“How Do You Handle the Nasty E-mails and Criticisms? I Get MAD!”

Dear Ms Bohlin,

A Godly day to you. After reading the nasty things that are e mailed to you regarding several and various topics at your site, I find it very interesting how you handle the nasty criticisms. Which brings me to the question, how do you handle the nasty and very angry criticisms? Do you get tipped off by them at all? I’m very interested because as I have seen from your answers, you seem to be handling them well. I wish to emulate from you. I always have a hard time handling situations like these. Whenever I share spiritual truths to some people they are very critical about what I say and I always get tipped off. It is as if I feel like I’m wasting my pearls to swine when people react the way some of your readers do and this kinda discourages me. I feel like what I’m telling them is important (considering the eternity they’ll probably end up if they don’t hear what the Bible has to say) but they simply are stubborn to have any of it. I’m not very good at handling my anger and I have no qualms about showing it. Is rage in some way connected to my practice of the occult from my past? I have read your response to the 17 year old person who had a brush with death (“Did I Encounter a Demon?”) and this made me think of my former practice and its relation to my reactions.

Thank you for your very sweet and kind comments concerning my e-mail responses. What you DON’T see is the time I let elapse between the time I first read the nasty e-mails, and when I answered them. I never fire off a response immediately because it would be too easy for it to come from my flesh instead of God’s Spirit. Sometimes I feel angry and defensive, but I’ve

learned to release those reactions into the Lord's hands and invite Him into the situation.

And then other times, I recognize what I think are the underlying motivations of people's venting. Often there's been hurt, always there is some deception of the enemy. They don't know that they are just pawns of the enemy, and I feel sorry for them. I've been involved in ministry for a long time, including some lay counseling training, so I see things a little differently.

Concerning your rage and anger, I would say that those are secondary emotions, and SOMETHING is fueling them. Anger doesn't occur in a vacuum. Usually it is the result of fear or pain or both. Although, if you have a history of occult involvement, I wouldn't rule out the possibility of demonic "button-pushing." Have you gone through any process of renouncing your occultic practices (Rom. 13:12) so you shut any doors to the enemy into your spirit? Neil Anderson's book *The Bondage Breaker* has a powerful chapter called "Steps to Freedom in Christ" that walks you through a list of possible open doors to the enemy that you can close as you renounce them. I would strongly suggest that for you.

However, if you have an ongoing problem with anger, particularly angry words, know that the Lord Jesus said that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Angry words come from an angry heart. Not that it's a sin to be angry, but it sounds like you need to look at what's making you angry and deal with it through forgiveness, if someone has hurt you. Or readjusting your belief system—such as developing realistic expectations of life, of God, of other people, of yourself.

I understand your anger when people don't appreciate the spiritual truth you share with them. Let me try and reframe what's happening to hopefully help you react more wisely. You have the truth, they need the truth. HOWEVER, if they are

spiritually blind (think cataracts), they cannot see their need for the truth OR the truth itself. First God has to do a work in their hearts before they can receive it. Or, you are offering the Living Water, but their cups are upside down. If you pour out Living Water into an upside-down cup, it doesn't benefit them at all. . . it just makes a mess. That's why you can offer spiritual truth, but if God hasn't prepared their hearts to receive it, they won't—they CAN'T get it. After all, it takes a miracle for a dead person to make the CHOICE to be born again, and it takes a miracle for spiritually deaf and blind people to hear and see truth. So instead of getting angry when they don't receive what you're offering, just let it go and tell yourself, "How sad that they're not ready to receive. Lord, do a work in this person's heart to open their eyes and heart."

I love your passion in seeing sacred things trampled underfoot. That is a love of justice and goodness speaking. However, please remember that when the Lord Jesus was being crucified, He kept saying over and over (that continual action is in the Greek, but it doesn't show up in the English), "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." People don't know what they're doing. They can only see what the world tells them is real, what their feelings tell them is real. They are deceived and ignorant, and God extends grace to them.

Keep on serving the Master by continually submitting yourself into His hands. One very specific way to do that is to ask him, "Lord Jesus, what is my anger about? What do You want to show me about that? What do you want me to DO?" and then listen over a period of time for Him to answer. He loves it when His people ask that kind of heart question.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Help Me Understand Fasting”

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

1. When I felt the Spirit move me to fast I was unsure of the direction. I often hear that still small voice and try my best to follow it immediately. Do I need a specific direction in order to fast?

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

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

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

> *1. When I felt the Spirit move me to fast I was unsure of the direction. I often hear that still small voice and try my best to follow it immediately. Do I need a specific direction in order to fast?*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other than self-centered reasons? Only disobedience. For instance, a person might have good and godly intentions to fast, but the Lord says don't. He knows that he has a blood sugar imbalance but the person doesn't, and fasting would be dangerous.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Do You Know Why My Dreams Come True?”

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

P.S.- I’m not crazy, promise.

Hi _____,

First of all, I believe you. You are describing a supernatural kind of life where the power comes from God and not yourself, and that is the kind of “abundant life” that Jesus was talking about bringing to us.

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

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

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

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

> *I was just wondering if you could give me some insight. I am SURE it's not Satan, dreams aren't my only specialty. If I concentrate—really hard—I can see through deception.*

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

would hurt us or trick us.

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

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

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

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

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Are Chemical Imbalances Real

or a Worldly Idea?”

Some people in my family have been diagnosed with chemical imbalance in their brains. In the past I have been a reader of Jay Adams. How does this idea of chemical imbalances (CI) measure up to the Scriptures and spiritual problems? Is this CI something the world has come up with denying the spiritual or is it really legitimate? Where can I find scriptural or spiritual input on this subject? At this point, I believe it is primarily a spiritual problem. Please help!!

When it comes to depression, I have seen people dealing with it because of spiritual issues, emotional issues and physical issues (chemical imbalance). In fact, my husband had anemia-induced depression that was treated by taking anti-depressants for three months. If it were a spiritual or emotional issue, simply taking the meds for such a short period of time wouldn’t have solved the problem.

Our brains are an organ, like our gall bladder, lungs and liver. They can develop physical problems and chemical imbalances; why would the brain be any different? *We* are not our brains. *We* are souls—personalities—that *have* a brain and who live in a fallen world where physical brain problems arise.

I am aware of Christians who try to make everything a spiritual problem, but I think that’s simplifying things too much. After all, scripture says we are made of three parts, spirit, soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23). To try and make depression (which is experienced in the emotions) solely a spiritual issue, doesn’t make sense. Unfortunately, there is a lot of shame heaped on people for treating depression chemically, which I think is unnecessary shame. For instance, I know someone with manic-depression who NEEDS her medications to allow her to function, just as I need physical assistance to make up for orthopedic weakness from polio. There should be

no shame in either my cane or my friend's medications; they are both a matter of accepting help for a real, physical problem.

Along a different line, another friend is a longtime school teacher and principal. She used to pooh-pooh the use of Ritalin for ADD and ADHD, until she researched the issue in depth and reversed her opinion. While there are certainly many kids who are taking it needlessly (quite possibly the majority of them), there are others who have a true chemical imbalance and benefit greatly from taking medication.

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

"Why Do Christians Go to Church on Sunday Instead of the Sabbath?"

Why do most Christians go to church on Sunday, the first day of the week, instead of the sabbath, the seventh day of the week?

Christians typically go to church on Sunday, rather than Saturday, because Jesus was raised from the dead on a Sunday morning. The resurrection is extremely important for Christians. Indeed, it's so important that, if it didn't occur, Christianity would be false! In 1 Corinthians 15:17 Paul writes, "…if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."

But why is such great significance attached to Jesus' bodily resurrection? Although many reasons could be given, let me mention just two:

1. In the resurrection, God the Father vindicated the person and work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who had been crucified not for His own sin, but for ours (2 Cor. 5:21). Thus, in Romans 1:4 we read that Jesus "was declared the Son of God with power by (or "as a result of") the resurrection from the dead." But don't Christians believe that Jesus was already the Son of God before His resurrection? Yes; this passage teaches that the resurrection was God's powerful confirmation that Jesus' message about Himself was true. After all, anyone can CLAIM to be the Son of God, but only God can confirm the truth of such a claim by raising the person from the dead!

2. In Romans 4:25 we read that Christ "was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification." To "justify" someone means to declare them "righteous," or not-guilty. This passage indicates the sufficiency of Christ's death for all believers. In other words, believers can be confident of their justification by God on the basis of Christ's resurrection. If the Father had not been fully satisfied with Christ's death for our sins, He would not have raised Him from the dead. The resurrection is thus God's confirmation of the complete sufficiency of Christ's death for all who believe!

It is thus because of the tremendous importance of Christ's resurrection for the Christian faith that Christians worship on Sunday, the day that God raised Jesus from the dead.

I hope you find this information helpful. May God bless you as you search the Scriptures!

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

“How Do I Do Spiritual Warfare?”

I’ve heard several “spiritual warfare” stories before. My pastor says “stay away from that which is dangerous,” and I understand why he says that. But how do I keep away from having an unhealthy focus on such things, without completely ignoring it? Also, what exactly is spiritual warfare? Why does it happen?

I’m so glad you asked! Your pastor is right to counsel you stay away from that which is dangerous; however, when you find yourself in the midst of a battle zone and you don’t have any CHOICE about being where it’s dangerous, the best thing to do is to be armed and educated about how to protect yourself! A wise teacher once said that the Christian life is like living in a war zone. We don’t have any choice about where to live, but we can protect ourselves in it!

What’s unhealthy is to be focused on demons; what’s healthy is to be focused on Christ and especially on who you are in Christ, the authority you have in Christ, and the importance of staying in moment-by-moment dependence on Christ. (Yes, it IS hard! Which is why we need to do it in the power of the Holy Spirit and not our own strength.)

Spiritual warfare is understanding that as believers, we are under attack by “the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places,” and using the spiritual armor and weaponry to withstand the attacks on our faith. The above phrase comes from Ephesians 6:12, and that whole paragraph (verses 10-18)

describes the spiritual armor available to us as believers.



There is an EXCELLENT book and Bible study by Kay Arthur called *Lord, Is It Warfare?* that I strongly recommend for you. She not only handles the scriptures well but gives good illustrations to help the reader understand what's going on.

Finally, why does it happen? Because Satan really hates God and hates God's people. He has lost the war and knows it, but he's going to inflict as much damage on God's people as he can before going down. He can't keep us out of heaven, but he can distract us from concentrating on Christ by throwing doubts about God and about our faith at us. The thing to never forget is that Satan (and his legions of demons) is a defeated foe who was stripped of all weapons by Jesus when He died on the cross (see Col. 2:15). All he has left is "wiles" or "schemes," which means he whispers lies and questions to us. The battleground for spiritual warfare is the mind, which is why it's so important to be transformed in the renewing of your mind and diligently pursue a Christian world view so you know what is true about God, yourself, and reality.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Does ‘Touch Not the Lord’s Anointed’ Mean that Abusive Pastors Can’t be Challenged?”

I have read your article, “Abusive Churches: Leaving them Behind.” It is loaded with useful information, esp. for me as I have been in an abusive church. Before I left I had a series of meetings with the pastor in which I confronted him on a number of things I thought were not right in the church, only to be labelled a troublemaker. The pastor used to say to me that even if he did anything wrong, I was not the one to “judge” him because as the Lord’s annointed he was only accountable to God and not man or any authority.

He used to draw attention of the church to a scripture that says that Saul had backslidden and sought to take the life of David, but the latter could not do anything about him because he was the Lord’s anointed. (1 Sam. 24:1-15)

My question to you is: Was David right in saying that he could not touch Saul even if Saul was his enemy just because Saul was the Lord’s anointed? Can the Lord’s anointed threaten lives and no action be taken? Does anointing give one immunity from punishment for wrong-doing? How do you answer this question of David and Saul?

The context of that verse is that David’s soldier was looking to kill Saul since he was there in a very vulnerable situation. That is very different from confronting a leader with regard to sinful behavior. Nathan confronted and rebuked David on his sin with Bathsheba (1 Sam. 12). So did General Joab, who confronted David on his sinful conduct after the death of his son Absalom (2 Sam. 19:5-8). Many abusive leaders misuse that verse to say they are above criticism, but that is a misuse of that text to keep themselves accountable to no

one.

Pat Zukeran
Probe Ministries

“Could My Children’s Autism be the Result of a Generational Curse?”

I understand that it says in the Bible that the children may be cursed for generations because of their fathers’ sins. I have two children with autism and a cousin that has a child with autism as well. Could this be a curse since both of our parents are sisters? There has been talk that in our family that relatives from two and three generations back married cousins. Isn’t that a sin?

I believe the concept of generational curses is best understood as the natural consequence of ingrained behavioral patterns that are passed down from one generation to the next. I yelled at my kids when they were small because my mom yelled at us. My brother is a (recovered) alcoholic because he saw our dad drink a lot every night he was home, and he internalized that behavior for himself. The guy down the street mistreats his wife because he saw his father continually do it to his mother. (And societally speaking, there can be generational “curses” when those in one generation make decisions which have effects for generations to come, such as the abortion decision. Our society continues to pay for that errant decision in more ways than the 30 million+ abortions since Roe v. Wade. The value of young innocent life continues to decline.)

We can’t change what we don’t acknowledge, so these behavior patterns (or curses) continue to play themselves out in the lives of those who don’t confront them and decide to stop them. But we CAN change what we DO acknowledge, particularly when we invite the Lord to release His power into an area we want to change.

But what you’re asking about is something different. Marrying cousins isn’t a sin biblically. The laws in place against marrying close relatives such as siblings are there to protect children from experiencing the fallout of recessive genes being expressed; however, the Journal of Genetic Counseling recently released a report that the risk of serious genetic disorders among children of first cousins is much smaller than originally thought (http://depts.washington.edu/mednews/vol6/no15/cousins.html).

Since there is talk in your family of cousins marrying several generations ago, and non-family genes were subsequently introduced through marriage to non-cousins which would strengthen the genetic mixture, I would think that while there is a chance that the autism in your family is connected to the cousin marriage, there’s probably more of a chance that it isn’t. More to the point, I don’t think this is a generational curse since the marrying cousins didn’t break any of God’s laws.

I am so sorry that you are having to deal with autism. That is a difficult burden to bear. Please don’t carry an unnecessary burden of thinking you are dealing with the consequences of someone else’s sin, when you’re probably not.

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Posted 2003

“Is It Wrong to Be a Sperm or Egg Donor?”

Dear Sue,

Quick question. What is your view on sperm/egg donations? Do you think it is wrong to be a donor? Why or why not? This is an interesting topic.

Quick answer. Yes, I think it’s wrong to seek—or be—a donor. Because the creation of a new human being is supposed to be the product of love and commitment in a marriage relationship, not a consumer commodity that we produce simply because we want a baby. Any time there is a sperm or egg donor, that means people are going outside the marriage relationship to get what they want, which means a type of adultery.

In the case of infertility, this is a difficult and emotional issue, but I think we should remember that no one has the “right” to have a baby. It’s like saying, “OK, God, You’re not cooperating to give me what I want, so I’m going to get it my way.” Same thing for people who want to be parents but aren’t married; having a baby is about getting what they want, not about what’s in a child’s best interests (which is always going to be a mother and father in a stable marriage).

This is a great example of why the “technological imperative” is wrong; simply because we CAN, doesn’t mean we SHOULD.

Thanks for asking.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“It’s So Hard to Be a Christian on My Job!”

I am a commercial airline pilot and a born-again Christian. I am frequently confronted with a very in-your-face, sexually explicit, lewd, and immoral environment from the crew members I fly with. I let people know that I am a Christian, that I attend church and that I attend a men’s group. However, it seems the barrage of sex jokes and immorality just keeps coming even though they know I am not into those things. I know that I am not the morality police and I try very hard not to be critical and judgmental. I try to find other “common ground” and try to serve my crew members and get to know them. But sometimes, I feel like maybe I need to let them know more emphatically that I don’t want to participate or be a part of those types of conversations and jokes. I don’t want to come across as judgmental and holier than thou but I also would like to establish healthy boundaries and establish a clear identity so people know who I am and what I am and am not about. Sometimes, I feel so frustrated about how to handle a situation that I just say nothing but then I feel like it’s not healthy to just sit there and listen to garbage all the time. I was wondering if you have any suggestions that might help me approach future situations with maturity and clarity. I truly desire to serve God on my job. I have a heart for people and would like to find the balance between being judgmental and just sitting back and saying nothing.

I asked my friend Mike Cleveland, the writer and webservant of Setting Captives Free (www.settingcaptivesfree.com), who is also a commercial pilot, how to answer your question.

Dear Sue, I’m glad to see him desiring to be in the world but

not of it. Of course I'm in these same situations as he is. I do not normally let them know, with my words, that I am a born-again, blood-bought child of God, but I do try to show it in my actions hoping that doors will open that I can speak of Him with my words. Normally when the crew goes down to eat in the hotel together is where most of this coarse joking takes place. People get together, have a few drinks and the foul speaking begins. I don't partake of it at all, I get silent and don't laugh at the filthy jokes whatsoever but simply turn away and look out the window or read the menu, or find some other way to disengage from the conversation. I have discovered that the strong man can be around that stuff and neither have to laugh at it nor declare how juvenile it is and how spiritual we are, but rather we can be silent and strong. For the past couple of years I haven't had this type of joking go on around me; though I don't get "in your face" about my beliefs, there is the "aroma of heaven" that accompanies a child of God who knows who he is in Jesus. If someone does slip with a bad word they normally look at me and say, "oh sorry Mike" yet they may not have even heard me say I'm a Christian. It's called silent intimidation, letting them "hear" our character by having them watch our deeds and the way we live. We are the light of the world, and a light cannot be hidden. A light "speaks" simply by its presence. Help him to learn to enjoy the presence of the Lord and wherever he goes he will BE a light. The enjoyment of God is what we have that the world doesn't, and that joy in the Lord can't be hidden. "They took notice of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Of course every now and then God opens a door where we can be bold with our words and proclaim the gospel freely. I love those times. But they are few and far between because the road to life is narrow and few find it. Mike

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

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