitimizes their ministries.”[{9}](#)

In some churches, women are routinely taught that the best way for them to serve God is to get married, make their husbands happy, and have children. They think this should be the sole focus of women’s lives. And to be honest, when God has given a woman a husband and children, especially young children,

focusing her primary energies and gifting on her family truly *is* the most important way she serves God in that season of her life. Children will not be impressed with how many Bible studies their mother teaches each week. And most husbands will be less than enthusiastic for their wives to go off on several mission trips each year when it means the home is falling apart and everybody's life is in chaos.

But women, even women with families, are given spiritual gifts that God intends for us to use to build up the body of Christ, both inside and outside our families. When we exercise those spiritual gifts and abilities, God delights to honor us with a sense of fulfillment. And usually that involves ministry in the church or in the world, as long as it's secondary to our family priorities.

But not all women are called to marriage and motherhood. It is disrespectful to single Christian women to treat them as second-class women because they don't wear a wedding ring. It's heartbreaking and frustrating when a woman would love to be married, but God hasn't brought her to the man of His choice; it just adds unnecessary sorrow for the church to say, "Sorry, honey, without a man you don't have a place here."

Lie #4: Women Should Never Work Outside the Home.

The fourth lie is that women should never work outside the home. Women who take jobs are shamed and judged, because they can't please God if they do anything outside of being a wife and mother.

This is a hurtful lie to many women who don't have a choice about working or not. There are huge numbers of divorced and widowed women in the church who would much rather stay at home with their families, but they're the only breadwinners. And for many two-parent families, they honestly can't survive on the husband's paycheck alone.

This lie comes from a misreading of Paul's exhortation in Titus 2:4 for women to be "workers at home."

Paul wasn't calling them to quit their day jobs to stay home. Women in that culture had no education and usually no opportunities for employment. He was addressing a character issue about being faithful and industrious, not lazy and self-centered. This letter was written to the pastor of a church on Crete, a society known for the laziness and self-indulgence of its people.[{10}](#)

Before the 1800's and the Industrial Revolution, both men and women worked at home, and they worked hard. Whether farming, fishing, animal husbandry, or whatever trade they engaged in, they did it from home. The care and nurture of children was woven into the day's work and extended families helped care for each other. There was no such thing, except among the very wealthy, as a woman who didn't work.

This lie completely ignores the Proverbs 31 woman, who not only took excellent care of her family, but also had several home-based businesses that required her to leave her home to engage in these businesses. I personally appreciate this biblical pattern because I had a home-based business and a ministry the entire time my children were growing, both of which took me out of the home sometimes. I was able to grow my gifts as my kids were growing, and now that they're both adults, I am able to use those gifts and abilities more fully with my new freedom to leave home.

On the other hand, an equally distressing expectation common to younger people in today's churches is that women should always work, regardless of whether they have children or not. Our culture has so downgraded the importance of focused parenting that many people consider it wasteful for a woman to be "only" a homemaker. It's sexist to say that a woman's only valid contribution to the world or the church is to be a homemaker, but both extremes are wrong and harmful.

Lie #5: Women Must Obediently Submit to Their Husbands in All Situations.

The last lie says that women must obediently submit to their husbands in *all* situations. This lie really grieves me deeply, because it is probably responsible for more pain and abuse than any other lie we've looked at in this article.

In Ephesians 5:22, wives are commanded to submit to our husbands. For some people, this has been twisted to mean the husband is the boss and the wife's job is to obey his every whim. That is a relationship of power, not self-sacrificing love, as this marriage passage actually teaches. The wife is called to serve her husband through submission, and the husband is called to serve his wife through sacrificial love.

We have no idea how many women have been physically, emotionally, sexually, and spiritually abused by their husbands wielding the submission verses as a weapon. When they finally tell their pastor about their husband's rage-outs and physical assaults, they are often not believed, and sometimes they are told that if they would learn to submit the violence would stop. Then they are counseled that it would be a sin to separate and hold the husband accountable for what is a crime! Some abused women, who feared for their lives, have actually been told, "Don't worry. Even if you died you would go to be with the Lord. So you win either way. Just keep praying for him. But you are not allowed to leave."[\[11\]](#)

A comprehensive study on domestic violence in the church in the mid 80's revealed that 26 percent of the pastors counseled an abused wife to keep submitting and trust that God would either stop the abuse or give her the strength to endure it. About a fourth of the pastors believed that abuse is the wife's fault because of her lack of submission! And a majority of the pastors said it is better for wives to endure violence against them than to seek a separation that might end in

divorce.^{12} I respectfully suggest that separation *with the goal of reconciliation* is often the only way to motivate an abusive husband to get help.^{13} Just as we cast a broken limb to enable it to heal, separation is like putting a cast on a broken relationship as the first step to enable change and healing. We see in 1 Cor. 5 that God's plan for unrepentant believers is to experience the pain of isolation in separation from friends and loved ones; why would it be unthinkable for the same principle to be effective within an abusive marriage?

All the lies we've looked at in this article are the result of twisting God's word out of a misunderstanding of God's intent for His people. The way to combat the lies is to know the truth—because that's what sets us free.

Notes

1. Lee Grady, *10 Lies the Church Tells Women* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2000).
2. Grady, 23.
3. George Byron Koch, "Shall a Woman Keep Silent? Part 1." http://www.resurrection.org/shall_a_woman___part_1.htm.
4. Rev. 22:5, 2 Tim. 2:12.
5. Grady, 21.
6. Grady, 89-90.
7. Grady, 90.
8. Grady, 140.
9. Grady, 143.
10. "Even one of their own prophets has said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.'" (Titus 1:2)
11. Grady, 172.

