

“My Hurting Friend Has Stopped Believing in God”

I have a friend who has had a rough couple of years. Her parents split up and she doesn't like her mom's boyfriend and she recently told me she has stopped believing in God though she has been brought up to be a Christian. She just told me and a friend all this stuff and we don't know what to say, could you please help?

I wouldn't worry about what your friend is saying right now about not believing in God. Those are the words of a broken heart. Often when people feel God has abandoned them or betrayed them because He has allowed something bad to happen, they respond by saying, “OK, God, I'll show you, I won't believe in You anymore!” They don't really mean it. . . they're just hurting so bad they don't know how else to respond.

If she were my friend, I would just be there for her, put an arm around her and hug her and love on her, and silently ask God to love her through me. She needs friends, she needs support, she needs to feel loved and cared for. That's how she'll eventually come to realize how God was loving her in her pain.

I also wouldn't get into any arguments about God. If she says things like “Well, I don't believe in God anymore, if God were there He wouldn't let stuff like this happen,” I'd just nod and say, “Yeah, it really stinks what's going on, and I don't blame you for hurting so bad.”

Just keep in mind what her heart needs instead of what her mouth is saying. And love her, love her, love her through it. Later on you can tell her you were doing it in Jesus' name.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“I Battle Terrible Self-Esteem”

Dear Sue,

I read your testimony, [How to Handle the Things You Hate But Can't Change](#). I am not physically handicapped, but what about spiritual or mental handicaps? I not saying I am stupid or slow but things happened to me as a child that have haunted me all my life. I have a very low self-esteem and I don't feel like I am worth anything to any body. I feel more like a hindrance than a help. I am a Christian and I am spiriting, but strongholds from the past keep me in bondage. I have served the Lord most of my life and in many areas my life has changed, but in this area of low self-esteem, I have prayed about it for so long without results, that I have almost decided to learn to live with it. If our God can heal the physical can he not heal the mental? Sometimes I get physically sick over this thing. As they say I am sick and tired of being sick and tired. This thing is so deep that I don't know what to do about it anymore. It is destroying my marriage and hurting my kids. It is a constant battle.

My mother died when I was about two-and-a-half and my father married again when I was five. I then had new brothers and sisters and the home life was not exactly Shangri-la. I ran away when I was fifteen and have never really looked back. I understand why I feel rejected but what I can't understand is why I can't get rid of it. I found the Lord when I was

seventeen and it has been the best thing ever. I brought my husband to the Lord when we were dating and both my girls are born-again and serve the Lord. But why after all these years does this one thing still plague me? I have rebuked it until I wore my rebuker out. And still this thing is there. Sometimes it fades into the background but it is always there hovering over me. I am sad to see my family suffer because of my suffering. They do not complain but it makes me sad not able to fix this problem for their sakes. I don't know if you can help, but please pray that God will bring along the right person who can help me.

Dear _____,

Thank you for sharing your heart with me. I am so very, very sorry to hear of the heavy burden you have been carrying all this time. You must be exhausted!!

I can understand why rebuking this thing isn't working; it can't be overcome by rebuking anything. From what I understand of your life and your situation, you have been wounded by not just life but also by the lies of the evil one who wants to keep you in bondage to false beliefs. Since you are a believer, you need to know who you are in Christ so you can replace the false beliefs with what is true.

For instance, you've been carrying the baggage of feeling rejected, but you won't be able to let go of it until you embrace the truth that you are "accepted in the Beloved," as Ephesians 1 says. And if God accepts you, you can choose to see yourself as acceptable. . . and you can choose to accept yourself. Listen—it's only been two years since I made a conscious choice to realize that God MADE me to be a self-accepting person, so I can accept myself!

The best resource I know of to help you grow in your identity in Christ is Neil Anderson's book *Victory Over the Darkness*. Another couple of excellent books that would help are both by

Kay Arthur: *Lord, Heal My Hurts* and *Lord, Is It Warfare?* I promise you, _____, Satan doesn't want you to know and fully grasp the truth that you are a princess, a greatly beloved child of the King and the Bride of Christ. . . infinitely significant and valuable simply because God made you no matter WHAT happened after that! But Neil's and Kay's books are really good for helping people move out of the darkness of the enemy's lies and into the light of the truth.

I hope this helps.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Do I Find Out Who I Am Inside?”

I have a question....I've been struggling lately with my identity. Not my identity in Christ, but who **I** am! I know what I want to do, I know what ministry I want to get in, I know my strengths and my weaknesses! But I've been trying to figure out who I AM!!! I'm not shy or timid, I just lack a persona, a character. I feel like sometimes (and I know this isn't true) that God has written the script for my life and forgot to write the character background. IT'S KILLING ME INSIDE, I FEEL SO EMPTY AND HELPLESS....How do I find myself, how do I figure out how I'm supposed to act, feel, think. People say "Well, you should be more like Jesus in what you do in your life and your personality" but I don't trust that response. How do I find my personality, I FEEL LIKE A SKITTLE WITH NO FLAVOR, I find it impossible to be me. Help!

A very wise man was teaching on boundaries and provided the most wonderful chart:

Who Am I?

I AM:

What I think / What I don't think

What I feel / What I don't feel

What I want or need / What I don't want or need

What I will do / What I won't do

What is acceptable to me / What is not acceptable to me

“Who I am” is the answer to these questions. It’s not like a test where you sit down and fill in the blanks; it’s more of a grid through which you pass the moments of your life, with these questions in the background. It takes a while to come up with a picture of who you are by finding out the sorts of things you like and don’t like, what you think and what you don’t think, what you want or need and what you don’t want or need, etc.

For instance, there was a time in fourth grade when someone asked me who I was rooting for in the World Series. I didn’t have a clue, not being a baseball fan. So I found out what team John Witten was for, since he was the love of my life at that point in time, and that’s who I was for. But I really wasn’t: the REAL me didn’t care about baseball and couldn’t care less who was in the World Series. But I didn’t know that that was an acceptable answer. I do now! ☐

I would suggest you write these questions on an index card and carry them with you, and as your personal beliefs and preferences and surface, make a note of them. I think you’ll discover who you are.

I hope this helps—I am very confident that it should at least help you get started!

Warmly,

“The JW Argument ‘There Is No Soul’”

One of the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ arguments is that if Lazarus was dead and his soul was in Heaven, why would Jesus resurrect him? They argue, why would Jesus take Lazarus away from what surely is a beautiful and wondrous place. Thus, there must not be a soul and when we die we just die. How do I answer this?

Thanks for your letter. The issue of personal survival after death (but before the resurrection) is best dealt with by an appeal to the authority of the Bible. If the Bible is a trustworthy revelation from God, and if the Bible teaches a conscious intermediate state between death and resurrection, then it logically follows that human beings do experience personal, conscious existence after death. So what does the Bible teach on this issue?

The Bible clearly speaks of personal conscious existence between death and resurrection. Indeed, even The New World Translation (1961), written by the Jehovah’s Witnesses, seems to imply this. In Revelation 6:9-10 we read:

“And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those slaughtered because of the word of God... And they cried with a loud voice saying: ‘Until when, Sovereign Lord holy and true, are you refraining from judging and avenging our blood upon those who dwell on the earth?’”

Here the author of the Revelation sees the SOULS of those killed on the earth. These SOULS are in the presence of God and clearly conscious because they ask God a question and even receive an answer (see v. 11). But how can this be if they do not really exist between death and resurrection?

Other verses which teach conscious existence between death and resurrection include Philipians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; and of course Luke 16:19-31. There are many other which I will not take the time to list.

The JW's want to know why Jesus would raise Lazarus back to earthly life if he was already in a better place? First, although there may be a connection between Luke 16 and John 11, this is nowhere stated explicitly. Second, the Bible only hints at why Jesus raised Lazarus. It indicates that He raised Lazarus to inspire faith in His disciples (John 11:14), to reveal God's glory to the people (11:40), and to help the people believe that Jesus had come from God (11:42). But WHY Jesus raised Lazarus isn't even the issue. Jesus may have raised Lazarus for very good reasons that He didn't bother to tell us. The real issues are:

1. Is the Bible a trustworthy revelation from God? and
2. Does the Bible teach that we have a soul/spirit that continues to exist between death and resurrection?

