“Will I Go to Hell For Getting Divorced?”

If I get a divorce, does that mean I will spend eternity in hell? I am saved so I don’t think I would be forgiven for it. I know that if someone gets divorced and then gets saved then they will be forgiven but I am saved so I’m supposed to know better. And I think the only acceptable reasons for divorce are abuse or infidelity and neither are true in this case. So does that mean I have to spend the rest of my life with someone incompatible just to avoid the lake of fire??

Sorry to be so intense but I really need to know, and could you use specific evidence from scripture to explain your point? Thanks.

Bless your heart. I can only imagine the pain that would bring you to the point you’re at.

No, divorce does not send anyone to hell. Refusing to be reconciled to God through Jesus is the only thing that sends anyone to hell. If you have been saved by trusting in Jesus, you have been sealed to Him through the Holy Spirit, and your eternity is secure. (We have a few articles on that subject that I think you will find helpful:

- “How Can I Know I’m Going to Heaven?“
- “Can a True Believer Commit the Unforgivable Sin?“
- “I Fear I Have Committed the Unforgiveable Sin!“

Back to your question: consider what the Lord Jesus said about divorce in Matt. 19:3-8–

> Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said,

> ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

Yes, God’s intention is for our marriages to be forever. However, because God is good and because He understands the wickedness of the human heart, he allows for divorce; note His reason: “because your hearts were hard.” He knows that being married to a person with a hard heart is like a prison sentence, and He provides a way out. I think the issue is more remarriage than divorce. If nothing has broken the marriage covenant, then when a divorced person remarries, he or she commits adultery.

So if your husband’s heart is unrepentantly hard, know that divorce is God’s grace in that situation. If it’s YOUR heart that’s hard, then the order of the day is confession and repentance, asking for His help to make it soft.

But please know, regardless of what happens, that divorce will not send you to hell. Jesus forever indwells your heart through faith, and the Father would not send Him there!

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“We Want an Easy Way Out of Our Pregnancy”

Dear Sir/Madam,

With due high respect I’ve got a deep problem in my family, I hope you are able to help us. My wife and me have a unwanted embryo. She had a pregnancy test and unfortunately it was positive. Our embryo is 3 weeks old. In my country, Iran, “pregnancy abortion” is illegal and even if it is possible it will be very expensive. We are not ready for have a baby and both of us hate this. What should we do? We are looking for medicine and easy way for clear it. We are impatiently waiting for your efficient way to save us and improve our life with your guidance.

Dear _____,

I’m not sure how you found us, but we are against abortion because it is the murder of an innocent human being. I know it is distressing to find yourself pregnant before you are ready, but you and your wife do not have an unwanted embryo, you are growing a BABY who is in an early stage of development.

I don’t know if it will make any difference to you, but I want you to know I regularly talk to women who had abortions, and it traumatized them. The guilt and shame they carry is a huge burden. They can’t get away from the fact that they murdered their own babies. Please reconsider your position.

There is no easy way to “clear” an unwanted pregnancy because it is a serious matter to take the life of another human being. This baby could not have been conceived without God’s permission and blessing; He means for you to have him or her,

love him or her, and trust Him to help you care for this precious life.

I pray God will give you a peace that will enable you to trust Him to get you through this time without doing something you will regret for the rest of your lives and for which you will have to answer to Him.

With concern,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Our Kids Have a Problem with Anger"

I read your commentary, "Supernatural Parenting." I have 5 and 7 year old boys and a 9 year old girl and we have a family problem. I call it easy provocation to anger which is antithetical to the fruits of the spirit including patience. Do you know of any other resources to call upon supernatural power to meet the demands of parenting in this regard?

One of the things I would encourage you to remember is that there is no spiritual maturity without emotional maturity, and part of being a child is immaturity. So a big part of your family problem is simply developmental angst that comes from having kids!

I do want to suggest, however, three books:

- *Boundaries with Kids* by John Townsend and Henry Cloud
- *Parenting with Love and Logic* by Foster Cline and Jim Fay

- *The Heart of Anger* by Lou Priolo. It has a workbook as well.