12. Grady, 174.

13. I especially recommend Dr. Paul Hegstrom of Life Skills Learning Centers. He is a recovered abusive husband and pastor who wrote an excellent book, *Angry Men and the Women Who Love Them: Breaking the Cycle of Physical and Emotional Abuse* (Beacon Hill Press, 1999). His Web site is <http://www.lifeskillsintl.org>.

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A Picture of Our Vulnerability

On the afternoon of Sept. 11, I was talking to a friend on the phone who said, "I'm afraid to leave my house. I'm afraid to drive down the street; I have these images of airplanes falling out of the sky and crashing into my car. I don't feel safe anymore." She's not alone. People are scared and angry at feeling like they're living in a war zone where their world could blow up at any minute. Just about the time that fears of hijacked planes slamming into buildings started to subside, new fears of anthrax have caused waves of anxious phone calls to FBI offices and police stations.

Many people resent the loss of our innocence and security, and that's completely understandable. But for the Christian, this is a poignant reminder that in actuality, we DO live in a spiritual war zone. We are in far greater danger of being attacked in spiritual warfare than we are of hijacked planes slamming into buildings. Scripture tells us we have a personal adversary who prowls around looking for whom he may devour. Satan's spiritual terrorism is every bit as real as earthly

terrorism.

The president tells us to remain vigilant and alert. That's a good policy for dealing with spiritual warfare as well. We make it easy for the devil when we get lazy and complacent. Our political and philosophical enemies know how to generate "disinformation" to confuse intelligence agencies and mislead the American public. The problem is, we can't tell the difference between actual threats and false ones. Disinformation is just a fancy word for lying. And we need to be alert for the lies of our spiritual enemy as well. But in the spiritual arena, we are in a much more powerful position because we can recognize Satan's lies if we know the truth, and God has already given us all the truth we need to know in the Bible. We have to read and study God's truth in order to recognize the lies of the enemy.

God has given every believer a supernaturally powerful set of defensive and offensive weapons we can read about in Ephesians 6. We have his assurance that it's not flesh and blood enemies we fight against, but spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. And God has given us everything we need to fight back; we need not be defenseless! Most importantly, we need to remember that we have God's Spirit within us to help us fight, even when we are up to our eyeballs in the enemy's flaming darts and scud missiles.

Whether we are facing the threats of terrorists within our own country, or the threats of invisible terrorists fighting us in the spirit realm, the same comforting assurance of God's word can help us stay secure: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear." Put on your armor, pick up your sword, and fight back!

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“Help! My Doubts Scare Me!”

Dear Sue Bohlin,

Hello. My name is _____. I e-mailed Ray earlier too. Anyways, I was reading an e-mail discussion you had with somebody, who didn't believe in God. You said something in it about how it's not an intellect issue, but a heart issue. This is hard for me to accept. I'm ashamed admitting this, but oh gosh its hard for me to admit. Maybe I won't. I could say that I don't believe in God, but that just sounds way too harsh. Have you heard of anybody who was a Christian, but then they began to have doubts and became agnostic? That's how I feel. I asked Jesus into my heart when I was younger (I'm 18 now), but for a long time I've just been so skeptical. I guess I'm not a Christian, because a Christian knows that he or she is one, and I don't. I don't know how to express what I've been going through lately. Everyday I think about my doubt and it depresses me. I'm not sure if I'll ever get rid of it and that scares me. I desire to believe in God so much, but it's hard. I have so many questions. I wonder why God doesn't show himself to me so I know for sure that He is there. I don't know. Maybe He has but it's just not enough. Maybe I don't have enough faith.

Another thing that really doesn't help me is some of the stuff that I have read on the internet. Different books that I've read about have caused me to have even more doubt. Have you heard of *The Bible Unearthed...*, or *The Jesus Puzzle...*? I haven't read any of them, but read reviews. Anyways, the second one I think denies that Jesus was a historical person. That really bothers me. Earlier today I was reading something on the web where this person was being critical of Lee Strobel (who wrote *The Case for Christ*). I really like that book (not done with

it yet), but after what I read on the internet about it, I wonder if it really shows that Jesus was a historical person. I don't know. Maybe I just let other people's conflicting views on Christianity get to me too much, but after reading these things, I start to wonder if maybe they are correct on what they are arguing.

Anyways, to me, my problem doesn't seem to be a heart issue because I really would like to believe in God. I desire to believe in Him and live for Him, but it's hard. Is there something that I lack? Do I just not have enough faith? I don't know, maybe I don't. Well I think I've made this long enough. If there's any advice you could give me I would appreciate it. Maybe you could pray for me. Thanks a lot.

I know you don't know me, but I REALLY wish I could reach through this computer screen and put my arms around you and give you a big hug and tell you IT'S GOING TO BE OK!!!!!! It is so OK to have doubts, to wonder about where you stand spiritually, because, at 18, you are at the point you need to be—deciding for yourself what you should keep and what you should jettison of what you have been taught. You are an adult now but you probably don't feel that you have enough information to make an informed, committed adult choice about something as important as eternal destiny and one's relationship with God!

Good news—lots of other people are also in your shoes. But they don't ask for help, and bless you, you did, and there IS help for you!! There are good answers, and you'll be stronger and more confident for having voiced your doubts and questions, once you're on the other side of this spiritual crisis. It's OK, _____. . . .God is walking through it with you.

I guess I'm not a Christian, because a Christian knows that he or she is one, and I don't.

Well, no, actually that's not true. Many Christians have assurance that we are Christians, and many Christians fervently *hope* they are but they're not sure. That's an important issue all by itself: can we *know* we're saved and going to heaven? Can we lose our salvation? Our founder and first president, Jimmy Williams, addressed this issue in one of [his e-mails](#).

I don't know how to express what I've been going through lately. Everyday I think about my doubt and it depresses me. I'm not sure if I'll ever get rid of it and that scares me.

I wish you could see God's heart as He watches you wrestle with your doubts and fears. He loves you so much (man, I feel like Monica on *Touched by an Angel* here!) and is very tender toward you as you experience these strong and scary emotions. I understand your fear that you'll never get rid of the doubt. But doubt is like darkness—you don't overcome it by pushing it away, you make it go away by bringing in light. As you seek light and truth and to know what is really true and real, God will show you the light. I am so grateful that you came to us at Probe instead of some New Age "all religions are the same" website!

I desire to believe in God so much, but it's hard. I have so many questions. I wonder why God doesn't show himself to me so I know for sure that He is there. I don't know. Maybe He has but it's just not enough. Maybe I don't have enough faith.

What's important isn't the amount or strength of our faith, but the *object* of our faith. God is strong enough to handle your doubts and to show you, in ways so intimate you will know it's HIM, that He is real and He loves you very much.

Another thing that really doesn't help me is some of the stuff that i have read on the internet. Different books that I've read about have caused me to have even more doubt. Have

you heard of The Bible Unearthed..., or The Jesus Puzzle...? I haven't read any of them, but read reviews. Anyways, the second one I think denies that Jesus was a historical person. That really bothers me.

With good reason. Some of the best Christian apologetics books started out with the author's intention to disprove Christianity, and the facts overwhelmed the skeptics into belief. The entire world was affected by the life of Jesus Christ, in one way or another, but He didn't exist? Now THAT takes a lot of faith!

Earlier today I was reading something on the web where this person was being critical of Lee Strobel (who wrote The Case for Christ). I really like that book (not done with it yet), but after what I read on the internet about it, I wonder if it really shows that Jesus was a historical person.

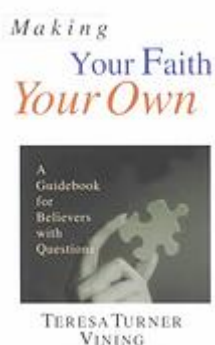
Did you know Lee Strobel started out as an atheist? I'm glad you're reading it; it was a wise choice. So is his second book, *The Case for Faith*. I found this statement from him in an interview online: "I have found that the testimony of history points compellingly toward Jesus Christ having returned from the dead in the ultimate authentication of His claim to be God. To me faith in Jesus is not blind or irrational. I have so much independent evidence that the New Testament writings are reliable that I would be swimming upstream against the evidence if I were to follow the teachings of the Koran or the Book of Mormon. The more I subject the New Testament to analysis, the more I pepper it with questions, the more I walk away utterly convinced of its trustworthiness."

I don't know. Maybe I just let other people's conflicting views on Christianity get to me too much, but after reading these things, I start to wonder if maybe they are correct on what they are arguing.

Just about every truth, especially those of eternal importance, will be countered with something counterfeit, because we're in a very real battle for our minds and souls. It's unfortunate that the counter-arguments can *appear* so compelling, but the issue is ultimate truth. Right now, you're on the right track in seeking truth and desiring to sort through the clamoring voices that attack it.

Anyways, to me, my problem doesn't seem to be a heart issue because I really would like to believe in God. I desire to believe in Him and live for Him, but its hard. Is there something that I lack? Do I just not have enough faith? I don't know, maybe I don't.

It's been said that the Christian life isn't hard, it's IMPOSSIBLE. You can't live for God in your own strength—not for any length of time, anyway, without burning out and getting majorly discouraged. The secret is to allow Jesus to live His life through you by yielding to Him. That, by the way, is one of the things that sets Christianity apart from every other religion: God inside us, offering to live His life through us, without any loss of our own individuality. But right now, the big issue is what to do with your head/heart conflict. Fortunately, there is a PERFECT book that I believe will make all the difference in the world to you.



It's called [*Making Your Faith Your Own: A Guidebook for Believers With Questions*](#) by Teresa Vining. I was privileged to read Teresa's manuscript and LOVED her book. One of its strengths is that she was in the exact place you are now, and she takes you through the questions AND the answers, and suggests you keep a journal as you work through the book so you can decide what you believe and commit to, and what you're not willing to. It is a terrific book on apologetics, and she is very respectful of the person with questions and doubts. I think you will love this book too.

Well I think I've made this long enough. If there's any advice you could give me I would appreciate it. Maybe you could pray for me.

I'd like to pray for you right now!

Father, I lift up _____ to You and I thank You for her intellect and her honesty in facing her doubts and questions. Thank You that You are not in the least bit troubled by them because You know You are real and true and able to take her through this time to a point where she will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that YOU ARE. I ask You to send her little intimate glimpses of You and open her eyes so she'll know it's You saying "Hi." I ask that You give her a peace when she's pursuing truth and give her an uncomfortable restlessness when she's moving toward the darkness and deception that would seek to draw her away from You. Lord, I thank You for Your hand on _____'s life and on her heart and on her mind, and by faith I thank You for taking her to the place where she will joyfully serve You with all three. Lord, make her feel loved and protected and cherished by You.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Hope this helps, dear one!

Sue

"What is the Spiritual Gift of Discernment?"

I was reading some of Probe's responses to e-mails and came across a message which touched on discernment as a spiritual

gift ([“Do You Know Why My Dreams Come True?”](#)). Over the years I have noticed that I often get what I classify as a “gut reaction” to people, particularly in Christian settings. I seem to detect, almost immediately, whether a person is sincere or a phony. Amazingly, I am almost always correct in my initial reaction, though it sometimes takes years before that reaction is confirmed. However, rather than attribute such feelings to the Holy Spirit, I have always seen them as a prideful or fleshly response to some subconscious cue I get from the other person’s behavior. Could you elaborate on discernment as a spiritual gift? What exactly is it, how does it work and what is its purpose? And, most importantly, how can one determine whether they, in fact, have such a gift? Scripture references would be helpful.

I’m delighted to hear from you! I thank the Lord every time I hear a believer recognizes they have the gift of discernment because the body of Christ desperately needs this “early warning system.” Unfortunately, it’s been my experience that many people dismiss any spiritual gifts they can’t understand or grasp naturalistically—in other words, that are so supernatural in origin and manifestation they can’t be explained any other way. So we lose out BIG when they are not encouraged or exercised.

The gift of discernment (1 Cor. 12:10) is a supernatural ability to distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, between holiness and evil.

Just as counterfeit money experts can quickly distinguish phony money from the real thing, those with the gift of discernment can distinguish holy and unholy spirits and discern truth from lies. A person with this gift can spot a phony before others do. It’s been my experience that they can also tell when someone is lying. When you ask them, “But how do you KNOW?” they just shrug and say, “I just know. I don’t know how I know, it’s just there in my spirit.” Proof that it’s the Holy Spirit’s empowering is given when they are

continuously validated in their assessment.

This is NOT the same thing as a “psychic ability.” Deut. 18:10-14 sternly forbids any involvement with spiritism. Only believers in Jesus Christ have this supernatural ability from the Holy Spirit.

1 Tim. 4:1 says that in latter days, deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons will come, so the important role of the gift of discernment is to identify those spirits and doctrines.

A discerning spirit tests the spirits with this rule of scripture:

“By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.”
(1 John 4:2,3)

Leslie B. Flynn writes in his book *19 Gifts of the Spirit*, “Any relegating of Jesus Christ to an inferior spot less than the incarnate Son of God, the crucified and resurrected Savior, means that spirit is not of God.”

This is helpful to know when we are analyzing and evaluating things we hear and see in the spiritual domain (for example, when watching Oprah’s New Age friends on her show). But just as important, though, is the exercise of this gift in our everyday lives. Those who have the gift of discernment have told me it’s like an internal alarm bell going off. Some examples:

- Our church used to be located on a busy street where panhandlers often came by with a sob story about needing cash for their babies in the hospital or some other pretense. One of the people who worked in the office had the gift of discernment and, after spending just a couple of moments talking to these people, she could tell which ones really needed help and which ones were looking for money for booze.

(If they were truly in need, there really would be a baby in the hospital, for example.)

- A friend took her 4-year-old son to see an art exhibit adjacent to art museum in Corpus Christi, Texas. The moment they entered the exhibits tent, her son stopped dead in his tracks. "Mommy, we can't go in there. This place is bad." Teri sensed the exact same presence of evil. They never saw a single piece of art before turning around and leaving. It turned out to be sponsored by a cult. Both mother and son later realized they have the gift of discernment.

- My husband Ray met a popular evangelical preacher at a dinner, but had a profoundly uncomfortable reaction to the man. (The word "slimeball" kept coming to mind.) There was no apparent reason, but it was a gut response. To be honest, this was before I realized he had the gift of discernment, and I dismissed his reaction as a critical spirit. The man was later removed from his pulpit for his unrepentant adulterous lifestyle.

We have found these questions helpful in determining if one has this gift:

- Do you have an internal alarm that goes off when you encounter something phony or evil?
- Even when you're the only one who senses something wrong, is your "intuition" eventually validated?
- Do you (and others) consider yourself a good judge of character?

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

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“Help! I Opened Myself Up to the Devil!”

I am in need of help! When I was about fifteen years old, I was friends with a man who at that time I did not know was a Satan worshipper. He cut the palm of his hand, I cannot remember if he cut mine or not but, he then rubbed our palms together and he licked the blood from his hand. I really didn't think much of it at that time. Now, I am thirty-seven years old. For the past three years I have been having a lot of trouble with people following me, putting devil symbols in my house and just a lot of different things pertaining to the devil.

I recently remembered this blood act with this man and now recall who he is. I recently found out that his daughter works with me and I really believe she knows what's going on. Although she acts totally innocent. I need to know if there is anything I can do to stop all this evilness around me. If you have any suggestions, please let me know.

Wow. You really do have a stronghold in your life for the evil one to exploit, don't you?

There is a powerful and wonderful resource that has freed thousands of people from exactly this kind of stronghold. Neil Anderson's book *The Bondage Breaker* is excellent, and you should read the whole book, but especially Chapter 12, called "Steps to Freedom in Christ." It is a series of prayers that walk you through all the places where you allowed Satan to gain a foothold in your life, and it helps you renounce them and stop the demonic harassment.

I hope this helps. I know it has helped SO many people in your

shoes.

Let me pray for you before I send this.

Father God, I lift up _____ to you and ask that You bring complete freedom to her through the ministry of people in the body of Christ like Neil Anderson. I pray that You would show her exactly what she needs to do to revisit the time when Satan gained an entrance into her heart and mind and life, and that You would protect her from the evil one. Lord God, I pray the holy and precious Blood of Jesus over her and ask that You do whatever it takes to allow that powerful Blood to cleanse _____ and make her holy and pure and freed from the traps of the enemy. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Let me know what happens, OK?

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Supernatural Parenting

Sue Bohlin points out that we can be supernatural parents when we are relying on a supernatural God for direction and strength. It is important that we include parenting as an integral part of our Christian worldview. Applying a biblical perspective is crucial to imparting the truth needed for our children to live truly successful lives.

There are certain universal truths in parenting.

- If you hook a dog leash over a ceiling fan, the motor is not strong enough to rotate a 42 pound boy wearing Pound Puppy underwear and a Superman cape. It is strong enough, however, to spread paint on all four walls of a twenty by twenty foot

room.

- If you use a waterbed as home plate while wearing baseball shoes it does not leak—it explodes. A king size waterbed holds enough water to fill a 2000 square foot house four inches deep.
- The spin cycle on the washing machine does not make earth worms dizzy. It will, however, make cats dizzy.
- Cats throw up twice their body weight when dizzy.

Dr. Dobson says that parenting isn't for cowards. It ain't such a hot job for mere mortals, either. What a daunting task—being completely responsible for an infant who cannot do a single thing for himself except make a lot of noise and a lot of dirty diapers! Teaching them to walk. And talk. And act like civilized human beings. Even more importantly, their eternal destiny is in our hands, and we have the awesome opportunity to show them what God is like, and to lead them to saving faith in Christ!

Praise God, as believers we're not limited to our own strength and power. Christ died for us, to give His life to us, to live HIS life THROUGH us. We can parent with the same supernatural energy that raised Christ from the dead. We can parent with the same infinite supply of wisdom and patience that Jesus had. We can let Him parent through us—we can be supernatural parents!

The Bible says that Christ is our life. What does that mean when you're about to change your fourteenth diaper today? "Lord Jesus, I don't have the stomach or the strength to do this, so You change this diaper through me. Here are my hands—use them—here's my face—show love to my baby by smiling through me."

"I have been crucified with Christ, and the life I live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave

Himself for me.” What does that mean when you’ve been giving, giving, giving all day and you’re on empty? “Lord, I’m empty and weak and out of resources. You be strong in my weakness. I will do this in Your strength because I don’t have any left.”

“For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” How do we live that out in parenting kids who would rather snarl at us than look at us, who have swallowed the junior-high-culture’s dictum that the only good parent is a dead parent? “Lord Jesus, Thank You for giving me this child. I choose to remember she is a gift and not a punishment. I don’t have what it takes to be kind today, Lord. You be kind in me. I cannot love this child today, Lord, so You channel Your perfect love through me. I am Your willing vessel but I’m fresh out of unconditional love and acceptance. So You be a loving and wise parent through me.”

You can be a supernatural parent. Even without a Superman cape.

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A Short Look at Six World Religions – Understand the Beliefs of Non-Christians

An overview of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Mormonism and Jehovah’s Witnesses from a conservative Christian perspective.

Islam

There are three monotheistic religions in the world, religions that teach that there is only one God: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

The term "Islam" means "submission" to the will of God, and the person who submits is called a "Muslim."

The founder of Islam is Muhammad, who was born in 570 A.D. At age 40 he claimed to begin receiving revelations from a spirit being he believed was the angel Gabriel. These later were recorded and became the Qur'an, Islam's holy book.

There are Six Articles of Faith that all Muslims hold to. The first is that "there is no God but Allah." The second Article of Faith is belief in a hierarchy of angels, of which the archangel Gabriel is the highest. Each Muslim is assigned two angels, one to record his good deeds and the other to record the bad deeds. At the bottom of the angelic hierarchy are the jinn, from which we get the word "genie." They are a Muslim version of demons.

The third Article of Faith is belief in 104 holy books, with the Koran as the final revelation. The fourth is belief in the prophets. According to the Qur'an, God has sent a prophet to every nation to preach the message that there is only one God. 124,000 prophets have been sent, most of them unknown but some of them biblical characters, including Jesus. Muhammed, though, is the prophet for all times, the "Seal of the Prophets."

The fifth Article of Faith is belief in predestination. All things, both good and evil, are the direct result of the will of Allah. Islam is a very fatalistic religion.

The sixth Article of Faith is the day of judgment. Those whose good deeds outweigh their bad will be rewarded with Paradise; those whose bad deeds outweigh their good will be judged to

hell. Islam is a religion of human works. The Bible tells us, though, that we can never earn God's acceptance on the basis of our deeds.

There are Five Pillars of Islam, obligations every Muslim must keep. The first is reciting the creed, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his messenger." The second is prayer: 17 cycles of prayer, spread out over five times of prayer each day. They must wash in a prescribed manner before they kneel down and face toward Mecca.

The third pillar is almsgiving, 2.5% of one's income for the poor. The fourth pillar is fasting during the lunar month of Ramadan. Muslims must forego food, water and sex during daylight hours. The fifth pillar is making the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lives.

Sometimes you will hear people say that Allah is another name for the God of the Bible. Is it the same? "Allah" is the Arabic name for God, and Arab Christians use the name Allah to describe the God of the Bible. Mohammed taught that there is one true God who is the same God that Jews and Christians ("the People of the Book") worship. He began Islam on the foundation of the God of the Bible. We can say that in principle, we worship the same God. Islam began on the foundation of belief in the one true God to combat the pagan polytheism of the area. However, Mohammed departed from this foundation, and we differ in our understanding of how God has fully revealed Himself. In the Qur'an, Allah is a distant spiritual being, but Yahweh is a Father to His children. Allah does not love wrongdoers, but God demonstrates His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Allah has predetermined everything about life; the God of the Bible invites us to share our hearts with Him.

Hinduism

Hinduism may seem like an alien religion of people on the

other side of the world, but it has infiltrated our culture in all sorts of ways. You're probably familiar with most of the basic Hindu concepts without even realizing it. Have you seen the *Star Wars* movies? They are filled with Hindu ideas. Ever watch *Dharma and Greg* on TV? "Dharma" is an important Hindu term for moral duty. 30% of Americans believe in reincarnation, which is a Hindu concept. Transcendental Meditation is thinly disguised Hinduism. George Harrison's song "My Sweet Lord" invokes a Hindu chant. New Age philosophy is Hinduism wrapped in Western garb.

Hinduism is tremendously diverse. It encompasses those who believe in one reality, Brahman, as well as those who believe in many gods—as many as 330 million! Some Hindus believe the universe is real; most believe it is illusion, or *maya*. (This world view isn't consistent with reality. You won't find Hindus meditating on railroad tracks, for instance.) Some believe Brahman and the universe are one; others see them as two distinct realities.

Despite the diversity within Hinduism, there are five major beliefs of this religion. The first is that ultimate reality, called Brahman, is an impersonal oneness. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Yoda tells Luke that everything—the tree, the rock, etc.—is all part of "The Force." This is monism: the belief that all is one. Nothing is distinct and separate from anything else.

Another Hindu belief is that just as the air in an open jar is identical to the air around the jar, we extend from and are one with Brahman. All is one, all is god—and that means that we are god. In her book and movie "Out on a Limb," Shirley MacLaine relates a time when she stood on a beach, embracing this concept and declaring, "I am god! I am god!" It's a very Hindu concept.

Humanity's primary problem, according to Hinduism, is that we have forgotten we are divine. The consequence is that we are

subject to the Law of Karma, another important Hindu belief. This is the moral equivalent to the natural law of cause and effect. You always reap what you sow. There is no grace, there is no forgiveness, there is never any escape from consequences. It's a very heavy burden to carry. Not only that, but Hinduism says that the consequences of our choices, both bad karma and good karma, follow us from lifetime to lifetime. This is another Hindu concept: samsara, the ever-revolving wheel of life, death, and rebirth, also known as reincarnation. A person's karma determines the kind of body—whether human, animal, or insect—into which he or she is incarnated in the next lifetime.

The final major Hindu concept is liberation from the wheel of birth, death, and rebirth. One can only get off the reincarnation merry-go-round by realizing that the idea of the individual self is an illusion, and only the oneness of Brahman is real. There is no heaven, though—only losing one's identity in the universal oneness.

Praise God that through the Lord Jesus, Christianity offers hope, forgiveness, grace, and a personal relationship with a personal God in heaven. Jesus means there's a point to life.

Buddhism

Buddhism does not believe in a personal God. It does not have worship, prayer, or praise of a divine being. It offers no redemption, no forgiveness, no hope of heaven, and no final judgment. Buddhism is more of a moral philosophy, an ethical way of life.

In his essay "De Futilitate," C.S. Lewis called Buddhism "a heresy of Hinduism." Buddhism was founded by a Hindu, Siddhartha Gautama, during the sixth century B.C. After being profoundly impacted by seeing four kinds of suffering in one day, Siddhartha committed himself to finding the source of suffering and how to eliminate it. One day he sat down under a

fig tree and vowed not to rise again until he had attained enlightenment. After some time, he did so and became the Buddha, which means "enlightened one." He started teaching the "The Four Noble Truths," the most basic of Buddhist teachings.

The First Noble Truth is that life consists of suffering. The Second Noble Truth is that we suffer because we desire those things that are impermanent. This is absolutely central to Buddhism: the belief that desire is the cause of all suffering.

The Third Noble Truth is that the way to liberate oneself from suffering is by eliminating all desire. (Unfortunately, it's a self-defeating premise: if you set a goal to eliminate desire, then you desire to eliminate desire.) The Fourth Noble Truth is that desire can be eliminated by following the Eight-Fold path.

In the Eight-Fold Path, the first two steps are foundational to all the others. Step one is Right Understanding, where one sees the universe as impermanent and illusory and believes that the individual does not actually exist. If you ever hear someone say, "The world is an illusion, and so am I. I don't really exist," they're probably exploring Buddhism. (You might want to pinch them and see what they do.) Right Thought means renouncing all attachment to the desires and thoughts of oneself, even as he recognizes that the self doesn't exist.

Other parts of the Eight-Fold path are Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Awareness, and Right Meditation. Ethical conduct is very important in Buddhism. There are commands to refrain from the taking of any life (that includes ants and roaches in your house), stealing, immorality, lying, and drinking.

The Eight-Fold Path is a set of steps that describe not only a good life but one which will move the follower toward Nirvana, the goal of Buddhism. Nirvana is not heaven; it is a state of

extinction, where one's essence—which does not actually exist in the first place—is extinguished like a candle flame, marking the end of desire and thus the end of suffering.

One of the important concepts in Buddhism is samsara, a cycle of birth, death and rebirth. It differs from the Hindu concept of reincarnation in that Buddhism teaches there is no self to continue from one life to the next. Another important concept is karma, the belief that you reap what you sow, and your karma follows you through the cycles of samsara. Note the inherent inconsistency here: there is no self to continue from one life to the next, but one's karma does?!

Buddhism says there are many paths to the top of the mountain, so there are many ways to God. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me."

Judaism

Both Christianity and Judaism have their roots in Old Testament faith. But Christianity is really a sister, rather than a daughter, to Judaism, which is the religion developed by rabbis from 200 B.C. on.

When the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., that spelled the end of sacrifices and the priesthood. Instead of being guided by prophets, priests and kings, the Jewish people turned to rabbis as their authorities on matters of laws and practice.

There was basically one kind of Judaism until the eighteenth century when the Age of Enlightenment swept through Europe. That's when the three major branches of Judaism arose.

That one basic kind of Judaism is what is now called "Orthodox Judaism." It has a strong emphasis on tradition and strict observance of the Law of Moses.

Reform Judaism began in Germany at the time of the

Enlightenment. Reform Judaism is the humanistic branch. In fact, there are many Reform Jews who don't believe in God at all. For them, Judaism is a way of life and culture with a connection to one's ancestors that is about legacy, not faith.

The middle-ground branch, seeking to find moderate ground between the two extremes of the Orthodox and Reform branches, is Conservative Judaism.

If there is any religious principle that Judaism explicitly affirms and teaches, it is the unity of God. You may have heard of the *Shema*, found in Deuteronomy 6:4^{3/4} "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One." This one all-important principle is the reason so many Jewish people have a hard time understanding Christianity, which they see as a religion of three gods, not one God in three Persons.

The Old Testament is the Scripture of Judaism. Many Jews, though, do not consider the Old Testament to be the Word of God or inspired, although they do give it respect as a part of Jewish tradition and history.

There are some lifestyle practices that set people apart as distinctively Jewish. Traditional Jews, usually Orthodox but including some from other branches, observe the Sabbath. This means abstaining from work, driving, and lighting a fire from Friday night to Saturday night. Orthodox Jews also keep kosher, which means keeping the Old Testament dietary laws. The most well known is the prohibition against mixing meat and milk at the same meal, although many people are also aware that most Jewish people do not eat pork or shellfish.

It is difficult for Jewish people to place their faith in Jesus as Messiah because it is not considered a Jewish thing to do. In fact, they see "Jewish Christian" as an oxymoron. For many, being Jewish equals "Not Christian." But there's another big reason it is so hard for Jewish people to come to faith in Christ. They don't see a need for "salvation,"

because there is nothing to be saved from. If there is a God, then Jewish people already have a special relationship with Him as His chosen people. Jesus is superfluous for Jews.

If you know someone who is Jewish, pray that God will cause the scales to fall from the eyes of their heart and they will see the truth: that there's nothing more Jewish or more godly than submitting in faith to one who was, and is, the very Son of God, and who proved His love for them by dying in their place on the cross.

Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses

Have you ever answered your door to find a couple of nicely-dressed people asking to talk to you about spiritual things? Chances are they were either Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses. Since both groups send many missionaries not only into American homes but to foreign countries, it makes sense to cover them in a discussion of world religions.

Many people think of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses as Christians in slightly different denominations, but this is not the case. To put it bluntly, both religions teach another gospel and another Jesus. They are cults, not Christian denominations.

Mormonism was founded by Joseph Smith, a teenage boy in New York. He claimed that he was visited by first God the Father and the Son, and then by the angel Moroni, who gave him golden plates, which he translated into the Book of Mormon. He said that Christianity had been corrupted since the death of the last apostle, and God appointed him to restore the truth. But Joseph Smith provided nine different versions of these events, which set the tone for the rest of his teachings.

Deuteronomy 18:22 gives God's standards for His prophets: 100% accuracy. Joseph Smith wrote a lot of prophecies, many of which never came true. He was a false prophet, and the

religion he founded is not from God.

Mormonism is not Christian because it denies some of the essential doctrines of Christianity, including the deity of Christ and salvation by grace. Furthermore, Mormon doctrine contradicts the Christian teaching that there is only one God, and it undermines the authority and reliability of the Bible.

Jehovah's Witnesses was founded by Charles Taze Russell, another false prophet. His Watchtower Bible and Tract Society has produced a prodigious amount of literature. It has prophesied the return of Christ in 1914, 1925, and 1975. Again, by God's standards, the representatives of the Watchtower Society are false prophets.

Jehovah's Witnesses deny the basics of the Christian faith. They deny the Trinity. They believe there is one singular God, Jehovah. Jesus is actually the created being Michael the Archangel, and who became flesh at the incarnation. The Holy Spirit is not God but an active force much like electricity or fire. They deny the bodily resurrection of Christ. Like Mormons, they deny the existence of hell and eternal punishment.

Both of these religions teach salvation by works, not God's grace. And they teach that salvation is only found in their organizations.

What do you do if they come to your door? First, don't do anything without sending up a prayer of dependence on God. If you are not well-grounded in your own beliefs, unless you know not only what you believe but why it's true, then you should probably politely refuse to talk to them, and work on your own understanding of your faith. Both Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are very successful at drawing in church-goers who can't recognize false teaching because they don't know what's true.

If you do know the Bible and what you believe, then

prayerfully and humbly answer their questions and comments by showing them what the Bible says. And pray that God's Spirit will show them the truth. He is grieved that people for whom Jesus died are so deceived.

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“Abortion Isn't Your Decision to Make For Others”

You assume your belief in the bible is the truth. If you disregard that book of stories to live by, then the arguments of right and wrong are invalid.

Now if your points against abortion were based on your feeling of terminating a life, not what you are told in a book then I would have much more respect for your point of view.

For those who feel abortion is wrong... good for them, they have that choice... others choosing to have an abortion will deal with it.

It's not your decision to make for others. You must understand that we all don't subscribe to your beliefs... and that's the great thing about our country, we are free to do as we feel right based on our upbringing.

I hope I have not misinterpreted your writings on this web page.

Thanks for writing about my [abortion article](#) at the Probe Ministries site.

You assume your belief in the bible is the truth. If you disregard that book of stories to live by, then the arguments of right and wrong are invalid.

Yes, I do assume that the Bible is true. Just as you assume that your beliefs are true. I used to dismiss the Bible as a fanciful "book of stories to live by," but after I found out how unusual it is, how incredibly consistent it is internally even though written by scores of authors on four continents within a span of thousands of years, I came to the conclusion that it was actually quite a miraculous book, inspired by God, and worth my trust.

If we disregard the Bible, which claims to be God's communication with us, then why even talk about issues of right and wrong? Without God in the picture, who says there IS a right and wrong? Without God, the universe just IS. No meaning, no purpose—and certainly no right and wrong.

Now if your points against abortion were based on your feeling of terminating a life, not what you are told in a book then I would have much more respect for your point of view.

So, if I based my position against abortion on feelings alone, you could respect that. . .but since I base my position on what I completely believe to be God's revealed truth, it's fluff? Feelings are a dangerous basis for opinions; they often have nothing in common with reality. How do you know that that \$20 bill in your wallet is actually worth \$20? Somebody told you it was, right? Does that make that belief invalid? But if you use that bill to buy \$20 worth of merchandise, a store will accept that money. That's because it corresponds to reality. I believe that my position on abortion—regardless of where I got those beliefs—also corresponds to reality. The question that ought to be asked about my position is not "where did you get it," but "is it true?"

It's not your decision to make for others. You must understand that we all don't subscribe to your beliefs... and that's the great thing about our country, we are free to do as we feel right based on our upbringing.

I'm sorry, where did you read that I make a decision for anyone else? I state that abortion is wrong because God says that it's wrong. I state that [abortion is hurtful](#) because that's what experience teaches us. That's a long way from stopping someone from having an abortion. You are more than free not to subscribe to my beliefs; but why would you challenge my right to hold them? I don't know how you ended up at that article, but the way the Internet works, you had to go out and search it out. It seems rather strange to me that you would look for and read an article on abortion, then castigate the author for not agreeing with you. . .???

I hope I have not misinterpreted your writings on this web page.

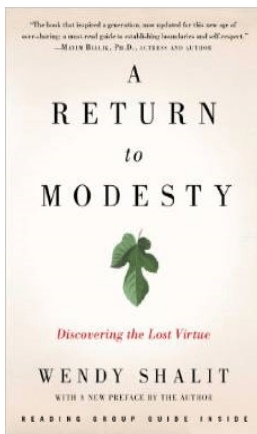
Well, I think you probably have, but that's your right. Almost all the articles at the Probe site started out as radio transcripts for a 5-minute program that airs on about 400 Christian radio stations; then we put the transcripts online. I'm glad you read it, even though I'm not sure why you would want to, if you so easily dismiss others' positions if they're based on revelation and not gut feelings.

But have a good day.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Is It a Sin To Wear A Bikini?”

On a Christian site, someone said that it is a sin to wear a bikini. I do not agree because I went sailing the other day and I was the only one not wearing a bikini and the men on the boat did not gaze at the women wearing bikinis. I do not think bikinis are immodest because they can be appropriate when swimming, just not for walking around on the street or other public places.



I would like to direct you to Wendy Shalit's book [A Return to Modesty](#), which covers the subject of modesty (and immodesty) better than anything I've ever read. It is consistent with a Christian world view even though the author is not a Christian.

In my opinion, wearing a bikini is sinful under most circumstances because the purpose of it is to show off as much flesh as possible while still covering the absolute essentials of genitals and nipples. There is nothing God-honoring about bikinis and much that is gratifying to the flesh: for men to leer and for women to show off their bodies. Scripture calls us to live and dress modestly, not to gratify the flesh. It calls us to do everything to the glory of God: wearing bathing suits that are designed to cause men to lust and women to publicly display their bodies is the opposite of glorifying God.

If the men on your sailboat didn't gaze at the women wearing bikinis, I would suggest that they may have been desensitized. Or perhaps they were just wearing sunglasses and you didn't notice their eyes! <smile>

I will add a disclaimer. There is nothing at all sinful in a wife wearing a bikini if *only* her husband will see her in it. Showing off her body to please him is part of the pleasure of sex that God intends for married couples to enjoy. See "The Song of Solomon" in the Old Testament for biblical evidence of that.

I'm glad you asked.

Sue Bohlin

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