

“Should I Pray to God or Jesus? What About the Holy Spirit?”

When I pray, I pray to God and I pray in Jesus' name. Others I know pray solely to Jesus. Should I be praying to Jesus as well as God? Furthermore, should I also be praying to the Holy Spirit?

It's really not such a matter of “should,” but more like “get to.” There is only one God, but He consists in three Persons (which I'm sure you know). So, since there is only one God, no matter to which Person you address your prayers, the one God hears them.

Here's how I look at it: Sometimes I address the Father, for example thanking Him for sending Jesus to die for me and live in me. Sometimes I address the Son, inviting Him to be present in an event or a job I'm about to be engaged in. Or thanking Him and praising Him for dying for me and calling me to be His bride. Sometimes I address the Spirit, asking Him to impress His presence on the heart of someone hurting, or asking Him to call the heart of someone who is lost. Most of the time I just say “Lord”!! <smile>

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Are Nocturnal Emissions (Wet Dreams) Sinful?”

I have question about nocturnal emissions or wet dreams. As a Christian seeking to to be released from sexual temptation, your writings have helped me center my thoughts on truth and gain victory over my temptations through the power of Christ's blood. Despite these victories, and perhaps in spite of them, I am being plagued by nocturnal emissions.

Six months ago I gave my homosexuality over to Christ and am no longer living as a gay man. I have, however, struggled with the temptation to masturbate. It took me a while to recognize masturbation as sexually immoral. So I am no longer masturbating either.

At this point I began having frequent nocturnal emissions. It is somewhat embarrassing because it usually seems to be a problem that adolescents have; I am 22.

There have been some noticeable differences in how my nocturnal emission are occurring now than in the past. The biggest difference is that my dreams are often not sexual in content, where as in the past they usually were.

Scripture surprisingly seems to mention this more directly than masturbation, or at least in the Old Testament. It tells us that it is unclean, but compared to the verbiage used to describe homosexuality, it would seem it is not as bad. Is it wrong, though? Am I sinning, and if so, how do I keep from sinning when I am asleep? Do you think that they could be caused by spiritual attacks, or is it simply my body wanting to relieve tensions? I am truly concerned and very confused about this.

Thank you for a most open and encouraging email. You have made some tremendous strides forward in His grace that are humbling

to read for one who has not struggled with the intensity you report.

To answer your major question, nocturnal emissions are universally understood to be a normal bodily response to accumulated semen. You never really stop producing semen and when you are not providing an outlet either through sexual intercourse or masturbation your body must expel the excess. I find it quite interesting that the content of your dreams associated with the emissions have changed as you have responded in obedience. What an incredible confirmation that God is honored by your choices. It should also be of interest to you that God has provided a moral release of these fluids apart from sexual activity. God has provided for abstinence and obedience!

Concerning the uncleanness issue, remember that a woman's menstrual period was also considered a time of uncleanness in the Law of Moses. It is still normal and not sin, just unclean. Part of the reason for ceremonial uncleanness in the Old Testament was for simple hygienic reasons that early Israel would not fully understand so God gave laws for them to abide by.

In regard to their frequency, though I am not a medical doctor, I would expect for the frequency of emissions to diminish over time as your body adjusts to your abstinent choices. Our bodies are quite flexible and will adjust to most changes we institute. For instance, as you eat less, your stomach will eventually shrink a bit and it actually takes less to fill you up. As you begin to eat more, your stomach can begin to expand to accommodate the larger volume. So too with nocturnal emissions. I suspect that as your "demand" is reduced, production of semen will eventually slow down though never cease altogether.

Therefore I would not consider your emissions as sinful at all, just a natural bodily response to your current obedient

choices. Be assured brother, you are not in sin! Not in the least! This is actual confirmation of correct choices. I rejoice with you and pray your unnecessary guilt will melt away.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, PhD
Probe Ministries

Addendum by Sue Bohlin, August 2010

Recently I had the privilege of speaking to a group of young people at a conference about unwanted homosexuality. In a breakout session dealing with replacing the lies we believe with the truth from God's word and God's world, I was addressing the lie "I can't live without sex," replacing it with the truth that sex is not a basic requirement like food, water and sleep. I supported my argument with the verse from Psalm 139 that says we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," explaining how nocturnal emissions are God's design for expelling the buildup of seminal fluid.

One young man told us a fascinating story:

"I had never experienced a wet dream. I was reading one of the discussion threads on the Living Hope Youth Forum (www.livehope.org) about the '6 Week Challenge.' That's where people challenge each other to go six weeks without masturbating. [The original poster wrote, "The hope is that by abstaining for this period of time, we can break the cycle of continually running back to P & M (pornography and masturbation) as "medications" for our problems and struggles, and instead learn to run to Jesus and other healthy replacements.']

"I decided to take the six-week challenge. After I reached six weeks, I kept going. After no sexual activity for eight months, one night I had an incredibly intense dream. I was in

the throne room of God. There was glory and beauty and light everywhere. Suddenly I realized God was showering me with such delight and favor. Somehow in the dream He was letting me know that He loves me, He delights in me and He's proud of me. I had this amazing sense of incredible joy that exploded inside me. Then I woke up, and I realized I'd had a wet dream."

One of the other students said, "Dude, are you kidding me? You're saying that your wet dream was connected to this spiritual dream that God was, like, *proud* of you?"

He replied, "Yeah, that's exactly what I'm saying."

I thought that was *most* interesting.

"Am I Committing Adultery?"

I got married right out of high school (34 years ago), and my husband committed adultery and divorced me a year later. Neither of us were Christians. I married someone else four years later, and two years into our marriage, my husband and I became Christians.

Is it considered "committing adultery" if:

-My previous husband had committed adultery while we were married?

-We weren't Christians when we did all this?

Are we **STILL** committing adultery by remaining married?? A few years ago, we wanted to join a church, and they said we couldn't because I had been married before. And they said we needed to separate because God did not recognize our marriage and we are still committing adultery by staying married. We

have been happily married for 26 years now, with two wonderful children. What should we do??????

Dear friend,

I'm sitting here shaking my head at the insensitivity, not to mention the biblical misunderstanding, of the church that gave you such lousy counsel. It sounds to me like that was God's way of saying, "This is not the place for you, beloved!"

Bottom line: neither you nor your husband are committing adultery.

God specifically says in His word that when one person commits adultery, the other is free to remarry without committing adultery. Your first husband broke your marriage covenant, giving you freedom to marry your present husband to the glory of God. (And it would appear that God is glorifying Himself through your present marriage!)

In Matt 5:32 and 19:9, Jesus says that if someone divorces a spouse for any reason other than adultery, they commit adultery when they remarry. This is because the divorce is illegitimate, and the second marriage is bigamy since the first marriage is still in force regardless of what the civil authorities say. But if the other spouse has committed adultery, then that act has broken the sacred covenant, and it is not bigamous (and thus not adulterous) for the sinned-against spouse to remarry.

That church may have been standing on the second part of Matt. 5:32, which says "whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." It's important to understand the culture of that day. There was a popular movement in Jewish culture that said a man could divorce his wife for any reason at all, including burning the toast. (I am not kidding.) Such a wife, thus divorced, was single in the eyes of the culture, but still married in the eyes of God, so any man who married her committed adultery since she was still a married woman.

You did not fall in that category. When your first husband committed adultery, that dissolved the marriage in God's eyes (in a manner of speaking), and you were free to remarry. I am so sorry that church refused to check into the circumstances of your divorce. If Jesus made an exception for adultery, and then Paul, writing with the very words God gave him, made an additional exception for abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 7:15), then the church needs to follow ALL of scripture and not just one verse.

You did not commit adultery when you married your present husband, and you are not committing adultery by remaining married to him, and the Lord bless you for staying together for 26 years! Way to go!!! <smile>

I wish you were in Dallas. I'd invite you to our church where you would be honored and affirmed.

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

P.S. I do want to make a distinction here: adultery does not *mandate* divorce, but God does allow divorce as a consequence of adultery. It's even better for the unfaithful spouse to repent, for the violated spouse to forgive, and for them to forge a new, stronger relationship. This isn't always possible due to the hardness of some people's hearts, and God understands and allows for it.

“Who Controls the World—God

or Satan?"

A friend and I were discussing whose rule the world was under, God's or Satan's. Of course we disagreed because I said God ruled the world and allows Satan to take us through suffering to make us strong and to test our faith. My friend feels that the world belongs to Satan because Eve succumbed to Satan in the Garden of Eden. Please clarify who controls the world today.

Thanks for your letter. Satan has been temporarily granted a tremendous amount of power over this world, as can be seen from the following passages:

John 12:31 – Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

2 Cor 4:4 – ...in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

1 John 5:19 – We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

But God is the One who ultimately rules and reigns over all things. He is the Creator of all that exists (other than Himself of course) and all things are ultimately subject to His will and power. Many passages of Scripture bear this out – e.g. Psalms 9:7; 22:28; 47:8; 59:13; 66:7; 97:1; 99:1; 103:19; 146:10, as well as passages such as Gen. 1-2; Job 1-2; John 1; Eph. 1; Col. 1; Rom. 9-11; Rev. 19-22; etc.

Satan is a creature; God is his Creator. Satan cannot do anything that the Lord does not permit him to do (see Job 1-2) and God will one day cast Satan into the lake of fire for all eternity (Rev. 20:10).

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“I Hurt So Bad Because I Miss My Boyfriend”

I have been going out with my boyfriend for a year now, I love him so much and there is no doubt he loves me. I always want to be with him but it's not possible at the moment because we are far from each other. I am at university in another country so we only communicate through the phone and emails. We are both devoted Christians, we love God and we comfort each other knowing that God has a purpose and plan for our relationship even as we long to be together.

My problem is I think about him a lot, I think about him sexually also. I long to be with him everyday and I tell him this. I dream of us being intimate, I pray about this and ask God for guidance. I love him so much and there is nothing in the world that I would want right now except to be with him. We are hoping to get married next year when I finish my studies but the thing is it's hard for me now, I just want to be with him. It hurts me worse when I see other people spending time with their loved ones, it makes me feel so lonely and I start thinking of the warm feeling that he makes me feel when I am with him.

I completely understand! My husband just returned from a missions trip out of the country for two weeks and I missed him so much I could practically TASTE it!

What you have isn't so much a problem as it is a painful condition of being separated. Your longing to be with him in every possible way is part of love. I would like to suggest that you turn your emotional energies (and you have a LOT of those for him, right?) from painful feelings into constructive prayer. Every time you find yourself missing him and longing for him, pray for him. There are many scripture prayers you can pray, and I think you would find it very helpful to make a special prayer journal into which you copy scripture that you turn into prayer for him. For example, consider Eph.1:15-19—

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints,

16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers;

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

You can turn it into a prayer:

“I do not cease giving thanks for _____, while making mention of him in my prayers; that You, Father, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to him a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of You. I pray that the eyes of his heart may be enlightened, so that he will know what is the hope of Your calling, what are the riches of the glory of Your inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of Your power toward us who believe.”

You can use this time of separation to “log in” hundreds and

hundreds of scripture prayers for your beloved, which you can read from your journal (even if it's a collection of index cards) as prayers as you add to them.

Here is a web page to give you a head start on coming up with some great scripture prayers:

<http://www.believers.org/believe/bel117.htm>

I hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

“So Are All Women Pastors Deceived and Going to Hell?”

Dear Sue,

I really have to write you this. I met you at the Mind Games conference in Fall 2004 at my university and asked about the role of women in the pastorate. You gave a convincing view from the Scriptures that women are not allowed in the office of pastor. Even when I asked when a husband and wife team found a church and the Husband serves as Senior Pastor and the Wife as Co-Pastor, you said without apprehension “They are well meaning people, but they are deceived.” Honestly I could just cry in my soul. “Deceived” meaning that Satan the deceiver purposely deceived these people to start a church to carry on the mission of Jesus Christ and go out into the world and save those who are lost and edify the Church? I cannot fathom this is going on between Bible-believing Christians (or so they say) about saving souls and ministering to the Body of Christ. I do believe in the complementary natures of male and female, males serving as the primary heads of their families.

Maybe I come from another perspective, being raised where women did serve in ordained ministry. As I read on more of this, I read that various evangelical denominations (who do believe male and females are complementarily created, who oppose the ordination of homosexuals, same-sex marriages and abortions) for over a century have had women serve in ordained ministry.

What is the divine judgment of this: Will these “deceived” people inherit the kingdom of God or go to hell? Only “complementarians” will be saved? What? I don’t get it! Clear this up for me because souls depend on it!!

I am so sorry that my comments have caused you such grief. Had I known your question came from your heart and not just your head I’m sure I wouldn’t have responded so cavalierly.

I would gently suggest that you are making an unwarranted jump of logic here:

“Deceived” meaning that Satan the deceiver purposely deceived these people to start a church to carry on the mission of Jesus Christ and go out into the world and save those who are lost and edify the Church?

No, starting a church and saving the lost is not the same thing as installing a woman as pastor and leader in a church. “Deceived” meaning, convincing oneself that the end justifies the means. That even though God says in His word, “I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man” (1 Tim 2:12), somehow it’s OK for a woman to be in pastoral authority over men in the congregation. I believe that God calls people to start churches all the time, to carry on the mission of Jesus Christ and bring the gospel message to the lost and edify the church—but only within the limitations He has set up according to His design for men and women. I can see that God would call a couple to start a church, but there’s a big difference between working as a team to plant a

church with the wife supporting her husband and contributing her gifts to the church, and the wife being a co-pastor. (Unless her pastoring [shepherding] is limited to women and children.)

As I have thought about your e-mail, I was reminded of Sarah, who believed that God was going to fulfill His promise of a son, but decided to help God out by doing things HER way. . . and the world's been dealing with the complication of Ishmael ever since. She was right to believe God for a miracle son, but she was wrong to go about it in the flesh. Women pastors are right to believe that God wants to do wonderful, marvelous things to build His kingdom, but wrong to go against and beyond His restrictions in the Word.

I don't believe women being pastors is a salvation matter. It's an obedience issue. I know these women say, "But God called me to this position," and my response can only be, "God would not call you to something He has restricted to men in the Word." They are mistaken in how they walk out their calling. I know God calls women to shepherding ministry all the time; in fact, one of my spiritual gifts is pastor-teacher. But that means I am called to minister to women (and children would be OK too but that's not where God called me), not be in any kind of teaching position or authority position over men.

Does this help explain my position more?

Blessings,

Sue

P.S. Something God showed me last year about a big reason women are not to be pastors is Eph. 3:14-15

*For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its
name*

A much better translation of "family" is "the lineage descending from a common father" or "fatherhood." (The Greek word is *patria*, which is closely related to the word *pater* [father].) Male leadership and headship is an earthly manifestation of our heavenly Father's role of leader, protector, and provider toward all of us, and women pastors cannot reflect the fatherhood aspect of God. This is a minor, but nevertheless important, supporting reason for God's restriction on women from having positions of leadership over men. It's backwards.

Dear Sue,

I thank you for responding to the letter. It seems that "women CANNOT hold authority over men" sounds like a Universal Truth about women, therefore a bit contradictory. Why can women hold positions of civil authority and professional authority over men but not in the church. Doesn't the "order of creation" come to play in every facet of life on this side of glory? Women SHOULD not hold positions of authority over men in any shape form, or fashion if this is a UNIVERSAL TRUTH. For instance, a woman is president of a Fortune 500 company and "exercises authority" over five thousand men in her company. Why is that God, who in your position restricts pastoral authority to men, give Deborah, Huldah, Miriam, spiritual authority as prophetess. Yes, they were not in the priesthood which was restricted to men. But they were not called to be priests, but prophets. The old priesthood was done away with when Christ went to a cross. And how is that the gift of PASTOR is separated from the office of PASTOR? God's Word is spirit and life (Jn 6:63). What difference is the sermon if it comes out of the mouth of a man or a woman if it is thus saith the Lord, not Rev. Billy or Rev. Joan? God's Words have no gender distinction. Please explain.

Why can women hold positions of civil authority and professional authority over men but not in the church.

Civil authority and professional authority are of the world; ecclesiastical authority is of the church. Two different realms.

Doesn't the "order of creation" come to play in every facet of life on this side of glory? Women SHOULD not hold positions of authority over men in any shape form, or fashion if this is a UNIVERSAL TRUTH. For instance, a women is president of a fortune five hundred company and "exercises authority" over five thousand men in her company.

I would respectfully suggest that things work better if women do not hold positions of authority over men, even in the world.

Why is that God, who in your position retracts pastoral authority to men, give Deborah, Huldah, Miriam, spiritual authority as prophetess.

To be a prophetess is to offer the words of God to His people, but there is no authority inherent in the position. There are many places for women to serve in the body of Christ, and prophetess was/is one of them. As webservant for Probe Ministries, I send out e-mails informing people of new files on our website, offering the words of Probe to people in effect, but I have no authority over anyone either.

Yes, they were not in the priesthood which was restricted to men. But they were not called to be priests, but prophets. The old priesthood was done away with when Christ went to a cross. And how is that the gift of PASTOR is separated from the office of PASTOR?

Because all of God's people need to be shepherded. Women are excellent at shepherding other women and children (a VERY powerful position of service!!) and we are called to do exactly that in Titus 2. There is a distinction between the

gift of shepherding and the office of shepherding because God's way is to put men in positions of spiritual authority, so only men should have the office of shepherding.

God's Word is spirit and life (Jn 6:63). What difference is the sermon if it comes out of the mouth of a man or a woman if it is thus saith the Lord, not Rev. Billy or Rev. Joan? God's Words has no gender distinction. Please explain.

God's Word DOES have a gender distinction when it comes to how things work in the church. We can't get around "I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man." We can't get around the requirements for elder as being HUSBAND of one wife, which is a very definite gender distinction. We can't get around the fact that Jesus chose 12 men as His apostles and leaders of His church, even though there were women who traveled with them and ministered to them in a service capacity.

There is also a difference between a person standing up reading scripture, which I would argue is open to both genders in a worship service, and a person standing up preaching a sermon, which is far more than simply reading scripture ("Thus saith the Lord.") A preacher is making statements about God and about the meaning of His word from a position of authority. God says only men belong in that position.

I understand the sweetness and compassion of your heart that wants women to have as much spiritual power and access to people as possible, and bless you for it, but what do you do with the Biblical restrictions of women in positions of spiritual authority? How do you deal with 1 Tim. 2:12-3:7?

Dear Sue,

God bless you for your wisdom and conviction!! I totally admire that!! I guess there will be these FIERY (hopefully loving and prayerful) discussions within the Body of Christ

til our Master comes back for His children. And in that day He will not come back for complementarians or egalitarians, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, or Pentecostal-Charismatics. He's coming back for us! And joyfully all of his children will be on one accord. Because in its totality, ministry of any form is not about our self-promotion, or egos. It's about Him. And the fact that we can agree to disagree on the hermeneutics of the Scriptures without bashing each other because we want to serve our God in our total capacities (however we may view them!) is really evident that we do care for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and how we don't want to marginalize them because some in Church History have abused their authority and opressed, repressed, and suppressed the voices of God's daughters for their own gain. And let just say that, you may not hold an OFFICE Mrs. Bohlin, you surely have a PASTOR's heart (for women anyway)!!!

May God Richly Bless You and Yours,

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See Also:

- [Feminism](#)

Probe Answers Our E-Mail:

- ["Should Women Be Pastors?"](#)
 - ["I Have Some Questions About Women in the Church"](#)
 - ["Your Position Against Women Pastors Is Outdated"](#)
-

“Did Christ HAVE to be Deity?”

Greetings Don,

I came across [your website article](#) concerning the deity of Christ and thought I would respond. if you have the time and interest, please entertain some of my thoughts and get back with me if time allows. My questions surround the topic of the necessity of Christ being deity. I accept that He is, but wonder if He MUST be for both the atonement and eternal salvation. What I would like to do is copy the text from my interaction with a good friend yesterday. That way I won't have to rewrite our dialogue. When you have time, please interject if you would. WB is my good friend, a pastor. I am DB.

WB: Your questions about Christ's deity in regards to salvation do sound like the Jews. “God can do it anyway he so pleases” (even Calvin suggests this as well). If God wanted, he could have made a world without the possibility for sin as well. He can do it any way he pleases, but he has reasons for doing it the way he does.

DB: Yes, he does. But as God, he could do it any number of ways. If you hold to the middle/knowledge position, you would have to agree to this idea, and the idea that he chose the best possible way to redeem mankind. That, in-and-of-itself, doesn't demand that Christ be deity.

WB: The early church fathers reasoned (there, I used the dirty word “reason”) that Christ had to be God for our salvation to be effectual. You have heard it before, even from me. Be patient as I explain it again. If I sin against you, how long does the sin remain? Answer: until you forgive me or until you die. Even if I die first, the sin remains as an offense

against you.

DB: No problems here at all. I agree wholeheartedly.

WB: If I sin against God, how long does the sin remain? Until he forgives me or until he dies. Since he does not die, and is an infinite being, then the sin is eternal: actually, my sin against him becomes an infinite offense. Now: how can an infinite transgression be forgiven? (I hope we don't have to revisit justification in all of this). Only an infinite being can pay for an infinite sin – only an infinite being can absorb an infinite curse and satisfy the infinite penalty of an infinite crime. Only an infinite being can bear an infinite wrath. If Jesus was a man, his death would have no efficacy.

DB: Here's where questions arise on my part. I agree that my sin is an infinite offense against God. Actually, God is eternal and infinite and we are neither (in the absolute definitions of those terms—i.e. “immeasurable or without beginning or end”). Hence, maybe there is some reservation on my part to claim I, a finite being, can commit an infinite act. I suppose since we live forever (in glory or judgment), our sins remain always or are cleansed and forgiven always; hence, they are infinite or erased. All that being said (I'm typing out my thoughts), I don't feel it requires that Christ must be deity to be a sufficient sacrifice for my sins. What is required is a perfect sacrifice. If Christ was a created being, one who was higher than angels and who took on the form of man, lived a perfect, sinless life with free will (like Satan but succeeding), his sacrifice would be sufficient. I don't understand how, using reason, it would not. Like us, he would have had a beginning. Like us, free will. Unlike Adam, he did not sin (even if he could have—if he was not deity, this would give even more credence to the example that even though he was a man, he did not sin vs. our position as Trinitarians). As he was sinless, created or not, his perfect example and sacrifice would be sufficient. It seems that if there coexisted TWO forms of deity at the same time, and it

was possible for them to sin against each other as does man, then a mediator, who would then have to be deity, would be required. To require deity to be sacrificed for the sins of finite man seems overkill and doesn't pan out in my mind as reasonable. It's certainly plausible, but I don't see how it has to be. Please correct me here. If God requires a perfect sacrifice, Jesus would have been a sufficient sacrifice if God said he was having lived a perfect life (as a perfect man or perfect Adam).

WB: The applicability of Christ's atoning work to us as human beings depends upon the reality of his humanity.

DB: Absolutely.

WB: The efficacy depends upon the genuineness and completeness of his deity. DB: Not if God only requires a perfect, sinless sacrifice vs. the sacrifice of a deity. I still fail to understand why reason disallows this. It seems to me we are predisposed to this position to embrace our view of the trinity vs. the other way around. Reason, in my mind, doesn't exclude this argument.

WB: The JWs reject this saying that God can do anything he pleases. Okay, why didn't he just let a muskrat die for our sins then? The beauty of the cross is not that we have been redeemed, but that the eternal Holy God was willing to undergo the kenosis (humiliation from glory to earth to servant to criminal to death to tomb).

DB: I agree—that is the beauty of the cross. But if God created for himself a son with free will (much like Satan—and NO, I don't think they were brothers!!!) to be a sacrifice for a lower mankind who despises them both and who hates them, then his suffering and sacrifice on our part for the love of his father, who he could disobey at will, is a lovely story as well. That's just as moving in my mind. If he was deity and couldn't sin (if he was impeccable), we can only glory in his

suffering, not his resistance to sin. Again, reason warrants that conclusion.

WB: This reveals God. And it is this that is the centerpiece of the Christian faith (our salvation was the result, and the reason, but the emphasis is on the grand mystery of God himself. (How boring it would be to send someone else to do his dirty work).

DB: I addressed this above.

Hello _____,

Thanks for your e-mail. Don is overwhelmed with other duties and asked me to respond in his place. I hope you understand.

Since you claim to accept the doctrine of Christ's deity, I will simply assume this is a belief we share. Thus, rather than offering any arguments for this important doctrine, I will simply assume it is true for the purpose of this response.

Let me make just a few points by way of introduction. First, I think you raise an important issue that needs to be carefully considered and discussed. Second, I will have to reply in a somewhat abbreviated fashion, merely outlining what I consider to be some important points. Third, at the time of this writing, I freely admit that I CANNOT offer a conclusive argument that it was necessary for Christ to be God in order to provide an acceptable atonement for the sins of man. However, I want to offer a cumulative case for this position which I think is nonetheless compelling. This will involve both a response to some of your statements, as well as a brief, positive presentation of some evidence which I think makes it at least highly probable that Christ would indeed have to be God to provide an acceptable atonement for our sins. Finally, I offer these thoughts for your consideration since you wrote to Probe requesting a response. Although I have to reply rather quickly because of many other pressing

duties, I am also offering a tolerably thoughtful response that I ask you to read carefully.

Please allow me to focus on your statements beginning with the remark, "Here's where questions arise on my part." You state:

"I don't feel it requires that Christ must be deity to be a sufficient sacrifice for my sins. What is required is a perfect sacrifice. If Christ was a created being, one who was higher than angels and who took on the form of man, lived a perfect, sinless life with free will (like Satan but succeeding), his sacrifice would be sufficient. I don't understand how, using reason, it would not."

I wonder HOW you actually KNOW this to be true? Granted, you MAY be right. But HOW do you really KNOW? I note that you appeal to "reason" – a faculty for which I too have great respect – but it's important to remember that reason, like ALL of man's faculties, is fallen. This remark is not intended to denigrate reason. But it's common knowledge that man often makes errors in reasoning about all sorts of things. Not only that, we often begin our reasoning from false presuppositions, which often results in correctly reasoning to false conclusions. Finally, we almost never have all the essential information which we would need to reason to the right answer – even if we didn't continually commit errors in our reasoning.

I would argue that the question of whether or not it was necessary for Christ to be God in order to provide an acceptable atonement for the sins of man is the sort of question about which it would be quite easy to reason incorrectly. I would also argue that YOU BEAR THE BURDEN OF PROOF here. This is so for the simple reason that Christ was in fact God (as you admit), and the Father did in fact send His Son to be "the propitiation for our sins" (1 JN. 2:2). Since God is a rational moral agent, it seems fair to assume

that He had some good reason for actually doing things as He did. Not only this, I think it's fair to ask whether God would have sent His only Son as the sacrifice for our sins if He could have achieved this end in some other way. It is at least odd that God would have sent His only Son to do what a morally perfect creature could just as easily have accomplished. Since God did in fact send His Son, however, you clearly bear the burden of proof in demonstrating that this was, in fact, not necessary. I don't think you can do so. Hence, I think your argument is ultimately unsuccessful.

Let me briefly illustrate this last point from a section of the dialogue between you and your friend:

WB: The applicability of Christ's atoning work to us as human beings depends upon the reality of his humanity. DB: Absolutely. WB: The efficacy depends upon the genuineness and completeness of his deity. DB: Not if God only requires a perfect, sinless sacrifice vs. the sacrifice of a deity. I still fail to understand why reason disallows this. It seems to me we are predisposed to this position to embrace our view of the trinity vs. the other way around. Reason, in my mind, doesn't exclude this argument."

Concerning your final comments, I would agree that reason, in itself, doesn't necessarily exclude the possibility that God only requires a perfect, sinless sacrifice rather than a Divine one. But remember my comments on "reason" again. Just because human reason cannot exclude the possibility that you mention does not in any way prove that a Divine sacrifice was not necessary! And since you bear the burden of proof here, I must ask you HOW, specifically, you KNOW that God does NOT REQUIRE A DIVINE SACRIFICE? Since this is what God actually did, I would argue that it is more reasonable to believe it was necessary than that it was not. Admittedly, this does not PROVE my argument is true, but I do think it's more reasonable. And I am not obligated to assume the burden of

proof here anyway.

I think you make an interesting, and potentially revealing, comment when you write:

“It seems that if there coexisted TWO forms of diety at the same time, and it was possible for them to sin against each other as does man, then a mediator, who would then have to be diety, would be required.”

Again, I wonder HOW you KNOW this? Why, specifically, would a Divine mediator be required? Certainly reason does not demand this! Why would any mediator “be required” at all? It’s quite possible that the gods could mediate their own dispute, just as two men might do. It’s also possible that a man, or a talking raccoon, could serve as a mediator. But here’s what’s interesting. If your logic is valid, and a god must mediate between gods, why would it not also follow that a God-Man must mediate between God and man?

But here’s another point. The example of reconciling two gods likely involves the reconciliation of equals. But this is not the case when we consider the reconciliation of man to God. Here, the parties are NOT equal. God is the Creator, man is His creation. It seems at least reasonable to believe (and is in fact true, I think) that the Creator may have a particular character which requires that reconciliation be achieved ONLY through a means which is perfectly consistent with all His attributes. And this, of course, may radically limit the means by which such reconciliation can actually be achieved. Again, I personally think it would be odd for the Father to send His only Son to accomplish on behalf of man what a morally perfect creature was capable of. Indeed, you yourself confess:

“To require diety to be sacrificed for the sins of finite man seems overkill and doesn’t pan out in my mind as reasonable. It’s certainly plausible, but I don’t see how it has to be.”

But since this is what God actually did, you bear the burden of proof in demonstrating that such a sacrifice was, in fact, overkill! Since God is a rational moral agent, it is at least reasonable to think that a Divine sacrifice may indeed have been NECESSARY. And if it was necessary it cannot, by definition, be overkill.

Let me conclude with two more observations. First, we both agree that Jesus was, in fact, the God-Man. I could easily demonstrate from the Scriptures both that Jesus believed this of Himself and that His disciples believed it as well. But here's the point. Every time that Jesus, or one of His disciples, makes the claim that He is the ONLY way to God there is, at least potentially, an implicit argument that only a God-Man can reconcile man to God! I could quote many verses, but let me offer just a few. When Jesus says to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP; that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life" (JN. 3:14-15, emphasis mine), He is speaking as the God-Man. I admit that it is not necessary to interpret such a statement as requiring a Divine sacrifice, but it certainly has this potential – and that's something to think about. In other words, since Jesus is the God-Man, He could be implicitly understood as saying that ONLY such a One as He is capable of reconciling man to God. It's the same with many such statements of Jesus (e.g. JN. 14:6, etc.). And Jesus' disciples, who also believed in His deity, repeatedly claim that there is no other way for man to be reconciled to God. For example, in Acts 4:12 Peter declares, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." Again, this does not PROVE that a Divine sacrifice was necessary (the burden is yours to show it was not), but it may certainly be read as implying its necessity.

Second, consider this. In Paul's famous verse on substitution, 2 Cor. 5:21, we read: "He (the Father) made Him (the Son) who

knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Luther referred to this as the “Great Exchange.” Christ takes our sin on Himself and gives us His righteousness in its place! Now an argument could be made that, in order to be acceptable to God, man must be clothed in His righteousness. If this is so, then it would seem to follow that a Divine substitute was not superfluous, but ESSENTIAL. For how could we become “the righteousness of God” in Christ, unless Christ was actually God? It’s reasonable to believe He could only give us God’s righteousness if He was, in fact, God. And if such righteousness is essential for our reconciliation to God, then it follows that a Divine substitute would be necessary to achieve this goal. Again, I fully admit that this argument is NOT CONCLUSIVE—it is merely suggestive. But as I’ve said repeatedly (I’m sure you’re sick of it!), you bear the burden of proof – not me. Thus, I think I’ve offered some good reasons to believe that a Divine sacrifice was indeed necessary and not overkill. I also think I’ve demonstrated that you’re far from proving your own position (if in fact it’s actually your position; I’m not saying it necessarily is).

Wishing you God’s richest blessings,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“What About the Person Who Never Heard of Jesus?”

I have a question. I have a Jewish person asking me “What about the guy who lives in a far off place and has never heard the name of Jesus proclaimed—is he going to hell?” My

immediate answer is that God finds a way to speak to your heart. Now, the Jews of the times of Abraham and Moses who believed in one God—after the cross I would say that John 3:16 holds true—but to a Jewish person who never looked at The New Testament—is there a sensitive yet clear and concise way to answer this?

I agree with you about God finding a way to speak to your heart.

We are now hearing many stories of people coming to faith in Christ as the result of a dream or vision where He appears to them, inviting them to trust in Him. This is particularly happening in the Muslim world. Many people instantly know it's the Lord Jesus when He appears to them, but some do not. In some dreams and visions, He tells them who He is, and in others He does not—He just loves them and calls them to come to Him. After the dream/vision, the Lord provides someone to identify Him as they continue to seek Him. (We see something similar in the story of Cornelius in Acts 10.)

So, from what I understand, people are putting their trust in Christ, but some don't know anything more about Him than that He is God, He loves them and He invites them to trust in Him. Two recurrent invitations continue to appear in the dreams and visions we are hearing about: 1) "I am the way, the truth and the life," and 2) "You belong to Me." As people are then able to get a copy of the Bible or talk to a Christian, their knowledge of Christ, the Cross, and the Christian life grows, as well as their faith and their understanding of who Jesus is and what He did.

For years, I have heard that God's only plan for evangelism is for us to share the gospel. But these stories show that sometimes, Jesus goes directly to a person. And, in Revelation 14:6, there is an angel who takes the gospel to men.

So what that means is that if a person has never heard of

Jesus through the preaching of the gospel, that is no obstacle for God. He can, and testimony shows that He does, appear directly to—and call a person to—have faith in Him. We still need to diligently pursue the Great Commission and take the gospel to all nations, since evangelism through the changed lives of Christ-followers is still God's main plan. But God's hands are not tied by our inability (or laziness, or selfishness, or disobedience) to get the gospel to everyone He has chosen for eternal life.

Concerning your specific question about a Jewish person who never looked at the New Testament, it's possible he might be in the same category as people who never heard of Jesus. . . however, in today's Jewish culture, part of what defines a Jew is "not believing in Jesus." It's not a valid definition, and it's not true, but it's hard to imagine anyone growing up in a Jewish culture—particularly in North or South America—who wasn't aware of the Jesus of Christianity in the surrounding culture.

So, I think the bottom line is that God would judge a Jewish person by the same standard as anyone else: "What did you do with the light you received?"

Your Jewish friend asks an important question, and it gives you the opportunity to talk about the character of God. I am grateful that our God is not only just, but loving, and I believe that He will allow the blood of Jesus to cover those who had no chance to reject Him, such as babies who die before or after birth, or the mentally impaired.

God promises that if we seek Him, we will find Him (Deut. 4:29). And since dead people cannot seek God and cannot choose life, that means that it's all God's grace allowing us to recognize our need for Him and seek Him in the first place! I would think that this same heart that longs for us to turn to Him, and gives us grace to turn to Him and seek Him, would also respond in love to the cry of a heart that says, "God, if

you are there, here I am! I don't know you, but I want to! Reveal Yourself to me!"

I hope this makes sense.

Sue Bohlin

See answers by
[Kerby Anderson](#)
and GotQuestions.org

“What Are Your Views on Hair Dyeing and Colored Contacts?”

I would like to know if there is anything in the Bible which would support my beliefs on hair dyeing, colored contacts, and anything else that goes along with unnatural changes. I believe that God made our hair color and eye color and everything else about us for a purpose and it's not respectful to change it. Anyways, this really bothers me because it seems that everybody does it and I would really like some feedback. Also, is it even worth it to say anything about it or does it even matter?

If there is anything in the Bible about these things I am not aware of it. God gave us dominion over the earth and commanded Adam and Eve to subdue it and rule it, which is the foundational philosophy behind science and technology.

The more important issue, though, is the reasons people would

do these things. As usual, it's what's in the heart, our motivations, that matter. Colored contacts are a function of technology, for instance, but there's a big difference between donning a different eye color as a touch of whimsy and fun, or doing it as part of a scheme to change one's appearance to avoid detection during a scam such as a bank robbery.

In terms of hair color, I think it's worth noting that usually it's women who color their hair, and why? Because we are both taught by the culture and we recognize instinctively that beauty and femininity go together, and making oneself as beautiful as possible is part of the feminine heart. But again, the motivation makes a big difference: a woman can color her hair to "go out and get a man" instead of trusting God to make her attractive to HIS choice of a spouse. That is very different from the woman who colors her hair to keep her gray from being an obstacle in ministering to the audiences she has been called to speak to (because our culture unfortunately values younger-looking women, even women that everyone knows are over 50.) In that case, coloring her hair is her way of living out the apostle Paul's comment in 1 Cor. 9:22 that "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." These are very real scenarios: I'm thinking of two specific women who personally told me their vastly different reasons for coloring their hair.

So the motivation makes all the difference, and as is usually the case, we can't know what's going on in other people's hearts. So the better route, I think, is to just trust those decisions to the Lord and leave them there.

Sue Bohlin

P.S. For the record, my contacts are dyed light blue to make them easier to find when I drop them on the floor, and my "silvering" hair is coming in so beautifully I could never find a color that's better than this. ☐

“Your Answer on Generational Curses Really Helped with our Bipolar Daughter”

Actually, this is a thank-you email.

Our (adopted) daughter is only five years old, and has very obvious childhood-onset bipolar. Unfortunately, this is a new diagnosis among children, and many people refuse to believe that such young, innocent children's lives could be affected by mental illness. Believe me, there is nobody who would want to believe that more than the children or the parents of the children who are suffering with these illnesses. But, unfortunately, they do exist. In fact, there is now PROOF that a dog that can sense-out a seizure just before it happens can also sense-out a bipolar episode. This is probably do to the nature of bipolar, as they now believe bipolar is a form of epilepsy.

Recently a Christian teacher asked me, “Could this be a generational curse? After all, God doesn't want any of His children to suffer. We will definitely be praying for your daughter.” This got me thinking, and I ended up at your website reading the article [“Could My Children's Autism be the Result of a Generational Curse?”](#) Boy, was I thankful to learn about what a generational curse really amounts to. Our daughter is on medication, and even that BARELY works.

Going to your website not only taught me about generational curses (enough to where now I can go back and speak with the woman more informatively!), but it also reminded me that this is NOT my fault. I tend to try to lay blame somewhere, and the best person to blame is myself. I can second-guess everything

I've done "wrong," imagined and perceived, and say that is why she is suffering. And believe me, she IS suffering, and doesn't mind saying so! For several months, we lied to her and told her bipolar simply means you are very smart. I got tired of lying to her. Today I finally agreed with her, and said, You're right. It IS a bad thing, but you can learn to live with it. Either you can defeat it, or it can defeat you. If you want to NOT let it get the best of you, you have to work very hard at it, especially when you're older.

But we'll get through it together.

It's so hard, I just can't begin to tell you what it is like to deal with a mental illness, especially in such a young child. We love her with all our heart and might. She has shown us how to love unconditionally. Sometimes, though, it takes everything inside us to stay strong.

Thank you for explaining about generational curses, and the fact that sometimes an illness is an illness, not necessarily a sin.

Dear _____,

BLESS YOUR HEART!!!! I am so sorry to hear about this trial your family is going through, and will be for a very, very long time. Our pastor's young son was also diagnosed with BPD when he was even younger than your daughter. It makes for a living hell some days, doesn't it?

I am delighted that you were able to find this article and that it encouraged you. How unfortunate that the teacher has such a profound misunderstanding of God and the role of suffering in our lives. What do people do with verses such as 1 Peter 4:19, which talks about those who "suffer according to God's will"? I guess they skip over them.

Recently, I had the privilege of chatting with the pastor of Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth; you may remember that

this was the church where a gunman murdered a number of students and staff at a "See You At The Pole" rally a few years ago. Dr. Al Meredith, who obviously knows something about suffering, suggested to me a wonderful book called *Don't Waste Your Sorrows* by Paul Billheimer, which I am in the process of reading right now. It's excellent, and I recommend it to you in view of the suffering you are experiencing.

I would also like to suggest that you pass on the blessing to your daughter that you received in owning the truth that her CPD is not your fault; she is not too young for you to bless her with the truth that it is not HER fault, either. Often when children experience suffering of various types, they personalize it and believe that they did something to cause it. The fact that it's illogical doesn't stop them! The message of "It's not your fault" is a type of revelation; children usually cannot know or figure out this truth without someone else telling them. You just might relieve her of a terrible burden she could be carrying needlessly by sharing this wonderful freeing news with her.

I pray you and your family will know God's comfort and peace as you live out this challenge to His glory and your benefit.

Blessings,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

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