If the answer to both of these questions is "Yes," then it really doesn't matter if we can say why Jesus raised Lazarus. He did it, and regardless of the reason why, the story demonstrates that human beings experience personal, conscious existence between death and resurrection.

Hope this helps.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

“How Should I Respond to ‘It’s All Right to Do Anything as Long as It Doesn’t Hurt Anybody’?”

I have a question about some of the new age mentality that I have encountered in the more recent months. As apologetics is a bit of a hobby for me, I love learning what other people think and believe. It seems that as I ask around more and more, people are always saying the same thing. In more words they always seem to say “I can do whatever I want as long as it doesn’t hurt anybody.” I know that this is by no means a new or uncommon answer, but it seems to be growing to me. Usually I address this with a series of questions which will cause them to backtrack and correct themselves, something like this: It is not all right to hurt people? Do you count as a person? Are you allowed to hurt yourself? Is emotional harm all right? How did you determine that it was not all right to hurt people? Who enforces this rule? Are you making a connection between church and state? How did the world come into existence? And so on. My philosophy is that sooner or later they will be forced to acknowledge that their view is full of holes, yet it appears to me that this way doesn’t work. I actually should have realized this sooner, because I now realize that those people really do not know what they believe, and that their choices are based on emotions. Thus, I am asking you how you would suggest responding to the view that “It is all right to do anything as long as it doesn’t

hurt anybody”?

I'm afraid you've hit the wall of the skeptical postmodern mentality. When a person doesn't believe anyone can know what is true about anything, and adopts the "true for me" mentality, the results are an amazing batch of contradictory ideas and no reason to try to make them consistent. People toss together beliefs according to what seems right at the moment, changing beliefs like changing outfits; ideas are subject to fashion just as clothes are. After trying to reason with people who think as you have described, you want to bang someone's head against the wall – theirs or your own (I don't suggest either!).

Because on the level of ideas contradictory beliefs can be held with such amazing ease, one typically cannot convince a person on that level. I say "typically" because some can be convinced at least that their ideas are inconsistent and that that is a problem. You just have to try drawing the person into a conversation and see what happens. For many it takes real life situations to drive home the point.

I recommend you find a copy of Francis Schaeffer's *The God Who Is There* and focus especially on the last section: "Speaking Historic Christianity Into the Twentieth-Century Climate." He deals with this issue there. One of his main points is that any religion or philosophy which isn't Christian must result in some kind of inconsistency in a person's life because we were made by God to live in God's universe. False beliefs put us at odds with the universe and with ourselves. So, for instance, a person who says there is no difference between good and evil will be quite upset if you pour boiling water on him. He might even say you were wrong! Of course, I don't recommend actually pulling off such stunts to prove a point! What one can do, however, is gently (I Pe. 3:15) question a person about an inconsistency between what the person says she believes and how she acts. It's like turning a light on and letting the other person see the problem for herself.

One thing we apologists easily forget is tact. One person defined it as “the ability to make a point without sticking someone with it.” Work toward encouragement and very subtle enlightenment rather than conquering in your manner. Be committed to truth, but also be committed to people and to showing the attractiveness of truth to them rather than whipping them with it.

If you have any questions after reading Schaeffer’s book (or at least the above-mentioned segment of it) write to me directly.

Rick Wade

See Also:

[As Long As It Doesn't Hurt Anyone Else](#) by Rick Wade

“You Are Degrading Teenagers in Your ‘Safe Sex’ Article”

I just quickly glanced over your article about STDs and pregnancy ([Safe Sex and the Facts](#)). I was extremely set back by the hypocritical phrasing, “immature teenagers.” You may want to take a long, deep thought about how people could judge you at this time in your life. Just because teenagers may lack experience, “immaturity” would not be the word to use especially used in your degrading sense.

I think if you had read the article more carefully, you would have seen that I give teenagers a lot of credit where I know credit is due, as in this paragraph:

“Current condom-based sex-education programs basically teach teenagers that they cannot control their sexual desires, and that they must use condoms to protect themselves. It is not a big leap from teenagers being unable to control their sexual desires to being unable to control their hate, greed, anger, and prejudice. This is not the right message for our teenagers! Teenagers are willing to discipline themselves for things they want and desire and are convinced are beneficial. Girls get up early for drill team practice. Boys train in the off-season with weights to get stronger for athletic competition. Our teens can also be disciplined in their sexual lives if they have the right information to make logical choices. Saving sex for marriage is the common sense solution. In fact, it is the only solution. We don’t hesitate to tell our kids not to use drugs, and most don’t. We tell our kids it’s unhealthy to smoke, and most do not. We tell our kids not to use marijuana, and most do not.”

This paragraph puts my comment in context:

“Condoms are inherently untrustworthy. The FDA allows one in 250 to be defective. Condoms are often stored and shipped at unsafe temperatures which weakens the integrity of the latex rubber causing breaks and ruptures. Condoms will break 8% of the time and slip off 7% of the time. There are just so many pitfalls in condom use that you just can’t expect immature teenagers to use them properly. And even if they do, they are still at risk.”

The comment you found disgusting is not meant in a derogatory way, it is simply a realistic observation. My wife and I have raised two sons, now ages 22 and 24. They are certainly more mature than when they were 13 and 15. Even they would acknowledge that. Teenagers are immature in many ways and that is natural. They haven’t had many life experiences, especially sexually, to allow them to act as mature adults and make wise

decisions. That was my point. From the statistics cited about teen sexual behavior, the immaturity shows. I also certainly understand that some teenagers are more mature than others. Not everyone fits a generalization. That is understood.

I'm sorry you interpreted the phrase as being degrading. That was not my intention and I see no reason to change it.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Where is the Scientific Evidence of Joshua’s Long Day?”

I was talking with a guy at work about Jesus and the word of God. He is very skeptical of the whole thing and doesn't really believe God exists. I told him I was watching The Discovery Channel a while back, they were saying how there must be some truth to the bible because they found that time was stopped for a certain amount of time and they traced it back to biblical times and found God did stop time. I was wondering if you could point me in the direction of scientifically proven scripture. Maybe a website or a book. This person wants proof of God [as most people do]. I know there is scientific proof, I just don't know where to look or know if I'll be able to [or he will] understand it!!

I'm sorry, _____, but the idea that scientists have proven that God stopped time is a Christian urban legend. What you

are referring to is Joshua's long day. Here's the webpage that debunks that theory:

<http://www.ship-of-fools.com/Myths/index.html>

Actually, there is no PROOF of God's existence; if there were proof, there would be no place for faith! However, there is a lot of evidence. For starters, may I suggest an article I wrote on that very topic: [Evidence for God's Existence](#).

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“What's the Problem with the Evolution of Amino Acids?”

Dr. Bohlin,

I have heard you describe on “Point of View” the probability of amino acids forming proteins on their own as being astronomical. Can you direct me to an article or will you briefly describe to me why covalence is not a possibility when considering the formation of amino acids and eventually proteins?

There are two primary problems for the origin of proteins on the early earth. The first is chemical and the second is informational.

The chemical problem arises from the nature of the peptide bond which links amino acids in proteins. In linking the carboxyl group of one amino acid to the amino group of the

other, a molecule of water is released. Since almost all early earth scenarios take place in the presence of water, the high concentration of water will prevent the linkage from taking place. The high energy needed to cast off a molecule of water in an aqueous solution is very high. Cells overcome this barrier through the action of the ribosome, a combination of RNA and several proteins which allows the linkage reaction to take place in a protein fold devoid of water. But in the early earth there are no proteins or RNA.

The informational problem arises from the fact that not every sequence of amino acids is useful for life-giving processes. Current estimates suggest that as many as 200 different proteins are necessary for life. Each of these proteins requires a specific sequence of amino acids in order to function. One calculation that has been verified experimentally, shows that a 100 amino acid protein requires a specificity of sequence that has only a 1 in 10 to the 65th power probability of occurring by chance alone. This even allowed for most amino acids to be substituted by similar amino acids in the sequence. So one not only has to manufacture one protein but hundreds, and then bring them together in a membrane like structure, in order for life to take hold. The odds are enormous.

One other problem is also chemical. Amino acids are among the many organic compounds (made of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen) that exist in two different structural forms called stereoisomers. One form will rotate polarized light to the left (left-handed) and the other will rotate polarized light to the right (right-handed). When amino acids are formed chemically, that is apart from a living system, both forms are produced in equal numbers. However, the amino acids of proteins from living organisms are almost exclusively left-handed. No one knows of a chemical process to achieve this result.

A good technical summary of this and other problems can be

found in Thaxton, Bradley and Olson's *The Mystery of Life's Origin*. Probe makes this book available on our website for \$10.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

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“What Is Carbon-14 Dating?”

What exactly is carbon 14 testing and what are its limitations? I will be explaining this to 7th graders.

Carbon 14 dating essentially tests how long something has been dead. In the atmosphere solar radiation transforms a predictable number of nitrogen atoms into radioactive carbon (carbon 14). Carbon 14 then becomes incorporated into carbon dioxide which is taken up by plants and used to produce sugars by photosynthesis. The carbon then moves up the food chain from herbivores to carnivores. Normal carbon is carbon 12. Therefore there is a constant ratio of carbon 12 to carbon 14 in the atmosphere and consequently in living things. There is a far greater abundance of carbon 12 than carbon 14 and the radiation is a very low level and is not hazardous in and of itself. When a creature or plant dies, the inflow of carbon 14 stops and decay begins. After 5,568 years half of the carbon 14 has reverted back to nitrogen. This is referred to as the half-life. Therefore, after every 5,000+ years, there is half-again the amount of carbon 14. Usually after 10 half-lives there is not sufficient carbon 14 left to measure. The limit of carbon 14 then is about 50,000 – 60,000 years.

This dating method is based on some crucial assumptions that are difficult to verify. First, it assumes that the rate of transformation of nitrogen to carbon 14 in the atmosphere is constant through time. It turns out that this has not been the case and scientists have found greater/lesser abundances of carbon 14 in times past yielding dates that are too young or too old respectively. Second, it assumes that there is no other source of carbon 14 in living things which has not been investigated very thoroughly.

Another complication has been recent reports that indicate that supposedly ancient sediments are producing trace amounts carbon 14 where there should be none at all. By ancient I mean sediments that are traditionally dated as being millions of years old. (see www.icr.org/research and click on the article "Measurable C14 in Fossilized Organic Materials." Either the c14 dating method is worthless or these sediments are nowhere near as old as suspected.

Hope this helps.

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Stop Wasting My Time About Life on Other Planets"

I have a comment on one of your recent broadcasts, [Are We Alone in the Universe?](#).

I listen to your broadcast because it is sandwiched between two of my favorite shows on Moody Radio. I just happen to hear it because I'm too involved in my work at the time to change

the channel. I find the current discussion obnoxious and a waste of radio space. I also think you're setting yourselves up for more "see, Christians are just insecure, intellectually dishonest bigots who won't look at 'scientific' evidence that their beliefs are all wrong." In the event that evidence of life on Mars or in an asteroid, or any other source be discovered, or fabricated, you will look like idiots. If it isn't discovered anytime soon, people will argue that we simply haven't had enough time. What's the point? It all depends on what people WANT to believe.

Quite frankly, the discovery of life on other planets, or the converse for that matter, won't prove anything about God. "Possibility" is a function of probability times occurrences. The Universe is a big place. So any good evolutionist worth his salt will argue "maybe the chances are infinitesimal that life could have arisen by chance, but look how big the Universe is." And, "See? The fact that life is so rare and hard to find only disproves the need for a designer, since we can't find it anywhere else."

No one is going to get saved by the "facts." The point is whether or not the Holy Spirit has access to someone's life and whether they chose to accept Christ or arrogantly say "Well, I have to have proof, and I have to know it ALL ahead of time."

Please stop wasting my time with this convoluted hogwash. It's not edifying. I'm sure the person who put the show together worked very hard on it, but it just doesn't add anything to my day or give me witnessing tools. This discussion is Medieval. IF there is life on other planets, God put it there, He knows it's there, He has some plan for it, and if their Genesis doesn't have a happier start, He probably went there, died, and rose again for their salvation. IF NOT, the fact that we are alone is part of God's plan too. My Christianity is not threatened by the prospect either way.

I am sorry you do not find our programming useful or meaningful. Our program is meant to help Christians to make sense out of the many-faceted assault on our faith in the midst of this post-Christian society. I assure you that many of our listeners find our programming stimulating and informative.

The purpose of the particular program you commented on was to help Christians see the underlying philosophical reasons behind our society's fascination with extraterrestrials. They really are afraid of being alone because they have excluded God from the equation and if we are all there is, to them this is terrifying! I use this to engender a sense of compassion for the lost rather than condemning their beliefs. We need to see the fear behind their assertions to give us understanding and to truly be all things to all people so some may be saved. It is difficult to witness to a culture we don't understand.

I am sorry if this intent was not clear to you, or even if it is, you still think it a waste of time. Hopefully some of our other programs can be of more redeeming value to you.

Additional comments follow.

Not sure I'm writing to the correct address, but I have a comment on one of your recent broadcasts. The series concerns whether or not there is/may be intelligent life in other parts of the universe or whether we are "all alone." I listen to your broadcast because it is sandwiched between two of my favorite shows on Moody Radio. I just happen to hear it because I'm too involved in my work at the time to change the channel. I find the current discussion obnoxious and a waste of radio space. I also think your setting yourselves up for more "see, Christians are just insecure, intellectually dishonest bigots who won't look at 'scientific' evidence that their beliefs are all wrong." In the event that evidence of life on Mars or in an asteroid, or any other source be discovered, or fabricated, you will look like idiots. If it

isn't discovered anytime soon, people will argue that we simply haven't had enough time. What's the point? It all depends on what people WANT to believe.

But why do they want to believe it is the important question. I was trying to explore this very question to help Christians understand the culture around us to be more effective witnesses.

Quite frankly, the discovery of life on other planets, or the converse for that matter, won't prove anything about God.

Agreed. But many scientists today look for life elsewhere to bolster their confidence in evolution and therefore push God even farther away.

"Possibility" is a function of probability times occurrences. The Universe is a big place. So any good evolutionist worth his salt will argue "maybe the chances are infinitesimal that life could have arisen by chance, but look how big the Universe is." And "See? The fact that life is so rare and hard to find only disproves the need for a designer, since we can't find it anywhere else."

Hardly. Evolutionists currently believe that life is inevitable and must find evidence of extraterrestrials life to confirm this belief. So evidence of its rarity IS evidence for design and evidence against chance.

No one is going to get saved by the "facts."

Agreed, but we can remove the barriers people erect so they can get a clearer look at the cross. Paul felt the "facts" of the resurrection quite important in 1 Cor. 15:1-19. He felt the facts of Creation quite important in Rom. 1:18-20. Facts don't save anyone but they do point the way to our need of a Savior. Many are looking for that Savior in the form of an ET.

We can only help them by pointing out that this hope is an illusion.

The point is whether or not the Holy Spirit has access to someone's life and whether they chose to accept Christ or arrogantly say "Well, I have to have proof, and I have to know it ALL ahead of time."

No one knows it all ahead of time, but to a few people, indeed, I would say most, a few facts are needed to help draw them to faith. Faith is not blind. Everybody has some kind of faith. The issue is whether our faith is placed in something we can rely on. Is the object of our faith true and reliable?

Please stop wasting my time with this convoluted hogwash. It's not edifying. I'm sure the person who put the show together worked very hard on it, but it just doesn't add anything to my day or give me witnessing tools. This discussion is Medieval.

All I can and will say is that I'm sorry you feel that way, but that we at Probe and most of our other listeners disagree.

IF there is life on other planets, God put it there, He knows it's there, He has some plan for it, and if their Genesis doesn't have a happier start, He probably went there, died, and rose again for their salvation. IF NOT, the fact that we are alone is part of God's plan too. My Christianity is not threatened by the prospect either way.

Agreed. But it's not your Christianity I am worried about, but the millions of misinformed fearful souls who are putting their hope and trust in extraterrestrials.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, PhD