As you trust the Lord to be patient in you as you deal with your kids and model His patience to them, these books will provide sound, biblical wisdom in practical parenting techniques. I really wish I'd had them when my two were growing up!

I hope this helps.

Warmly,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"Is a Marriage Ceremony Necessary?"

I have been embroiled in a recent debate over the evils of cohabitation and sex before marriage. Another Christian agrees that fornication is a sin, but he doesn't believe that two "committed" people living together should be considered fornication. In his mind, fornication is wanton sexual promiscuity with no commitment or sincerity. You know—Spring Break sex.

He believes that if two people intend to spend the rest of their lives together and have pledged themselves to one another, God sees their hearts and doesn't require legality or ceremony.

I explained that this would be true if two people were stranded on a desert island with no opportunity to participate

in the process. However, in America, it is our custom and law to have a ceremony, even if it is only between us and a justice-of-the-peace, and we have maximum opportunity to engage in this custom. If we choose not to then we are not recognized as husband and wife by the state. Since we, as Christians, are bound to obey the authority that God has placed over us, such a non-recognition by our culture and authorities would amount to a non-recognition by our God.

Unfortunately, though, he doesn't want to listen to what I consider sound reason. He demands scriptural proof that a ceremony is necessary for a marriage blessed by God. Do we have any other argument that may satisfy him?

God says in Genesis 2:24, "A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his WIFE and the two shall be one flesh." What changes a man into a husband and a woman into a wife? Only a wedding ceremony.

God says in Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." What defines a marriage bed? A place where a husband and a wife sleep.

So what makes for marriage? A social ceremony in the presence of witnesses who are there to support and ratify (in a social sense) the public commitment of two coming together to become one. The role of witnesses in the formation of social contracts is a biblical principle. (Just do a word search for "witness" in any Bible software program.) No matter where you go in the world, wedding ceremonies occur in the context of community (witnesses) because a marriage creates a new social unit that becomes part of the community.

Two unmarried people who are "committed" to each other in their hearts are still unmarried people, and their sex is fornication. It's God's definition that matters, not ours. Fornication, by His definition, is sex outside of marriage.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Do We Explain the Spirit to Children?”

Recently I attended the viewing and funeral of a dear Christian sister. One of her sons has two little children, a boy four years old and a girl two. They explained to them that Grandmother is asleep but her spirit went to be with our Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. They seem quite comfortable with this.

At the viewing celebration the mother asked me a question. She said, “My son asked me what is the spirit. How do I answer him?” This really made me think about how we can explain this type of Christian understanding to little children in a way they might be able to understand, yet will not seem frightening, confusing, or spooky to them.

Thank you for your help and your web site.

Probably the best way to explain the spirit to children is by saying that it’s the part of us that thinks and loves and talks and chooses. That part is invisible and on the inside, just like our body is visible and on the outside.

I would also use an analogy with a visual aid by picking up a glove and showing them how lifeless it is when just lying on the table. But when you put your hand in it and start to move your hand, the glove “comes to life,” even though you can’t see the hand. Our spirit is like the hand—it’s what makes our outsides move and talk and love. So the children’s grandmother

went to heaven, leaving her body on earth, the same way that you can take your hand out of the glove and leave it behind on the table.

Does this help?

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"How Does the Bible Show Abortion is Murder?"

In my "Introduction to Ethics" class, the topic for the night was abortion. As the discussion progressed, people all around me were saying that an abortion is good to do under any situation (rape, too young, the woman's choice) and I argued my point on that abortion is murder. I stated that the Bible had claimed to that statement also. The teacher then told me that I have to prove to him and the class that the Bible says abortion is murder. Can you help me with verses, or anything I could possibly use to make my point valid?

Glad you asked!

The perspective that abortion is murder depends on two points: 1) The Bible condemns murder (taking the life of another human being), and 2) The unborn baby is a person—a human being.

Point #1: What is murder?

> Exodus 20:13, usually translated "Thou shalt not kill," one of the Ten Commandments, actually means "Thou shalt not murder." (There is a difference. Taking the life of another person in war, for example, is not the same thing as

murder.)

Point #2: The humanity of the unborn

1. Both Hebrew and Greek (the languages of the Bible) do not make a distinction between pre-born and born babies. Whether they live inside or outside the womb is not important as to their value or personhood.

2. *For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be. (Ps. 139:13-16)*

This portion of scripture is written about the unborn baby.

3. *The Lord called me from the womb; from the body of my mother He named me. (Is. 49:1)*

The prophet Isaiah says he received God's calling and naming while still in the womb.

4. *Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (Psalm 51:5)*

The psalmist states that he was a spiritual being from the point of conception. This isn't saying that he sinned while in the womb, but that he recognizes that from the earliest part of life, he was a sinner.

5. *Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jer. 1:4-5)*

Jeremiah declares that God knew him, consecrated him (set

him apart), and appointed him a prophet before he was even conceived! From God's perspective, Jeremiah's humanity began even before conception.

6. *At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among*
women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. (Luke 1:39-44)

The unborn John the Baptist had a physical reaction to the presence of Mary and ESPECIALLY her unborn Child. At this point, Jesus was probably only a week- or two-old embryo. (Scripture tells us that as soon as the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary about God's plan for the Holy Spirit to overshadow her and conceive the Messiah in her and she consented, she hurried to see Elizabeth, who lived about 70 or so miles from Nazareth.)

I believe that these verses indicate that abortion is murder, but all you can do is offer the light they provide. Some people who don't want to believe that abortion is murder or that an unborn baby is anything more than a "potential human being" can and will refuse to accept it. (Remember what the Word says in Jeremiah 17:9—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?") Your job is to pray for God to open the eyes of the hearts of the others in your class, humbly offer the truth, and leave the results to God.

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“Where Can I Get Christian Movie Reviews?”

There are two excellent Web sites that provide Christian reviews of movies:

1. Movieguide
www.movieguide.org

2. Crosswalk Movie Reviews
www.crosswalk.com/fun/movies/

There is also a conservative movie review Web site you might want to check: www.screenit.com

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

“What’s the Difference Between Gambling and Investing?”

Can you explain the difference between gambling and investing? Thanks in advance.

Thank you for your e-mail and question about the differences between gambling and investing. There are a number of Christian authors who have addressed this issue (Norm Geisler, Tony Evans, Gary North, etc.).

Briefly let me say that there are some similarities, and there are people who get addicted to high risk investing just like gambling. So I would acknowledge there are some similarities between the two.

But the key issue is that there are some striking differences. Investors research an investment with the goal of lowering the risks and making a wise investment. Gambling is all about risk and the odds cannot be lowered by further research (except for those who can modify the odds of blackjack by card counting or something like that).

The goal of investing is to build up a company and portfolio. Even if it's done selfishly, it still can have a positive effect on the company and the economy. Gambling takes money out of the capital economy. It doesn't contribute to job creation, etc. As I argue in my transcript on gambling, gambling actually hurts a local economy and increases social costs (abuse, neglect, bankruptcy).

Most investing is done with discretionary income and with certain limits (amount of stock that can be bought on margin, debt load allowed by a lender, etc.). Most gambling is not done with discretionary income. Money that should go for food, rent, clothing is often risked in a "get-rich-quick" scheme.

So while I would acknowledge that investing and gambling have some similarities, the differences make the difference. If you are interested, I would encourage you to read some additional material by some of the authors I mentioned.

Thanks for writing.

Kerby Anderson

“Do You Have Statistics on Cohabitation?”

Do you have any statistics which indicate the dangers of cohabiting and the results on a relationship?

Thank you for your e-mail about cohabitation. Of course, the Bible has something to say about this subject, but let me focus merely on the statistics. (If you are looking for specific citations of these statistics, please see my article Cohabitation. It has 17 citation-rich endnotes.)

Research by Christians and non-Christians in this field consistently finds that living together before you are married will significantly increase your likelihood of a future divorce. There are lots of studies done in this field you would read, but here is a brief summary of the statistical facts about cohabitation:

1. Percentage of Americans who have cohabited at one time or another: 50%
2. Percentage of cohabiting couples who go on to marry: 50-60%
3. Percentage of cohabiting relationships involving children: 40%
4. Percentage of unions that survive two years:
5. Cohabiting unions not leading to marriage: 33%
6. Marital unions: 95%
7. Percentage of unions that survive ten years:
8. Cohabiting unions not leading to marriage: 12%
9. Marital unions: 90%

10. Likelihood of divorce within first ten years of marriage:
    Those who cohabit prior to marriage are almost twice as likely to divorce as opposed to those who do not cohabit prior to marriage.

As you can see, living together before you are married can affect your marriage in a deleterious way. Christian and secular research is validating what the Bible has been saying all along.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

"My Husband Wants to Put Our Daughter on Birth Control!"

Help! During a casual child raising discussion, I found out that my husband insists on putting our (unborn) daughter on birth control when she enters high school. He claims that it is the best thing "just in case" she gets caught up in temptation – he does not want her to "ruin" her life by having a baby so young nor does he want to raise the child for her. I tried to express my disagreement with the idea, indicating that I believe that placing her on birth control is a form of condoning the behavior and I do not want to give that impression to her. I even tried to use an analogy of telling her not to use drugs, but giving her a clean pipe to carry around "just in case" she is at a party one night and is tempted to smoke crack! Of course he saw the drugs as completely different, and he insists that birth control is the way to go. Your personal input backed by theological soundness is greatly appreciated.

I answer your question both as a mom and as someone who ministered to high school girls for several years.

First of all, you can relax. Making policy about unborn children is something lots of parents do and it completely changes when reality sets in.

Secondly, the cross-gender relationship between your husband and his little girl is going to be very different from what he expects. If he's like most fathers he's going to be extremely protective of her, and that means looking at the young men she hangs around with a very wary eye. Instead of putting her on birth control, there's an even better chance he'll have an eyeball-to-eyeball little "chat" with her male friends and let them know how he expects them to take extremely good care of her and that means not touching her sexually in ANY way. (With some dads, that "chat" happens without words by giving them the evil eye. . .<smile>)

Your drug analogy was really very good even if he blew you off about it. Here's another one: what if he bought a Lambourghini that he kept in the garage, washed and waxed every week, was absolutely obsessive-compulsive about keeping it maintained to perfection. . . and then, when you daughter got her license at 16, said, "Here are the keys, honey, and of course, I got you insurance because you might get in a wreck but hey—no big deal. I expect you to wreck a car the first year of driving." Uhh…..I'm thinkin', NOT!!! <grin>

When parents get their teenagers birth control, they are making a statement about having low expectations of their kids. It's amazing that we can expect that kids will exercise tremendous self-discipline for sports or academics, but when it comes to sexual activity we assume they are incapable of it! It's entirely possible to start talking about the treasure of virginity and the importance of maintaining modesty as soon as kids are old enough to know what they are, and build a protective wall of positive expectations that help the kids

maintain their purity. It has been a joy to see both our teenage sons accept a chastity ring and the challenge to stay virgins until they get married, and to fight the temptations of the flesh out of their own convictions. In other words, it CAN be done.

When my husband and I were growing up, we were told "Just say no" to sex, but not given any reasons why. When it was our turn to parent, we explained how God's word tells us to keep the marriage bed pure and condemns fornication (sexual immorality), which is any kind of sexual activity outside of marriage. As Josh McDowell communicates in his "Right From Wrong" conferences and book, God's commands are given to both *protect* us from harm and *provide* us with good. We talked to our kids about sexually transmitted diseases (and showed them really gross photos of diseased sexual organs from the Medical Institute for Sexual Health [http://www.medinstitute.org/], where Ray got training for giving lectures on STDs). We also told them that sex in marriage is worth waiting for.

We understand that our kids will make their own decisions about these things, but we gave them all the ammunition to fight temptation (and a culture that is absolutely saturated in sex) that we could.

The great news is that parents today have more help [for example, Aim for Success at http://www.aimforsuccess.org] in assisting their kids to value purity and chastity than ever before, especially in the church. I hope that by the time your daughter is old enough to handle this issue, there will be even more!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries