

“Do You Have More Information on Human Cloning?”

I am looking to inform my class on the steps to cloning a human and also the most recent experiments done in this field of work. I have read your articles, but is there any additional information you could provide me?

Below is the recent announcement by the first group to publicly say they are actively going to seek to clone a human. There is no published results from any laboratory anywhere in the world. The potato is just a little too hot yet. The story from the BBC may also provide some additional links for you.

The article confirms some of the scientific and ethical problems I have mentioned elsewhere.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Tuesday, 30 January, 2001, 17:08 GMT
Cloned human planned 'by 2003'

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/sci/tech/newsid_1144000/1144694.stm

By BBC News Online's Alex Kirby

A private consortium of scientists plans to clone a human being within the next two years.

The group says it will use the technique only for helping infertile couples with no other opportunity to become parents.

It says the technology will resemble that used to clone animals, and will be made widely available.

One member said the group hoped to produce the world's first baby clone within 12 to 24 months.

It was founded by an Italian physician, Dr Severino Antinori, whose work includes trying to help post-menopausal women to become pregnant.

A spokesman for the group is Panos Zavos, professor of reproductive physiology at the University of Kentucky, US.

No alternative

He said it would "develop guidelines with which the technology cannot be indiscriminately applied for anybody who wants to clone themselves."

As with animal cloning, he said, the technology would involve injecting genetic material from the father into the mother's egg, which would then be implanted in her womb.

"The effort will be to assist couples that have no other alternatives to reproduce and want to have their own biological child, not somebody else's eggs or sperm," Professor Zavos said.

He said he believed human cloning was achievable. It could at first cost \$50,000 or more, but he hoped that could come down to around the cost of in vitro fertilisation, about \$10,000 to \$20,000.

Professor Zavos said he was well aware of the ethical dimensions of the project.

"The world has to come to grips [with the fact] that the cloning technology is almost here," he said. "The irony about it is that there are so many people that are attempting to do it, and they could be doing it even as we speak in their garages.

"It is time for us to develop the package in a responsible

manner, and make the package available to the world. I think I have faith in the world that they will handle it properly.”

‘Irresponsible’ plan

But the plans of Professor Zavos and his colleagues received an unenthusiastic response in the UK.

Dr Harry Griffin is assistant director of the Roslin Institute, Scotland, which successfully cloned Dolly the sheep.

He told BBC News Online: “It would be wholly irresponsible to try to clone a human being, given the present state of the technology.

“The success rate with animal cloning is about one to two per cent in the published results, and I think lower than that on average. I don’t know anyone working in this area who thinks the rate will easily be improved.

“There are many cases where the cloned animal dies late in pregnancy or soon after birth.

“The chances of success are so low it would be irresponsible to encourage people to think there’s a real prospect. The risks are too great for the woman, and of course for the child.

“I remain opposed to the idea of cloning human beings. Even if it were possible and safe—which it’s not—it wouldn’t be in the interest of the child to be a copy of its parent.”

Tom Horwood, of the Catholic Media Office in London, told BBC News Online: “A lot of our objections come down to questions of technique.

‘Morally abhorrent’

“But beyond that, cloning human beings is inconsistent with

their dignity, and involves seeing them as a means, not an end.

“The scientists involved in the project are planning a conference in Rome to explain their plans.

“I don’t think you’ll start getting lots of papal pronouncements just because they’re meeting in Rome.

“The reaction in the Vatican will be the same as everywhere else—that the project is morally abhorrent and ethically very dubious.”

“What Do You Think of the ‘Many Universes’ Theory?”

Hi Dr. Bohlin, my name is _____ and I wrote to you a while back. Your answer was greatly appreciated and helped me a great deal. You see my problem was with continuing to believe in my Christian faith and dealing with scientific evidence. Most of it I can deal with, without any problem at all. In fact sometimes it helps to increase my faith. But one area in science that I cannot come to grips with is the new research being done in cosmology. From all of my research, I found that the majority of astronomers and cosmologists favor the “inflationary” theory of our universe. It may not seem like a problem at first, but after further examination it has created a huge problem for me. According to the inflationary universe model, there may be and probably are an infinite amount of universes. Each one spawning like a new bubble and having different laws than the other universes. It attempts to easily explain our design seen throughout the universe. If there are an infinite amount of universes, surely through probability,

you will end up having one which fits the requirements for life. I thought that this was just one person's theory, but soon found out that a lot of evidence points in the direction of inflation. Could you tell me what you know of this and how this can or if it can fit with my faith. My faith has always been the most important thing to me, but I cannot just believe that easily if a major part of my belief is incorrect. How do Christians deal with an issue like this, and if this theory turns out to be true, in what way does this affect the Christian faith? I have read a book by Robert J. Russell, William Stoeger, and George Coyne, but it seems to go around the question. Any input that you have would be greatly appreciated.

The many universes hypothesis is not so much a part of the inflationary universe theory as an addendum to it. It has been added as an attempt at an explanation for the fine-tuned nature of our universe from an explosion. While inflation is somewhat testable scientifically, the many universes hypotheses is pure conjecture. How can we ever discover other universes with properties different from ours? Its only value is to suggest multiple universes to overcome the odds of this one occurring by chance just this once, which in many cosmologists' and astronomers' eyes indicates the necessity for an intelligence to order it. The many universes hypothesis is therefore a thinly disguised rationalization to avoid the necessity of intelligence in the universe.

The many universes model also relies on quantum mechanics to suggest that the universe emerged from a quantum fluctuation from nothing to something. While quantum fluctuations are mysterious, we only know them to operate within a space-time universe. Without a space-time universe, there is no such thing as quantum mechanics. So this would negate the use of quantum mechanics to explain the origin of the universe from nothing since quantum mechanics didn't exist until the universe existed.

By the way, while my faith in Jesus does depend on evidence (the resurrection, historicity of the Bible, etc.) it does not rest on the accuracy of the latest scientific theories. Men will always find ways to order their universe without God. Just because they think they can, doesn't mean God is any less real. Be careful of being willing to jettison your faith based on scientific theories. There is still much we don't know about the universe and even the Bible to be that tenuous about our faith because of science. When scientists proclaim that the facts argue against God, they are usually simply showing their own bias and refusal to consider the mountain of evidence in favor of His existence. Scientists are human too.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Your Position Against Stem Cell Research Disregards Diabetics”

I know that you don't think it's right to use stem cells and you have that right, it's granted to you in the constitution. But do you have diabetes? Do you know what it's like to have to get blood 4 times a day to know what your blood sugar is so that you can make good decisions so you don't die and every time you get in a car to drive? Then have to stick a needle into your skin to give yourself insulin to survive because your body does not produce insulin anymore. Do you know what that's like? Do you? The way I see it from your webpage you're not looking at the 16 million Americans with diabetes that

have to live with this. If the stem cell research was to succeed then there would be no more Diabetes, Parkinson's and many other diseases.

I appreciate your passion for a desire to cure diabetes. It is a difficult disease, and I am sorry to learn that you suffer from it. However, allow me to reframe the argument.

We need to make a distinction between embryonic stem cells and adult stem cells. We have no problem with using adult stem cells to research treatment and cures of disease. What if embryonic stem cell research *doesn't* succeed? There are no guarantees. We haven't even cured a mouse, let alone treated any human disease with embryonic stem cells. Then we have will have wasted thousands of human embryos for nothing. Not to mention all the women who had to endure hormonal treatments to obtain their eggs to make the embryos. How much is their sacrifice worth to you?

What if adult stem cell research (research with no ethical questions and much hope of success) achieves a treatment before embryonic stem cell research? Again, we will have wasted thousands of human embryos for nothing.

I have a genetic disease myself, hemochromatosis, excess iron in the blood and organs. When left untreated it can lead to liver disease and cancer. I simply need a pint of blood withdrawn every 2-3 months to keep my iron levels under control. This is not the inconvenience of diabetes. But I am not without understanding of the issues. My health and convenience is not worth the sacrifice of human embryos who have no option of informed consent. I refuse to sacrifice the next generation in any way for my convenience. It's always been the other way around, the current generation sacrificing for the next.

You are also entitled to your opinion. But don't assume I have callously tossed aside the suffering of others. I simply

choose the life of human embryos, embryos who have every potential to form a human being if left in their natural surroundings, over my convenience. To suggest that these early embryos are simply reproductive cells like sperm and egg is disingenuous and medically incorrect.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Can You Give Examples of Subtle Invalidation?”

In Kerby Anderson’s article [Why Marriages Fail](#) he writes, “Invalidation is a pattern in which one partner subtly or directly puts down the thoughts, feelings, or character of the other.”

What other examples can you give of subtle invalidation?

I decided to answer your question because it’s helpful to have a woman’s perspective in addition to a man’s (as what you read in Kerby’s excellent essay). Here’s what I came up with:

- *Rolling the eyes at something a spouse says*
- *Ignoring the spouse when they’re talking*
- *A dismissing or contemptuous tone of voice in saying things like “I don’t think so” or “You’re wrong” or “Like you would know anything about that!” (Note: those very words can be used in affectionate banter when said with a smile and in the context of a spouse’s strengths.)*
- *Any form of sarcasm*
- *Making plans without consulting the spouse (which would*

affect the spouse)

- *Ridiculing a spouse's dreams and hopes, even in jest*
- *Continually rejecting a spouse's romantic or sexual overtures*
- *Choosing to spend time chatting with internet friends (especially of the opposite sex) over being with one's spouse*
- *Not acknowledging the heart issues behind the words that a spouse shares*
- *Not looking at a spouse when they're talking*
- *Being critical of or ridiculing a spouse in public, even in jest*
- *In a dispute or disagreement that involves the children, ganging up with them against the spouse*
- *Saying things to one's kids like "Oh, your mother is just being wierd (stupid, illogical, emotional, etc.) again" or "Don't listen to your father, he doesn't know what he's talking about"*

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"What Are Some Examples of Historical Revisionism?"

Dear Kerby,

I have heard you discuss the topic of historical revisionism on radio. I told my son about this, and he doesn't believe it. Do you have some examples of how our history has been revised from the original?

Many historians have wanted to secularize our founders. Take this quote from W.E. Woodward. He wrote that “The name of Jesus Christ is not mentioned even once in the vast collection of Washington’s published letters.”[{1}](#)

Anyone who has read some of Washington’s writing knows he mentions God and divine providence. But it isn’t too difficult to also find times in which he mentions Jesus Christ. For example, when George Washington wrote to the Delaware Indian Chiefs (June 12, 1779) he said: “You do well to wish to learn our arts and ways of life, and above all, the religion of Jesus Christ. These will make you a greater and happier people than you are. Congress will do every thing they can to assist you in this wise intention.”[{2}](#)

Other examples are also available. For example, a well-worn, handwritten prayer book found among Washington’s personal writings after his death had the name “Jesus Christ” used sixteen times. [{3}](#)

Often historical revisionism is done by selective omission. Consider this famous quote from a book on American history by Kenneth Davis.[{4}](#) In 1775, Patrick Henry asked, “Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?” Davis then picks up the quote again with the final statement by Patrick Henry: “I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death.”

Technically the quote is correct, but what is missing is very important. The entire quote should read: “Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God. I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death.”

Davis does the same thing when he cites the Mayflower Compact. “We whose names are under-written . . . do by these presents

solemnly and mutually in the presence of God, and one another, covenant and combine our selves together into a civil body politick, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid.”

Some important points are omitted. The section should read: “We whose names are under-written having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith and honor of our king and country, a voyage to the first colonie in the Northern parts of Virginia do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God, and one another, covenant and combine our selves together into a civil body politick, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid.”

Some of the best documented cases of historical revision were provided by the work of Paul Vitz and funded by the U.S. Department of Education. He notes that “One social studies book has thirty pages on the Pilgrims, including the first Thanksgiving. But there is not one word (or image) that referred to religion as even a part of the Pilgrims’ life.”

[{6}](#)

Another textbook said that “Pilgrims are people who take long trips.” They were described entirely without reference to religion. One reference said the Pilgrims “wanted to give thanks for all they had” but never mentioned that it was God to whom they wanted to give thanks.[{7}](#)

Historical revisionism is a sad fact of American education today. Students are not getting the whole story, and often references to religion and Christianity are left out.

Kerby Anderson

Probe Ministries

Notes

1. W.E. Woodward, *George Washington: The Image and the Man* (New York: Boni and Liverlight, 1926), 142.
2. George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1932), Vol. XV, 55.
3. *Manuscript Prayer-Book Written by George Washington* (Philadelphia, 1891).
4. Kenneth C. Davis, *Don't Know Much About History* (New York: Avon Books, 1990), 61.
5. Davis, 21.
6. Paul Vitz, *Censorship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Textbooks* (Michigan: Servant Books, 1986), 3.
7. Vitz, 18-19.

Suggested Reading

David Barton, *Original Intent* (Aledo, TX: WallBuilders Press, 1996), Chapter 16.

Paul Vitz, *Censorship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Textbooks* (Michigan: Servant Books, 1986)

“Why Is There So Much Acceptance of the Idea That Truth is Relative?”

Thanks for your question about truth. The current pseudo-relativist mindset makes apologetics and evangelism difficult,

for the non-Christian is often very happy for us to be Christians . . . as long as we don't insist or even suggest that what we believe is true for everyone. I call it pseudo-relativism because no one is a thoroughgoing relativist. We ALL have our absolutes. (For more on this you might want to look at William Watkins' book *The New Absolutes*. Or for a shorter treatment see [my article](#) with the same title on our web site.)

Why is it so widely accepted? There are a few reasons, I think.

1. The influx of Eastern religions in the '60s introduced a "both/and" mindset with respect to truth. In the West we have recognized the reality of the "either/or" nature of the universe: e.g., either the earth revolves around the sun or it doesn't. It can't be "both the earth revolves around the sun and it doesn't." Which is it? This is simply how the universe is. This reality is represented in logic as the law of non-contradiction. We presuppose it in our speech constantly. When the doctor says, "Take this medicine; it will help you get well," he doesn't also mean "Take this medicine; it will not help you get better." Eastern philosophies and religions often have a pantheistic view of reality which means that everything is of one nature, and everything is divine. If all is one, then those things which appear to be opposites to us really aren't.

2. Social realities—Plurality of beliefs: How can all these sincere people be wrong? we ask.

3. Democratic ideal—One person, one vote. Knowledge becomes democratic; everyone's opinion is equally valid.

4. Science—Quantum theory: Paul Davies said that "Uncertainty is the fundamental ingredient of the quantum theory" (this theory, by the way, is a very significant one in science today). Some people think that if scientists can't even be

certain about empirical matters, why do we think we can know about spiritual matters with any certainty?

5. Religion—No one knows ultimate reality, people think, so one god is as good as another. Some tell us it's our responsibility to create reality; some say we are gods ourselves.

6. Philosophy—Rationalism has faded away; political power is our basic category of understanding rather than truth.

I think, then, that there are several factors which figure into our postmodern frame of mind. This is the hallmark of postmodernism: a loss of confidence in our ability to know objective truth. Our job is to restore confidence in it, grounded in Jesus, the creator of the universe.

Thanks again for writing.

Rick Wade
Probe Ministries

“Evidence for God's Existence? I Think Not!”

I have just read [your article on the existence of God](#). There are SO many mistakes (and assumptions) you have made that I don't know where to begin:

A “Just Right” Universe?

Of course our planet is 'just right' to sustain life. If it were not we would not be here! There are billions and billions of galaxies, each galaxy has billions of stars, and each star

has many planets. So although the chances of life occurring are slim, because there are so many opportunities for it to occur, the chances are that it will almost definitely occur somewhere.

The Nagging Itch of "Ought"

This is to do with moral values. Not Christian values, but just plain humanitarian moral values. We know that in order to survive, social chaos is a bad thing. We don't need a Supernatural all knowing God to tell us this. Common sense tells us to do to others what you would like them to do to you. Do you seriously believe that without God it is impossible to make moral judgements in the interests of mankind? Don't forget that although we evolved from apes, evolution itself is driven by natural selection, genes that enable us to survive live, and those that don't die. Obviously murdering, stealing, cheating etc, will increase the odds of that happening to you. Therefore it is not in a species' interests to have these characteristics, therefore they die out. We have evolved moral values, they were not bestowed upon us by some god!

Evidence of Design Implies a Designer

Have you not never heard of evolution? Evolution is the non-random development of species through time, through random mutations in its DNA. That means that if it mutates in a bad way, the creature dies. If the mutation is beneficial to its survival then it lives and passes it 'new' genes on to the next generation. The process can take millions of years to evolve simple self replicating molecules (which can and do occur) into a diverse range of species. And hence give the appearance of design.

The Reliability of the Bible

HA!

Reliable and Bible are not two words I use together in a sentence very often! The Bible is full of holes and contradictions, it is the most inconsistent book I have ever read. If you don't believe me have a look at the enclosed text file!

Jesus: The Ultimate Evidence

Jesus? The only evidence that can be found to suggest that he even existed. Is yes... in the Bible! Which insistently was written by unknown authors over 150 years after he (supposedly) died. It was also written in a different language than Jesus himself would have spoken!

Thank you for writing. You asked no questions, but only made statements which show me that you have not done much research, but you do have strong opinions. Therefore, I will not attempt to answer your comments since I am sure your time is as valuable as mine, and I doubt that you're interested in anything that would contradict your opinions.

I did look at your list of contradictions, and they do not trouble me at all since there is a rational explanation for them. The majority of them are like the contradiction my children experienced when my husband called me "Sue" and they called me "Mommy."

But thank you for writing.

In closing, you might want to consider Pascal's wager: Either Christianity is true or it's false. If you bet that it's true, and you believe in God and submit to Him, then if it IS true, you've gained God, heaven, and everything else. If it's false, you've lost nothing, but you've had a good life marked by peace and the illusion that ultimately, everything makes sense. If you bet that Christianity is not true, and it's false, you've lost nothing. But if you bet that it's false, and it turns out to be true, you've lost everything and you spend eternity in hell.

Quite a wager. . . and every one of us makes it, either consciously or unconsciously.

So, _____, since you haven't checked into the things you confidently assert are true (for example: your statement that there is no extra-biblical evidence for the existence of Jesus. Check out the historian Josephus), are you willing to bet your life and your eternity that you're right?

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

Pascal's wager? You are asking me to believe in God, just in case he is real! If that has to be my reason, then I am not really believing in him, am I? I look at the evidence, if it convinces me then I will believe, if it does not, then I do not believe. Going by Pascal's wager I would have to then subscribe to every earthly religion going, (just in case) their god happens to be true, regardless of any evidence! This of course is not feasible.

Asking me why I don't believe in God is like being asked why I don't believe that a giant invisible pink unicorn called Dodo created the universe! While it is possible, I see no reason to assume so. . .

Let me ask you a question:

I have done nothing wrong. I lead a good fulfilling life, I am certainly not 'evil' just because I don't hold a strong belief in any god(s).

If you were god, as in creator of the universe and all life etc, would you condemn me to burn in hell for all eternity simply for not believing in you?

I have done nothing wrong.

By whose standards? Yours, or God's? Even by yours, you're telling me you have never lied, have never done anything that

fell short of your own standards of how people should treat each other, have never done anything you needed to say "I'm sorry" for?

If you were god, as in creator of the universe and all life etc, would you condemn me to burn in hell for all eternity simply for not believing in you?

No, _____, YOU would be condemning yourself.

Look at it this way. You are an astronaut and you are doing a spacewalk. You decide you don't like NASA's ridiculous restrictions about wearing a bulky space suit and staying tethered to the space shuttle, so you decide you're going to be your own boss and not submit to them. You break the tether and take off your space suit.

Is NASA condemning you to die from lack of oxygen and the freezing cold of space? No. . .they are the source of life to you out there in space. They're the ones keeping you alive as long as you stay connected to their technology. YOU would be condemning yourself to die.

God doesn't condemn anyone to a hell separated from Him for eternity. He did everything in His power to make it possible for us to be reconciled to Him. But He does not override our choices, and if you choose to cut yourself off from the only source of life, then you are condemning yourself to eternal death. It's your choice, not God's.

You may not want to believe in God, _____, but that doesn't stop me from praying that He will reveal Himself to you in such a personal and intimate way that you will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that He is there and He loves you more than you can imagine.

Sue

He did everything in His power to make it possible for us to be reconciled to Him. But He does not override our choices, and if you choose to cut yourself off from the only source of life, then you are condemning yourself to eternal death.

You are contradicting yourself. God, as you define him is all powerful. Therefore nothing is beyond his ability! Right?

Therefore there is plenty that he could do (if he existed) that would convince me of his existence. For example if he appeared in a puff of smoke and perform a few miracles, etc. I might just believe him. However, I am forced to rely on evidence such as the Bible! Which to me is not very convincing! On top of this, I am faced with another dilemma, there are other religions, preaching their own beliefs, which are all just as equally feasible as yours! This is why I remain unconvinced!

You are contradicting yourself. God, as you define him is all powerful.

Therefore nothing is beyond his ability! Right?

No, that's not true. God cannot contradict Himself. For example, He cannot create a boulder so big He can't move it. He can't create a round square. Those sorts of things are logical contradictions. God is logical.

Therefore there is plenty that he could do (if he existed) that would convince me of his existence. For example if he appeared in a puff of smoke and perform a few miracles, etc. I might just believe him.

You know what? You could come up with any number of hoops for Him to jump through and still not believe. The problem isn't that the evidence isn't good enough, _____. The problem is a heart that refuses to accept the evidence that's already been given. You and Carl Sagan have a lot in common.

Even mentally disabled children can see the evidence of God's existence and believe in Him. The problem isn't intellect; it's a heart issue.

However, I am forced to rely on evidence such as the Bible! Which to me is not very convincing! On top of this, I am faced with another dilemma, there are other religions, preaching their own beliefs, which are all just as equally feasible as yours! This is why I remain unconvinced!

Only on the surface. No other religions explain reality as well as Christianity, but again, until you truly examine them all with an unbiased eye, and not dismiss them unexamined, it will remain a heart issue.

And that's why I pray for you.

Your friend,

Sue

© December 2000 Probe Ministries

“Help Me Know That God is Really There”

I read your article [Evidence for God's Existence](#). I have always believed in God until recently when I read some articles by James Randi known to most people as “The Amazing Randi.” He seems to be able to disprove the divine power of people who claim to be able to talk to the dead and move objects with their minds with scientific proof that they are merely just cheap parlor tricks. I believe he is correct not only because he says so but because the bible tells us that

Jesus was the last person on earth who could do such things as tell the future or perform miracles etc. But what if Jesus knew these parlor tricks which are as old as the hills? I saw Siegfried and Roy make an elephant disappear right before my very eyes in front of a thousand people and admit to trickery. Who is to say that Jesus didn't know how to fool the average person in the same way thousands of years ago? Please understand that I am not being a wise guy. I truly have issues with this because I was such a firm believer in God and Jesus Christ. If God doesn't exist, then I am truly alone and have wasted many hours and prayers on things that would or wouldn't happen anyway with or without my prayers.

Also, I have been talking to myself all these years and I must be crazy. I realize the consequences of my decision not to believe in God if I am wrong. Somehow that seems trivial while I am still alive. I still go to church every Sunday with my wife. I don't let on that my faith has been diminished because my wife is such a good God-fearing woman and I don't want to impose my beliefs on her or anyone else. Especially if I am wrong. What it boils down to is if science can prove that the existence of God is only something that exists in my mind, and the voice I hear inside myself is my own self, then I am guilty of being a fool. For he who teaches himself has a fool for a master. True the earth is a miracle in itself and surely no parlor trick. I can't explain how it all began if there is no God. But we as just mankind can't even begin to explain any theory with our limited knowledge of the universe. If Siegfried and Roy can make an elephant disappear in front of all those people and admit it is a trick, yet nobody can figure out how it was done, than it is understandable that the beginning of the world which must be a far greater "trick" and is something that we as ordinary individuals can never figure out. Bad things happen in this world that I feel shouldn't. I love my family and my pets. I don't want to see them die. But they must die just as I must die. What if there isn't anything after death and you just lie there in the ground. That

beautiful gift of life has been destroyed. I can't accept that a loving God would take these things away from me or anyone who hold them so near and dear to their heart. Could it be that God is for the weak minded who need direction and discipline to get through life without going off course for their own good? Is life just a crap shoot anyway where what ever happens, happens whether you pray or not? Please forgive me if I have offended you with my talk of disbelief but I thought if anyone could answer my questions, you could. I don't mean any disrespect. I need to know that God is really there to hear my prayers and help me to make decisions. I need to know that I am not on my own in this world and my prayers are heard and answered according to his word not just my imagination or wishful thinking.

Dear _____,

Bless your heart! Thank you you SO MUCH for sharing your deep thoughts and fears with me. I have two things to say in response.

1. The best thing Jesus ever did to prove that what He did was true miracles and not tricks was to rise from the dead. How do you counterfeit THAT? The resurrection is the strongest evidence for the truth of Christianity that we have. Consider that the disciples, who had been so disheartened by His death (even though He had promised several times to rise from the dead), were so turned around by seeing Him alive again that they changed the world and were willing to die for their belief in a risen Savior. If it were only a trick, no one would have died for a lie. May I suggest you get a hold of Lee Strobel's book *The Case for Christ* and shore up your faith? I think that book will really help. (Consider also other people—like Strobel the former skeptic—who set out to prove the resurrection false, like Frank Morison, and were so overwhelmed by the evidence that they became believers and wrote books like *Who Moved the Stone?*)

2. I believe that the doubts that assail you are nothing more than spiritual warfare. I think you are being attacked by the spiritual forces of darkness, and I gently suggest you read Ephesians 6 and put on the armor of faith to fight these horrible attacks. I have also been impressed by Kay Arthur's book *Lord, Is It Warfare?* to help deal with spiritual warfare in the form of attacking doubts.

_____, I am completely convinced that this period of doubts in your life is like being outside on a bright sunny day when the sun disappears because it is obscured by a cloud. . . temporarily. You are not alone—you would not BELIEVE how many e-mails I get just like yours. You have put your faith in an eternal truth, not in lie. I promise.

Cheerily in Jesus,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Help Me Understand Fasting”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I believe so. He judges our hearts and knows our intentions. He wants us to succeed more than we do! There is NO

condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1), so just pick yourself up again and keep on going.

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

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

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Do You Know Why My Dreams Come True?”

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

but not like they do on tv. It's different. It's more like I feel their pain and fix that, not their body. Anyways, if you have any ideas, please let me know.

P.S.- I'm not crazy, promise.

Hi _____,

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

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

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

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

Are you special? Absolutely—in the same way that God makes all of us special, and gives us special gifts, abilities, talents and passions, so that we can be like stained glass windows for

His light to shine through with special, unique beauty. Please remember that God gives gifts to serve Him by serving others and not for our own enjoyment, although the exercise of our gifts IS a blessing to us. So I encourage you to always be looking to see your gifts as a way to serve rather than to draw attention or glory to yourself.

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

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

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

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

I do want to make sure, though, that you understand it is essential to be *excruciatingly* discerning about your dreams, exposing them and your interpretations of them to the light of Scripture. If God is speaking to you through your dreams, it will always—ALWAYS!—be consistent with what He has said in His

Word, and never contradict either His Word or His character as revealed in His Word.

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

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries