

# **“You Anti-Abortion Doctor Killers Are Hypocrites!”**

So since obviously you say the religion is against abortion and abortion is evil and wrong. . . What is god going to do about the guy that murdered a man in church since he was an abortion doctor?

So murdering a baby is wrong. . . . and getting your anti, “you don’t have a choice” word across no matter what happens is OK?

It’s OK to bomb clinics and murder doctors and harass people. . . I must have missed that passage in the bible. That must be in the book of “I’m a Hypocrite” verse 12.

So let’s say your beautiful wholesome daughter was raped by a psychotic crazed madman and he got her pregnant. You would welcome that half-crazed child into your life? Or going off of anti-abortion tactics, obviously you would just kill her and say it was in the book of Hypocrite, or wait. . . you would put the baby up for adoption and not tell the parents that this is a child of a rape.

You see the problem here don’t you? But of course it’s not a problem in your eyes until it hits home isn’t it.

Oh I guess you anti-abortion activists will continue to bomb buildings, murder people and harass people in the name of god. Wow. . . you know what. . . that is rather hypocritical isn’t it.

Murder is OK, it must say so in some part of the bible that I missed too. . . and bombing. . . does it say anywhere there “And the lord, place a bomb in the building to blow it up”? Man, I musta skipped over that section.

Dear friend,

I'm glad you wrote so we can provide a different perspective. Before responding to the points of your email, let me state unequivocally that *we condemn the use of all violence in the struggle to end the violence of abortion*. As a ministry, and all of us individually.

*So since obviously you say the religion is against abortion and abortion is evil and wrong. . . What is god going to do about the guy that murdered a man in church since he was an abortion doctor?*

My guess is that He will respond the same way as to any other murderer.

*So murdering a baby is wrong. . . . and getting your anti, "you don't have a choice" word across no matter what happens is OK?*

We would say no, it's not okay. God tells us to show respect and honor to everyone, even those we disagree with.

And we disagree with those who believe it is acceptable to use violence to stop abortion. "The end justifies the means" is not a biblical philosophy; it is actually the fruit of Darwinist thinking that says the fit will survive by whatever means they can get away with. Those justifying their unbiblical actions because they believe that abortion must be stopped regardless of the methods used are dishonoring God.

*It's OK to bomb clinics and murder doctors and harass people. . . I must have missed that passage in the bible. That must be in the book of "I'm a Hypocrite" verse 12.*

:::wince::: Your point is well taken. However, please consider the possibility that people who bomb clinics and murder abortionists and harrass people are acting on their own choice

instead of taking their orders from what God has said in His word. The Old Testament property laws show that God wants us to respect other people's property, and bombing clinics is a violation of that. Murdering doctors is a direct violation of the commandment "Thou shalt not murder." Harrassing people is a violation of God's command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

*So let's say your beautiful wholesome daughter was raped by a psychotic crazed madman and he got her pregnant. You would welcome that half-crazed child into your life? Or going off of anti-abortion tactics, obviously you would just kill her and say it was in the book of Hypocrite, or wait. . . you would put the baby up for adoption and not tell the parents that this is a child of a rape.*

Let's go one step further. I'm a woman; during my childbearing years I lived with the possibility that it could have been me getting impregnated through a rape. I did think about what we would do. Because there's a big difference between pre-deciding a response to a hypothetical situation and actually living it, we had two choices: welcome the baby into our family as a continual reminder of what grace (undeserved blessing and favor) looks like, or giving the baby up for adoption. There is a growing number of infertile couples who would give anything to bring such a life into their home, regardless of how he came to be. The baby would be an innocent party who had nothing to do with his or her conception. (And even if the father were a "psychotic crazed madman," that doesn't make his offspring crazy.)

*You see the problem here don't you? But of course it's not a problem in your eyes until it hits home isn't it.*

It would be a *very big* problem. Our response is that we have an even bigger God.

*Oh I guess you anti-abortion activists will continue to bomb*

*buildings, murder people and harass people in the name of god. Wow. . . you know what. . . that is rather hypocritical isn't it.*

Yes, it is hypocritical to do things in the name of God who forbids us to do those things. I'm curious, though, why you wrote to Probe Ministries, since none of us are anti-abortion "activists." Not a one of us has ever bombed a building or murdered doctors or harassed people. I'm also curious. . . are you able to consider the possibility that people who cross God's lines, no matter how well-intentioned they are, are a tiny minority of those who are passionate about this issue?

We think it's interesting that in today's culture, it's not okay to blame all Muslims for the actions of extremist Muslim terrorists (and of course it's not). . . but it's acceptable to blame all Christians for the actions of a handful of extremists? Isn't that what you're doing here?

*Murder is OK, it must say so in some part of the bible that I missed too. . . and bombing. . . does it say anywhere there "And the lord, place a bomb in the building to blow it up"? Man, I musta skipped over that section.*

You're right. Murder and bombing other people's buildings are not instructed in the Bible. In fact, the Bible tells us to do the opposite of those things. The people choosing to resort to their own methods in hopes of achieving their goals are not basing their choices on biblical values or principles. They do what they do *in spite of* what the Bible says, not because of it.

Thanks for writing.

Sue Bohlin

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# “What About Hindus’ Claim that Hinduism is the Oldest Religion?”

Indian Hindus claim that Hinduism is the oldest religion, but Bible teaches us that God created all this in Jewish form. If so, why do those Vedas and upanishads say they are older than the Bible?

Your question seems to be a complex question with multiple implications and I think we need to be careful to define some of our terms. First of all, even though God did create Adam and did place a special calling, promise and blessing on Abraham and his descendents, the Bible doesn't say that “God created all this in Jewish form.” When God created Adam, Judaism was not in complete form yet, even though Judaism would descend from Adam and Abraham's blood. Judaism carefully traces its roots all the way back to the creation of the universe, and the creation of man, connecting Adam to Abraham. This started out as oral tradition which was written down much, much later. So that needs to be taken into account.

Second, even among scholars of the writings of the Vedas, there is some dispute about when the actual writings of the Vedas were written. Some of them might date back to 1500 BC, but some Biblical scholars date the Exodus of the Hebrews around this time. Conservative Biblical scholars (and I) hold that Moses was the primary author of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible.) This would date the Pentateuch as being as old as some of the Vedas. But it is true that Christianity was started with Christ or, technically, after his resurrection. The New Testament was written in the first

century. So, in one sense, one might claim that Hinduism is older than “CHRISTianity” because it dates back before Christ. [However, Christianity’s roots are in Judaism, which, again, traces *its* roots all the way back to the first man and woman.]

But if a Hindu apologist uses the phrase “Hinduism is older than Christianity” kind of as a “gotcha” statement, trying to make something more credible because of its age, their implications include a couple fallacies. First, Hinduism has changed and added books with their Vedas over the years, and it’s difficult to say all the Vedas are older than the Torah. Second, just because something is older doesn’t make something more true. This is the logical fallacy “*Argumentum ab Annis*” (argument because of age). Just because a religion, a thousand years ago from a primitive group, taught that child sacrifice to the gods was good, this didn’t make their belief or their practice true or good. And not just because of the argument that one religion being older makes it better. However, God’s existence, his creation, the existence of Adam, and calling of Abraham existed in reality years before Moses documented them in the Torah.

Hope you find this helpful.

Dave Sterrett

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**“How Do I Talk to My Friend  
About Her Son’s**

# Homosexuality?"

My very dear Jewish friend and mother has a gay son. She insists that she knew from age 5 forward, that he was different and going to be homosexual. She loathes Christians who say that being homosexual is not genetic, but learned behavior, and is sinful. How can I best respond to her biblically, about homosexuality? Or to anyone I meet with this perspective?

I'm so glad you asked! I see several issues in your email.

*She insists that she knew from age 5 forward, that he was different and going to be homosexual.*

If she was sensitive to her children, it is not surprising that she noted he was different from very early in his childhood. There's nothing wrong with being different. But it's sad that she "knew" he was going to be homosexual because it didn't have to turn out that way.

I believe there is a [spectrum of masculinity](#) in boys, and they are born at whatever place on that spectrum that is God's choice, and gift, to them. On one end is the rough-and-tumble physical, athletic, emotionally insensitive boy. Our culture would deem him "classically masculine." He loves to play ball or engage in various sports, to get dirty, and to play with other boys. On the other end of the spectrum from the athletic boy is the aesthetic boy: gifted in music, art, poetry, performing, enjoying reading and other quiet activities, and emotionally sensitive. Songwriter and musician Dennis Jernigan, himself a former homosexual, calls these boys the "Davids" of the church.

Unfortunately, our culture has too narrowly defined masculinity, labeling the sensitive, artistic boy different and gay. One man I know, provided with this perspective,

exclaimed, "If someone had explained to me when I was 17 that I wasn't gay, I was gifted, that would have changed everything!"

When a boy's father, especially, gives him warm attention, affection and affirmation, supporting whatever kind of boy he is, he usually grows up accepting and comfortable with his particular kind of masculinity. When a boy knows that his daddy believes in him and is his #1 cheerleader, he can connect with the world of males and continue to develop without incident. But when a boy doesn't receive the masculinity imprint from his father that makes him feel like he belongs in the world of boys and men, he can remain stuck at that place. (If he DOES have a great relationship with his dad but doesn't make the connection with other boys, the arrested development can happen a few years later.)

How do I know this? From being in ministry to hundreds of men whose stories are heartbreakingly similar. There are a few wild cards, such as sexual abuse, that can produce same-sex attractions even when a boy has a great relationship with his dad and his peers, but most of the time it's a very similar story.

[Incidentally, I see a similar spectrum of femininity for girls, ranging from the foo-foo girly-girl on one end, to the tomboy jockette, allergic to dresses, on the other. Our culture also too narrowly defines femininity, just as it does masculinity.]

*She loathes Christians who say that being homosexual is not genetic, but learned behavior, and is sinful.*

Well, being homosexual is NOT genetic. There is not only no evidence for a genetic cause for same-sex attractions, there is strong evidence for certain pre-conditions that characterize the histories of those who eventually take on a gay identity: the sensitive temperament, a lack of warm,



affirming connection with dad, a lack of affirming connection with other boys, and a resulting lack of self-confidence in being male.

And yet it can feel like people were born that way.

Maybe this analogy will help. My friend grew up in the south where everyone in his family was prejudiced. It was just the culture of his family and pretty much all the people his family ran with. As long as he can remember, he always hated and feared black people. Everyone he knew hated and feared black people. He didn't know there was any other way. But he wasn't born prejudiced. He was shaped that way because of countless interactions and modeling. He told me, "You grow up being taught and thinking that black people are bad and evil and you believe that until the Lord reveals something else. Then you change and you were not what you once were—what felt 'normal' to you."

No one chooses the feelings of a lack of confidence in one's masculinity, of not belonging to the world of boys and men. Then, once the sex hormones start flooding his body in adolescence, no one chooses the resulting sexual/romantic attraction to a guy who possesses what a boy wishes he had or were. The feelings are not learned, but the resulting choices and behaviors are. The Bible, including the Old Testament passages, does not condemn the feelings, only the chosen behavior. (And sexual sin is always a choice.) So I would make a distinction between the feelings and the actions.

So homosexual feelings are not chosen, but acting on them is, and it's sinful. It's not a sin to be tempted (what same-sex feelings constitute), but it is a sin to step over the line and give in. You might mention to your friend something like the fact that it's not a sin to be tempted to shoplift, but it is a sin to give in and steal. I would imagine she could get that.

*How can I best respond to her biblically, about homosexuality? Or to anyone I meet with this perspective?*

The first issue is to determine if they're even open to hearing another viewpoint. It's not a good idea to try and "correct" someone's values and beliefs when they are content in them, but Jesus told us to be salt and light. So we need to be careful with our words and offer another viewpoint with respect and gentleness, as Peter tells us (1 Pet. 3:7). You might say something like, "You know, there are lots of former homosexuals who see things very differently than what we usually hear in the media."

I would suggest simply stating what God has said in His word: that His plan for sexuality is within the bounds of marriage between one man and one woman. Anything outside of His intention is not only sinful, it's harmful, and that's why he tells us to avoid it. God's rules for sexuality are rooted in His love for us, and He knows that when we insist on doing things our own way, trying to meet legitimate needs in ungodly and illegitimate ways, we will suffer from negative consequences. We can point out that the biology of sex shows that God designed it for male-female coupling. (This argument holds true for an evolutionary perspective as well.) And when people who have been immersed in a culture of anything-goes sexuality insist that homosexuality is a viable option, gently ask what would happen if a group of gay-identifying people populated an uninhabited island. What would happen over time?

All you can do is respectfully offer God's truth as revealed in His word, and trust God with the results. We live in a culture that has been shaped by a definite agenda designed to normalize and legitimize homosexuality, and suggesting people think differently than the culture demands can be like asking a fish what it's like to be wet. A fish doesn't know the meaning of "wet" because it doesn't understand the concept of "dry." And people don't realize there's a legitimate, though

politically incorrect alternative view.

And it's probably worthwhile to mention that someone whose child is gay can easily react very defensively to the offensive idea that homosexuality is preventable and changeable, because that would indicate they played a role in it. And that just hurts too much to consider. Parents usually beat ourselves up with guilt anyway; this issue can push the guilt factor to an unbearable weight. So I think it's wise to be aware of that dynamic.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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## **“How Do I Know the Bible is True?”**

**How do I know that the Bible was true, since I base my faith on it? Why weren't some books canonized?**

Great question! We have several articles that will help you with answers.

*Are the Biblical Documents Reliable?*

[www.probe.org/are-the-biblical-documents-reliable/](http://www.probe.org/are-the-biblical-documents-reliable/)

*Authority of the Bible:*

[probe.org/authority-of-the-bible-a-strong-argument-for-christianity/](http://probe.org/authority-of-the-bible-a-strong-argument-for-christianity/)

*The Inspiration of the Bible:*

[www.probe.org/the-inspiration-of-the-bible/](http://www.probe.org/the-inspiration-of-the-bible/)

*The New Testament: Can I Trust It?*

[www.probe.org/the-new-testament-can-i-trust-it/](http://www.probe.org/the-new-testament-can-i-trust-it/)

*The Christian Canon:*

[www.probe.org/the-christian-canon/](http://www.probe.org/the-christian-canon/)

You will be especially interested in this answer to email:  
“How Did the Church Recognize Which Books Were Inspired By God?”

[www.probe.org/how-did-the-church-recognize-which-books-were-inspired-by-god/](http://www.probe.org/how-did-the-church-recognize-which-books-were-inspired-by-god/)

So glad you wrote!

Sue Bohlin

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## “How Can I Teach Pluralism Wisely?”

I am teaching *Life of Pi*, by Yann Martel, in my Advanced Placement English class.

As an evangelical Christian working in a public school, I want to evoke discussion about pluralism as we read. The book does discuss Christianity (through the Catholic tradition), Hinduism, and Islam. The main character in the book explores all three and converts to Islam and Christianity while still a Hindu.

I think this is the “ultimate pluralist” created by Martel. □

Keep in mind that my students are freshmen, and my definition

**of religious pluralism would need to be somewhat simple.**

**Whatever I teach focuses on whomever I teach. How can I, as a Christian teacher, probe their minds and hearts to think about deeper issues?**

Thanks for writing. It's great that you want to help your students think about pluralism. It's probably safe to say that many teachers are quite happy with pluralism and wouldn't think to challenge the notion.

Since you can't promote Christianity, I can think of two ways to approach the subject: making clear the differences between the major religions, and talking about the nature of truth.

First, a lot of people say all religions are the same without knowing what they teach. It would be instructive to put up a chart or make a list of the beliefs of the different religions. For example, regarding God or ultimate reality:

- *Hindus are pantheists or polytheists.*
- *Buddhists are atheists or pantheists.*
- *Muslims are theists and unitarian.*
- *Christians are theists but trinitarian.*

There's a pamphlet called ["The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error"](#) which you might find at a Christian bookstore that lists a lot of differences.

The point is that they teach contradictory ideas. How can they all be true?

If the students respond with the "it's true for them" line, ask why they think so? The only ways that could be so would be if 1) there really is no god; religion is just something people make up, or 2) there is a god, but no one can really know anything about him. Whichever of these they might believe, you can ask why they think so.

You may even want to back up a little and talk about truth itself. Talk about its exclusive nature. If it's true that I'm typing on a keyboard, for example, it has to be false that I'm typing on a tree or an elephant. Logic reflects the way the world is. A thing (like a keyboard) can't be another thing (at the same time and in the same sense). And, a thing can't both exist in reality and not exist. You can extend this to moral issues as well. Ask if it's okay for one set of parents to beat their child blue with rods when they don't get their homework done (or use another example they'll find horrendous). If they say it's wrong, say something like, "But it's true for them, then it's good."

You can also talk about whether it's important to make distinctions between true and false. This and the above are more preparatory kinds of things that make it possible for people to believe one religion can be true and others false. You have to relate these questions to real life. Talk about other things in their lives that have to be either true or false (including moral issues, if not religious ones). The main point is to get the students thinking about the nature of truth, using things in their world where they know true and false in the classical sense apply. That can raise in their minds a conflict. They're used to the "true for me" thinking, but in their lives they don't and can't live that way. You can then relate this to the matter of religion.

Finally, they may talk more about social matters, about the need to respect all people. To this you can pose this problem. Ask what, say, a Muslim might think if you tell him you respect his religious beliefs even though no one can really know what God (or Allah) is like, or if you say that there really is no God, but that religion is something that people make up to meet their needs. Would a Muslim feel gratified and respected by this "inclusive" attitude? I know as a Christian it doesn't make me feel more respected when someone claims that Jesus really isn't the only way to God, because that is

central to my beliefs. Students need to know that people can disagree about ideas without hating each other. Unfortunately, that idea (that disagreement equals hatred) is so often fostered today. To think someone is wrong means you hate them and will do harm to them. That's all part of the tolerance nonsense being taught today.

If all this is clear as mud, write back and we'll talk some more.

Rick Wade

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## **“Christianity Teaches Four Gods, Right?”**

The Bible clearly states that there is only one God. Deuteronomy 6:4 states, “Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.” The Father is obviously called God as seen throughout the Bible. No one will argue that point. So there is one member of the Trinity, the Father.

Jesus the Son, is a separate person but He is also called God. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Holy Spirit is also a separate person, and He is also called God.

Let me see if I got this right. Please correct me if I'm wrong.

God is a trinity, composed of three divine persons, namely,

the Father, Son, and holy spirit. God is also the Father, the first person of the first God who is a trinity. God is also the Son, the second person of the first God who is a trinity. God is also the holy spirit, the third person of the first God who is a trinity.

All of this means that there are four Gods. One three-person God and three single-person Gods. But to avoid the stigma of polytheism, all four Gods are really one God.

**Did I get that right?**

I don't know if you really wanted a response or not, since it seems like you may have just been trying to have some fun. But obviously no orthodox trinitarian Christian would subscribe to the doctrine as you have characterized it.

Actually, you basically got it right when you wrote: "God is a trinity, composed of three divine persons, namely, the Father, Son, and holy spirit." In other words, God just "is" the unity of the three divine persons. Traditionally, this has been expressed by saying that God is one in essence, three in subsistence. Trinitarian Christians do not propose the absurd (and logically contradictory) notion that there is only one God, and yet (somehow) there are three Gods. That would clearly be incoherent. Rather, we maintain that there is only one God (monotheism) who mysteriously subsists as three distinct persons (Trinitarianism).

Consider an analogy (which I take from the Christian philosopher William Lane Craig). Cerberus was a three-headed dog that guarded the entrance to Hades in Greek mythology. Cerberus, therefore, was one dog with three heads. Now we could imagine that each head constituted a distinct center of consciousness. We could even give them names, say, Spike, Bowser, and Rover. Spike would be conscious of being Spike, but also of being Cerberus. He would also be conscious of not being either Bowser or Rover. The same could be said, in an



appropriate way, regarding the conscious experience of both Bowser and Rover. Now consider Cerberus as a spiritual, disembodied entity. You have one being, Cereberus, who has three distinct centers of consciousness (i.e. Spike, Bowser, and Rover). This is something akin, I think, to what the Trinitarian maintains about the nature of God, recognizing, of course, that God is an infinitely higher being than any merely finite being. I could write more, but you get the idea. Hopefully this analogy will help you better understand what Christians maintain about the nature of God. Of course, it's only an analogy—and to ridicule it for that reason would really be rather petty. I offer it solely as a way of making this doctrine a bit more comprehensible, while nonetheless acknowledging that there is genuine mystery here as well.

Best wishes as you continue to explore and examine Christian doctrine!

Michael Gleghorn

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## **“What About Ghosts in a Haunted House?”**

I've found your site helpful as I create a bible study on spirituality and dangerous “spiritualties.” I read over Michael Gleghorn's [“Communicating with the Dead,”](#) but I felt it didn't deal directly with my question for my Sunday School class this week: What does the Bible want us to think about ghosts and supposed ghostly encounters? Several people in our church have experienced what they call ghosts in their homes, and I want to explore what the Bible says about that during

our class. Michael's essay spoke about the small chance that souls from heaven, like Lazarus's and Abraham's, could return for very special occasions; what about the weird things that fall outside of human experience in a so-called haunted house? Should we always assume those are evil spirits parading as ghosts? What Bible verses help us to understand those things?

As I argue in my article, the Bible seems to suggest that it is a very rare event for a person who has died to return to earth to communicate some message to those still living. Also, given that the rich man was not able to return to warn his brothers (even though he wanted to), it seems that a dead person could only return with the permission of God (as one supposes was the case with Samuel returning to Saul to pronounce God's judgment upon him, or with Moses and Elijah appearing with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration). If this is correct, then I think that we would have to regard the vast majority of ghostly sightings, etc., to be either visions (caused by God or some other power), or hallucinations (caused by drugs, lack of sleep, sickness, psychological problems, a close emotional bond with the deceased, etc.), or demons. Of course, as I said, there may also be the rare instance when God allows a deceased person to return for some reason. In addition, I suppose a ghostly encounter could also be explained in terms of an angelic visitation.

The bottom line, I think, is this: when it comes to questions of this sort, I don't think the Bible speaks clearly (or explicitly) enough to the issue for us to be dogmatic. There are many possible options for the sort of phenomena you mention—and each would have to be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis.

Morally and spiritually speaking, the Bible seems much more concerned to warn us against trying to communicate with the dead than it does in answering our questions about the nature of ghostly encounters, etc. This, I think, is the really important point: we are forbidden to attempt to make contact

with the dead. If God wants to send someone back with a message, that's His business. Ours is to obey His commands. Having said this, however, I personally think that most ghostly sightings are probably either visions or hallucinations. Some may be demonic, others angelic. Rarest of all, I think, is the actual return of a dead person, but even this (as I've said) is not impossible—assuming that God commands it for some reason.

I hope this helps a little.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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## **“Why Is God Allowing Me to Suffer?”**

I don't know what to think anymore. I am a Christian (or thought I was a child of God) and go to church weekly, tithe weekly and try to live my life according to God's Word.

I was downsized by my company last June, I have gone thru my severance and my retirement money, I am losing my home and my life. I am just weeks away from being a homeless person because I will have to walk away from my home and possessions. I have applied to over 140 jobs with nothing panning out. I have a college degree and a medical certificate and was at my company for over 12 years—I am not a slouch by any means.

I just don't know how to think about God anymore. I have talked to Him daily, confessed all known sin, studied until I

am cross-eyed, I have asked daily for His help, what He wants me to learn from this, what He would like me to do for Him while I am waiting, etc. I am at a loss here and it appears He is going to allow me to be taken down and die this way. I have never been so discouraged in my life and have even considered taking it because it would end all the pain and misery. I only haven't because I am so scared of Him to do so. So where is the loving God I have been worshipping all these years? I really don't think I was saved after all because I don't think He would do this to a child of His. I have seen other Christians in my community go thru job loss and He has helped them through it all and they are back to their lives, but not me. What is wrong with me that He won't help me?

**Discouraged and alone,**

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I am so very, very sorry for what you have been experiencing in this huge trial. It sounds like you are so discouraged and hopeless that you are questioning if you are actually saved at all because God seems to be treating you differently than what you've seen with other Christians. You sound frustrated and panicky because God appears to be allowing everything to go down the drain. And who can blame you for feeling this way? I am so sorry.

It's especially hard in our culture where we tend to equate God's goodness and love with Him keeping us comfortable. So when we lose the things that have made our lives comfortable and livable, we question if God is still loving and good. And then we're open to the enemy's suggestion that God is neither loving nor good, and that He owes it to His children to keep us comfortable. Then, when we focus on a resulting sense of entitlement, it's easy to let a spirit of anger and bitterness grow inside.

You are not alone. Job had the exact same feelings and the

exact same questions. And that is why I am so grateful for that book, because it provides a perspective we couldn't possibly know through our reason or our experience. When you've done everything right, when you've sought to examine yourself to see if there is any unconfessed sin, when you've prayed and submitted to God and still things don't change, there may well be a drama unfolding in the spiritual dimension that you can't possibly see right now. Satan was the source of attacks on Job, but God allowed it for His glory and for Job's ultimate benefit.

I don't know what God is doing in you, \_\_\_\_\_. But I do know that He is good, and that He loves you, and that He has a plan for these horribly difficult times in your life. Even if it entails losses you could never imagine. A hundred years from today, when you are with Him in heaven, it will make sense. This is not the end, even if it can feel like it.

I think more and more Christians will find themselves in similar situations, where we become dependent on other members of the Body of Christ to survive difficult financial seasons in our lives. I believe this is why the Word says that it is important to stay connected to the Body in community, because community helps us with both discouragement and the isolation of aloneness. The Body of Christ is His "aloneness-fighter" for each other. And I pray you will be able to find resources for support in your church, or a church in your area that follows the Bible's pattern for taking care of each other.

I wish I had a solution for you, \_\_\_\_\_. All I know is that God is still God, and love is still driving all His dealings with you. I know that He wants to bless you and glorify Himself, even if His definition of blessing is not what you would choose right now. I send this with a prayer that you will experience His provision and His love in new and deeper ways, regardless of how He provides for you, and regardless of how He shows His love for you.

With sincere concern,

Sue Bohlin

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## **“Is Hypnosis Spiritually Safe for Childbirth Pain Control?”**

**My friend, a Christian for about four years, is a doula [a trained childbirth assistant and labor coach]. One of her recent clients has expressed an interest in hypno-birthing as a method for laboring. I expressed my concerns to my friend and she assures me that it is harmless. She says that you are in total control and place yourself in the hypnotic state where you would not do anything that goes against what you believe. I'm not so sure that I believe hypnotism is harmless; can you help me?**

According to the trustworthy book *Mind Games: Exposing Today's Psychics, Frauds, and False Spiritual Phenomena* by André Kole and Jerry MacGregor, hypnosis can have legitimate medical benefits such as pain control, weight loss and smoking cessation. They report that your friend's assurance that a person undergoing hypnosis can't be forced to do anything that goes against one's will or one's beliefs is valid.

They explain that hypnosis is not truly understood and cannot be empirically proven (i.e., there is no brain wave difference for those undergoing hypnosis). There is no clear definition of a trance, and no one knows how it works. They say,

*“The simplest way to understand hypnosis is to regard it as a state of mind characterized by increased suggestibility—the*

*acceptance of an idea without being critical of it. It is a method of bypassing the conscious mind. Whatever is presented to the subconscious mind, under certain conditions, may be automatically accepted and acted upon."*

The power of hypnosis, then, is faith. The person being hypnotized must want to be hypnotized, they must trust the hypnotist, and they have to be consciously open to whatever is suggested to them. They have faith in the hypnotist and in the process, and willingly submit to it. Kole and MacGregor say, "In one sense, when you submit to hypnosis, you actually give control of yourself and your mind to another individual. Therefore you should be extremely cautious about who you submit yourself to." Since we are not to be controlled by anything except the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), the "green light" to use hypnosis would have to include accountability to make sure that the hypnotist, for laboring or anything else, is honorable in their intentions and in their practice.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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## **"Couldn't Jesus' Disciples Have Just Fabricated Fulfilled Prophecy Claims?"**

First of all I'd like to thank you for helping me so much. You have really cleared up a lot of questions I've had about my faith in Christ and have given me some great answers. I have

**another question for you that I have been struggling with. Couldn't the disciples have made it look like Jesus fulfilled all those prophecies, and simply fabricated them?**

This may seem possible in some instances, but in many others it becomes very difficult to believe. For example, consider those prophecies which were fulfilled during the last week of Jesus' life (i.e. from the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem through His death by crucifixion). Quite frankly, these events were observed by too many people for the disciples to have fabricated them. Not only did Jesus' loyal followers witness these events, but so did unbelieving Jews and Romans (the very people responsible for executing Jesus). These events are too well-established historically for anyone to seriously suggest that the disciples fabricated them. What the skeptic will typically do, therefore, is simply deny that such Old Testament texts are truly prophetic. They'll argue that the disciples misinterpreted these texts when they applied them to Jesus. It would be unusual to seriously argue that the disciples made up stories about how Jesus fulfilled these prophecies. In this sense, the debate really tends to be over how these Old Testament passages should be interpreted, and whether such texts can be fairly applied to Jesus' life and ministry. Although this is a technical and complicated debate, I'm convinced that these texts do accurately prophesy certain things about the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Hope this helps.

Michael Gleghorn, Probe Ministries

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