

# “Can a True Believer Commit the Unforgiveable Sin?”

Can a true believer turn away from God at some point and eventually commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? I don't believe a true Christian would be capable of that no matter how far they strayed because one saved, always saved, but I need verses to support my opinion to share with someone else.

Thank you for your question. The “unpardonable sin” of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the three synoptic Gospels: Matthew 12:31-32, Mark 3:28-29, and Luke 12:10. Historically, these verses have aroused a great deal of anxiety and fear, especially in those with a sensitive conscience. But what do these sayings mean?

In my opinion, the two best positions are the following:

1. This sin is committed when someone willfully attributes the work of God the Holy Spirit to Satan.
2. This sin is simply willful and persistent rejection of, and lack of faith in, the person and work of Christ.

If the first option is correct, some would hold that it is not even possible to commit this sin today. In this view, this sin could only have been committed while Christ was physically present on earth and performing miraculous feats through the power of the Holy Spirit. Others would hold that the sin can be committed today; nevertheless, there is a pretty large consensus among evangelical Christians that a true believer could never commit this sin. After all, Peter says that all true believers “are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1:5). And Paul tells the Philippian believers that he is “confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).

Although I may certainly be wrong, I honestly prefer the second view. Please notice that if this view is correct, a true believer could not possibly commit this sin by definition. While I could list many reasons why I prefer this view, let me mention just a few.

First, it is by far the easiest way to make Scriptural revelation self-consistent. For instance, we know that persistent unbelief is an unpardonable sin. But Jesus says that all sins and blasphemies will be forgiven except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:28-29). Logic, then, seems to require that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is persistent unbelief.

Second, notice the progression of ideas in Matthew 12:30-33. Jesus begins by stating the importance of being rightly related to Him (v. 30). He then describes the unpardonable sin (vv. 31-32). He then seems to present His listeners with a choice: "Either make the tree good...or make the tree bad; for the tree is known by its fruit" (v. 33). Could Jesus be offering those who had spoken against Him in v. 24 (they are the ones He is speaking to – v. 25), an opportunity to repent (i.e. change their minds about His identity) and become rightly related to Him in v. 33? If so, it would seem to indicate that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is persistent unbelief. And the cure is faith, leading to forgiveness.

Third, although Mark's parenthetical explanation in 3:30 could be taken as evidence of the first view; nevertheless, I see in it evidence for the second view as well. After all, if they were saying that Jesus "has an unclean spirit" (v. 30), it certainly indicates that they did not believe Him to be who He actually was (and is). Thus, this statement is consistent with simple unbelief in the person of Christ.

Finally, why doesn't John mention this sin? It certainly seems like it would have been important. But what if he did mention it, but simply described it differently? Look at John 16:8-9.

Jesus is speaking of sending the Holy Spirit after His ascension. Notice what He says of the Holy Spirit: "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me..." The Holy Spirit convicts the world concerning the sin of unbelief, or lack of personal faith, in Jesus! Could the persistent rejection of the Holy Spirit's conviction, and the willful refusal to believe in Jesus, thus be blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? That, at any rate, is my opinion. Thus, by definition, it is absolutely impossible for a true believer to commit this terrible sin. It can only be committed by someone who persistently rejects the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit, choosing to remain in their unbelief.

Additionally, this ties in very well with what is said in other parts of the New Testament concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. All true believers receive the Holy Spirit (Rom.8:9, 14). The Holy Spirit testifies that believers are God's adopted children (Rom. 8:16). The indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life is said to be permanent (John 14:16-17), a pledge or "down-payment" of an eternal inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14). Indeed, the Holy Spirit is said to "seal" believers "for the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30)!

Just a very few of the many good passages on the security of the believer can be found in Rom. 8:28-39; John 10:27-30; and 1 John 5:9-13. But my own favorite is John 6:35-40. Read this passage carefully. Notice v. 37, that the one who comes to Jesus will certainly not be cast out. Notice that Jesus came to do the will of His Father (v. 38). But what was His Father's will? That the Son lose none of those who come to Him (v. 39)! But think about this. If Jesus loses even a single one who truly comes to Him for salvation, then He has not fulfilled the Father's will! But this is impossible for Jesus always does what is pleasing to His Father (John 8:29). Thus,

it is impossible that Jesus will lose any who come to Him for salvation. Thus, Christians cannot commit the unpardonable sin.

Hope this helps. God bless you!

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries

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## **“I Have Some Basic God Questions”**

**Question #1: In John 1:3 it says, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Did God made Satan?**

**Question #2: Where was God when heaven and earth were not yet created?**

**Question #3: In John 10:30 Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” Does this mean that Jesus is the Father also?**

**Question #4: Does this mean that Jesus knew all the events as the same as the Father also?**

**Question #5: In Ephesians 2:9 it states, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Does this mean “good works” is not necessary?**

**Question #1: Did God made Satan?**

“Satan” means adversary. God created the angel who became Satan (i.e. the Adversary), but God created this angel (and

everything else) good (Genesis 1:31). The fall of Satan may be described in Ezekiel 28:11-19. If so, note that before his fall he was created perfect and blameless (vv. 12, 15).

**Question #2: Where was God when heaven and earth were not yet created?**

Where was God before the creation of heaven and earth? Since God is omnipresent (i.e. present everywhere – See Psalm 139:7-12), He was present “everywhere.” Of course, prior to the creation of the universe, it’s difficult to know precisely what this might mean. However, since God is eternal, He has always existed; since He is omnipresent, He has always existed “everywhere” (whatever this might mean).

**Question #3: Does this mean that Jesus is the Father also?**

No; Jesus is the incarnate Son of God. The Father and Son are both God, but they are distinct Persons within the Godhead. John 1:1 helps us to see this. Notice that the Word (God the Son) was WITH God (i.e. the Father). This implies a distinction between the Father and the Son. But we also read that the Word WAS God. This implies that the Son, like the Father, is fully God. This obviously leads us into the mystery of the Trinitarian nature of God. God is one in essence, but subsists as three distinct Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Christians do NOT believe in three Gods. They believe in ONE God who subsists as THREE distinct Persons.

**Question #4: Does this mean that Jesus knew all the events as the same as the Father also?**

While incarnate on the earth, there were some things that were known by the Father, but not the Son (see Mark 13:32). I see this as a temporary and voluntary limitation of the Son’s exercise of His Divine attributes while incarnate upon earth. Philippians 2:5-11 indicates that Jesus “emptied Himself” by becoming a Man. He did not give up His Divine attributes (for then He would no longer be God), but He freely consented to a

temporary limitation of the exercise of these attributes while incarnate upon earth. As God the Son, He knows everything that the Father knows. Both the Son and the Father are omniscient (i.e. all-knowing).

**Question #5: Does this mean “good works” is not necessary?**

Good works are not necessary for salvation, for salvation is a *gift* of God (Ephesians 2:8). Nevertheless, good works are important, for as Paul says in Ephesians 2:10, believers are “created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (see also Titus 3:8). In other words, we are saved by God’s grace through faith in Christ, completely apart from our works. But we are also saved “for good works” (Ephesians 2:10). Genuine salvation (which comes first) produces the fruit of good works (which come after salvation).

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries

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## **“Is it a sin for a married couple to masturbate during sex?”**

**Is it a sin for a married couple to masturbate during sex? In many cases a woman can’t get an orgasm without proper stimulation.**

If a married couple is making love, then nothing they do together is considered masturbation. It’s all part of holy

sex. (Masturbation is self-pleasure by oneself.)

You're right, most women can't have an orgasm without stimulation, which is how God planned it, I think. . . .the idea being that her husband would be the one to give her pleasure that way. The Song of Solomon even has a verse about the wife asking her husband to do exactly that: "Let his left hand be under my head, and his right hand embrace me." (SoS 2:6).

Nothing a married couple does in the marriage bed is sin as long as it is mutually acceptable and it doesn't involve anyone else (for example, porn movies or fantasies that involve another person). I think God intends for us to experience far more freedom and enjoyment than a lot of people think! May I suggest you get an EXCELLENT book for married women called *Intimate Issues* by Linda Dillow and Lorraine Pintus. Absolutely the best book on the subject for women out there, I think. Please also see our article [What's God's Plan for Sex in Marriage?](#)

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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**“What About the Super-Secret Skull and Bones Society at Kerby Anderson’s Alma Mater**

# Yale?"

Both George W. Bush and John Kerry are members of a satanic secret society known as Skull and Bones. When both George W. Bush and John Kerry were asked about their involvement in Skull and Bones on the Tim Russert – Meet The Press show, both laughed it off as it was too secret to talk about... What are they hiding???

I wonder since Mr. Kerby Anderson is a Yale University graduate, will he dismiss the Skull & Bones secret club on Yale University as just a frat house like all the others fraternities??

Thank you for your question about Skull and Bones. From time to time we have received questions about this organization. When I was at Yale University, I passed by the building but never really knew much about the organization.

Fortunately, David Aikman (former Senior Correspondent for *Time Magazine*) has written a book *A Man of Faith: The Spritual Journey of George W. Bush*. The following is an excerpt from his book about George Bush's involvement with Skull and Bones.

Kerby Anderson

*In his junior year, George W. was "tapped" (invited by existing membership) for Skull and Bones, the well-known Yale senior-year secret society that was founded in 1832 and has been the focus of wild, indeed sometimes paranoid, conspiracy theories ever since. Skull and Bones is the most famous of the Yale societies, which admit a dozen or so juniors as lifetime members. Since the intake is so small, there are only around eight hundred Bonesmen (women were admitted for the first time in 1992) at any time, and Yale being already an elite institution, it is hardly surprising that Bonesmen have risen to be United States cabinet secretaries, Supreme Court justices, and even, on three occasions, presidents of*



*the United States—most recently, Bush Senior and George W.*

*The prestige of Skull and Bones membership and the fear of its alleged power among many of the society's critics are products of the secrecy in which the society has operated from the outset and the unmistakable achievement of generation upon generation of Bonesmen. President and Supreme Court Justice Howard Taft, Ambassador W. Averill Harriman, Secretary of State Henry Stimson, Massachusetts senator and Democratic presidential aspirant John Kerry, conservative political commentator and author William F. Buckley, and of course Bush Senior's father, Prescott Bush, later himself a U. S. Senator, were all Bonesmen. But while the first century and more of the Skull and Bones tradition was heavily WASPish from the 1950s onward, both African Americans and foreigners were admitted.*

*Among those tapped along with George W. were an Orthodox Jew and a Jordanian Arab. Bonesmen traditionally are supposed to leave the room anytime a "barbarian" (i.e., non-Bonesman) even mentions the name of the society or the numeral by which it is also sometimes known, 322, In A Charge to Keep, George W. is dutifully reticent, writing, "My senior year I joined Skull and Bones, a secret society, so secret I can't say anything more. It was a chance to make fourteen new friends."*

*The Skull and Bones initiation ritual—which appears never to have been fully and credibly penetrated by outsiders—does seem to involve some hocus-pocus ceremonials, but almost certainly not of any genuinely "spiritual" significance. It focuses on stripping initiates of any pretense or barriers of reserve about who they really are—a process that, in its turn, is likely to reinforce a sense of bonding among the fifteen "knights," as the newly tapped members are called, for the rest of their time at Yale and, for many Bonesmen, for the rest of their lives.*

*In his important 1951 book, God and Man at Yale, William F.*

Buckley, a Bonesman, denounced the socialist and atheistic leanings of much of the Yale faculty, even as several bonesmen from earlier classes vigorously defended the university against Buckley's attack. They included McGeorge Bundy and none other than William Sloan Coffin, later to be a thorn in the flesh of freshman George W. In effect, if there had ever been some nefarious, anti-Christian plot cooked up within the "Tomb," as the Skull and Bones building is called, it does not seem to have made much imprint in the Bonesmen of the late twentieth century.

As for George W. Bush, Bonesmen reportedly never saw him return to the Tomb for reunions or dinners, unlike his father who was at a Bones Tomb celebration as recently as 1998. Though George W. certainly kept in touch with some of his fellow Bonesmen, he has affected an almost insouciant unawareness of the institution's recent or current activities. According to Alexandra Robbins in her informative history of Skull and Bones George W. responded to a question about Bones by ABC News by saying "Does it still exist? The thing is so secret that I'm not even sure it still exists."

Bush's ambivalence about Skull and Bones probably is in part explained by the general suspicion of alleged East Coast supra-governmental conspiracies against American freedoms concocted by Ivy League elitists like Bonesmen, by members of the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations, or by the Trilateral Commission. When Bush Senior was running for U.S. Senate from Texas in 1964, critics said that he seemed tarred with the brush of East Coast elitism. The same charge—hardly possibly to disprove—was later to be used against George W. when he ran unsuccessfully for Congress in Texas in 1978.

There are two other possible explanations for Bush's seeming lack of interest in the secret society of his senior year at Yale. One is that his own Christian experience later in life, an experience replete with deep and lasting spiritual relationships over many years with close Christian friends,

*has eclipsed whatever friendship bonding occurred at Skull and Bones. The second is George W.'s apparently lifelong distaste for the pretensions of much of the predominantly liberal world-view of many of the students and faculty on Ivy League campuses.*

*"I always felt that people on the East Coast tended to feel guilty about what they were given," he told an interviewer years later. "Like, 'I'm rich; they're poor.' Or 'I went to Andover and got a great education, and they didn't.' I was never one to feel guilty. I feel lucky. People who feel guilty react like guilty people."*

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## **"Where does the Bible Talk About Unmarried Sex?"**

**I am a single Christian and I do believe in abstaining from sex until marriage. But I have a friend who is also a Christian and is having sex outside of marriage with her boyfriend (both are single).**

**I have always believed that the Bible teaches that you shouldn't have sex outside of marriage, but when I went to look for scriptures that teach this, I couldn't find any. I found plenty about not sleeping with relatives and animals and such, but nothing about unmarried sex.**

**Can you tell me where the Bible teaches that you shouldn't have sex outside of marriage?**

*Kerby Anderson answered:*

**I typed in the word "premarital sex" on the Probe web site**

(www.probe.org) and got back 16 matches. I might encourage you to look at my article on "[Teen Sexual Revolution](#)" along with the article by Ray Bohlin on "[Sexual Purity](#)" and the article by Jerry Solomon and Jimmy Williams on "[Why Wait Until Marriage](#)."

Perhaps the reason you are having difficulty finding verses on premarital sex is due to the fact that the Bible uses words or phrases like fornication, sexual immorality, or youthful lusts. If you put these terms in a search engine, you will find numerous verses in the Bible dealing with premarital sex.

Thanks for writing, and stay pure.

Kerby Anderson  
Probe Ministries

*Dr. Ray Bohlin answered:*

The term fornication, or in more modern translations, sexual immorality, simply refers to all sexual activity outside of marriage. Below is the first paragraph under "fornication" in the *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1975, Vol. 2, p. 601:

"Four different NT meanings are obvious. 1. In 1 Corinthians 7:2 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Paul is warning unmarried people about the temptation to fornication. In both cases fornication refers to voluntary sexual intercourse of an unmarried person with anyone of the opposite sex. The meaning is specific and restricted. In four other passages fornication is used in a list of sins which includes "adultery" (Matt. 15:19; Mark 7:21; 1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19). Since adultery involves a married person, the meaning of fornication in these passages is specific and restricted, involving unchastity of unmarried people."

Later the same entry relates,

“Jesus related fornication to adultery when he said “Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully (i.e. with a thought of sexual intercourse) has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:28). R. C. H. Lenski interprets the “everyone” to include both men and women and both married and unmarried. Thus Jesus was saying that sexual intercourse of unmarried people (fornication) is as evil as extra-marital sexual intercourse (adultery).”

The entry closes with this statement:

“Those who state that the NT makes no reference to permarital sex relations and gives no advice on the personal and social problems involved are overlooking the NT use and meaning of the word fornication, esp. in such passages as 1 Corinthians 7:2 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3.”

Please also note that Paul closes his discussion of sexual immorality in 1 Cor. 7 with verses 8 and 9. “But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I (verse 8). But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn (verse 9).” I’d say he felt rather strongly about it.

While the Scripture is very clear concerning the immorality and sin of pre-marital sex, these verses also need to be shared with humility and gentleness with the end of restoring a brother and sister in Christ, not driving them away. The truth of God’s word convicts on its own. A spirit of judgment can often be counterproductive.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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# “What Are the Differences Between Catholics and Christians?”

Dear Mrs. Bohlin,

I have read your article on the [“Six World Religions”](#) with great interest. I am sure you receive many emails, so I will keep this short. Could you please send me your thoughts on the essential differences between Catholics and Christians. My son is about to marry a Catholic, and I cannot fully justify to him my concerns.

Well, you’re asking the right person, since my husband and I were both raised Catholic! Of course, there’s a difference in expression between U.S. Catholicism and elsewhere in the world, but the basic beliefs are the same.

First of all, you should know that there are born-again Christian believers in the Catholic church. You should also know that the gospel really is there in the Mass, and in the catechism teachings that children and converts receive. Ray and I are grateful for the foundation of spiritual truth that we received from the Catholic church: that God is one God in three Persons, that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died on the cross for the sins of the world and was raised on the third day, and that He’s coming back.

What we DIDN’T receive was the personal aspect: that we needed to *personally* receive the grace-gift of salvation. We were taught, instead, that being baptized a Catholic was enough to bring us into God’s family. We were taught that Jesus opened the door to heaven, so to speak, but it was our responsibility and our good works that would get us there. So it was Jesus PLUS our good works that might result in salvation. But there was no assurance of salvation, just a vague hope that our good

deeds would outweigh our bad deeds when we died.

If I were you, I would gently and lovingly have a conversation with your future daughter-in-law, and ask her the great question, "If you were to die tonight, and you were to stand at the gates of heaven, and God said, 'Why should I let you into my heaven,' what would you say?"

If she says anything other than, "Because Jesus died on the cross for my sins," then she is trusting in her own self or in the Catholic Church, and not Christ. You might ask her why Jesus had to die. If we could do *anything* to get us into heaven, why would Jesus have to die a horrible death? Wouldn't that be a terrible waste?

Sometimes people will say, "Because I'm a Catholic." We were taught that salvation is only found in the Catholic church. I would respond, "Where does that idea (that being a baptized Catholic is a "free pass" to heaven) come from? How do you know it's true?" Claiming to be a member of any organization is just another way of trusting in human merit and good works instead of what Christ has done FOR us.

I think that a lot of Catholics actually believe that it's "Jesus plus me." If you were to ask her, "Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God? Do you believe He died on the cross for YOUR sins?" you might discover she has intellectual assent to the truth of the gospel. You might then want to gently explain that in the Bible, God calls us to actively TRUST in Christ and not just believe in our heads what is true. The demons, after all, also believe that Jesus is God's son and that He died for mankind, but that doesn't change their hearts.

One other thing. If and when, Lord willing, you have grandchildren, you will have some marvelous opportunities to teach the truth about Jesus to them, and it's amazing how parents can be reached through their children. Pray a lot, and ask the Holy Spirit to give you a green light to talk about

spiritual things for which He has prepared her heart. The Lord bless you and keep you!

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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## **“Is Lust Justification for Divorce?”**

I have a question. In Matthew 5:27ff. Jesus says that if a man lusts after a woman he has already committed adultery in his heart. Then, in v. 32 Jesus indicates that sexual immorality is the only justification for divorce. Is, then, lust justification for divorce? If so, what degree of lust is justification for divorce? Or, if it is not Jesus' intention to allow divorce for lust, please substantiate this position. Thanks.

Good question!

The bottom line answer to your question is no, lust is not grounds for divorce.

If you look at the context of the Lord Jesus' remarks about lust in Matthew 5, what you see is that He is “pulling back the rug,” so to speak, on outward sins to expose the underlying problem, which is sin in the heart. Murder doesn't start with murder; it starts with sinful anger in the heart (vv. 21-22). Don't be as concerned about the proper words in taking an oath; be people of such integrity that your simple word alone will suffice and no oath is necessary (vv. 33-37). Instead of carefully measuring the retaliatory consequences of an offense against you, give in and don't fight back (vv.



38-42). Instead of loving your neighbor and hating your enemy, love your enemies and pray for them (vv. 43-44).

The main point to all of these illustrations in the Sermon on the Mount is that a sinful heart lurks behind every offensive action. By shining the light of His perfection on our dark hearts, the Lord very effectively makes us aware of how short we fall of God's standard of righteousness. That's why we need to receive Christ's righteousness, since we have none of our own.

So the point about lust is made to expose the sinful motives of the heart, showing that even before one actually enters into an adulterous relationship, there's a heart problem that's just as serious in God's eyes as acting on it.

But if the Lord had meant to set lust as an acceptable ground for divorce, He would have said so. He doesn't play games with us to keep us guessing about what pleases Him. Personally, this makes sense to me, since a person can fall into the sin of lust for another person, and repent and receive forgiveness, without his/her spouse ever getting hurt. They don't ever need to know about it; it's an internal war of the one struggling with lust. As sinful creatures, we are going to struggle with various sins all our lives. But there's still a big difference *in consequence* between fighting the internal battle against the sin nature and going out and *acting* on it.

Furthermore, engaging in sexual immorality is an external act that can be proven by witnesses and/or testimony. Experiencing lust is internal, and can only be judged by another without any proof. Only God can know whether someone truly lusts or not. Kind of hard to hold up in a court of law!

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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# “Why Don't You Appreciate Herbal Medicine?”

I read an article written by Mr. Zukeran on [alternative medicine](#) and was wondering just how much time he really put into researching herbs and ancient medicine before he began to write. It sounds like the typical raised eyebrow “suspicious of anything that doesn't come out of the AMA or Good Housekeeping Magazine” approach.

There is a tremendous amount of research that has been done and is being done with herbs, and Mr. Zukeran's dismissal of herbal therapy implies a lack of scholarship, not a good apologetic. I'm a Christian and have a great appreciation for herbal medicine as well as other alternative approaches. I owe my life today to a diet change that included a vegetarian way of life for nearly a year, along with herbal therapy. I also have in my library The Yellow Emperors Book on Internal Medicine, along with Hyppocrates works, and simply because one came from Greece and one came from China I do not necessarily reject the ancient Chinese approach any more than I would reject Pythagorus or Archimedes mathematical axioms and theorems simply because Pythagorus and Archimedes belonged to “Mystery Schools” and were pagans. Their mathematical formulas and proofs form much of the basis for modern science and engineering.

You seem to be throwing the baby out with the bathwater in your blanket condemnation of a vast area of human research in the area of medicine that spans many thousands of years in an attempt to stay orthodox in your religious views.

I notice that Mr. Zukeran has a degree in theology. That does not necessarily qualify him as an expert in alternative

**medicine. You would do better in defending the gospel to carefully research your topics, and have someone who is well qualified in an area to write on that topic, instead of someone who demonstrates a manifest lack of expertise on the subject.**

Thanks for reading the article and your comments. I stated in my article, "... complementary therapies provide important insights into maintaining good health." I also stated in my section on Herbal Medicines this: "Some herbal treatments are costly and provide no enhancement. However, some herbal supplements have shown some promising benefits. Herbal treatments may prove to be helpful additions to conventional treatments. Herbs like ginseng have shown to be beneficial for Type 2 diabetes, for example. Herbal preparations are sometimes less potent in dosage than prescription drugs and may be less toxic." So I do not dismiss herbal therapies, I state there are some that have shown to be beneficial while there are others that are costly and have not proven to fulfill the promises they make. I think you would agree with that.

In 1998 Representative Tim Harkin passed a bill to enlarge the National Institute for Health Office to include a department to study alternative medicines. Dr. Steven Straus was placed in charge of the department. Dr. Eisenberg at Harvard Medical School also has created a department to study alternative Medicine as well. So the AMA, American Medical Association and other government research groups are doing research on Alternative Medicines. I think a person would be wise to look at their conclusions when deciding on an alternative treatment. Much research has been done and as I stated in my article, some herbs were shown to be beneficial while others were found not to be. There is very little proof that life energy therapies are beneficial.

It is true, my degree is in theology and I focus on the theological and worldview aspects of alternative medicine. I

rely on medical experts for the medical studies. I have interviewed one of the leading authorities on my radio show on this subject, Dr. Donal O'Mathuna, whose conclusions I repeat. Let's not throw out the good, let's just be discerning. I am sure you would agree with my conclusion, that there are some benefits to alternative medicine but there are also alternative therapies that are not beneficial and should be avoided. A Christian should be discerning when looking at alternative Medicine.

Patrick Zukeran  
Probe Ministries

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## **“Do People Who Commit Suicide Go to Hell?”**

**A young man I know committed suicide. Someone remarked that if he was troubled that day, he is *really* troubled now because the Bible says he is in hell forever. Is this true? If so, can you give me Bible references to support it, likewise if it is false?**

That is NOT what the Bible says. That's what a lot of people think, but God isn't one of them.

Trusting Christ is the only criterion for determining whether one goes to heaven or hell. If the young man had trusted Christ and committed suicide as the only way he could think of to make the pain stop, then he is with the Lord because of the security of the believer. For instance, Rom. 8:38-39 says,

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, nether the present nor the future, nor any

powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Nothing—including our own acts such as suicide—can separate believers (the context of Paul’s letter) from God’s love.

Consider also John 10: 28-19, which shows we are DOUBLY safe:

“I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”

Not even ourselves.

If the young man had not trusted Christ, then unfortunately he is in hell, but not because of suicide: it would be because of his refusal to believe in and entrust himself to Jesus.

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin  
Probe Ministries

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## **“How Do I Help This Young Teenage Wiccan?”**

My husband and I are taking care of a 15-year old girl while her dad and step-mom (who are Christians) are on vacation. However, she just recently moved in with them. Previously she was living with her mom in another state. We were discussing Christianity with her last night and asked her what she believed in. She stated she believed in reincarnation and

Wicca. Also, she doesn't believe in Satan which is really a contradiction. She says she went to the public library and checked out books on Wicca and studied them and she can cast spells. Of course, her dad and step-mom are not aware of her beliefs or that she practices Wicca. I searched your website using the word "Wicca" and read all of the articles so I understand some of what it is. However, I'm not sure what approach would be effective in ministering to her about Christianity and where to point out that Wicca is a false-religion. Are there other articles on your website with more information on Wicca specifically and how to minister to someone with these beliefs? What suggestions do you have? What scriptures can I point her to?

Whoa. You DO have your work cut out for you, don't you?

If I were you, I'd go beneath the girl's Wiccan beliefs to the heart issues that drew her to Wicca in the first place. Wicca is appealing because it offers the lure of personal power, and it is particularly appealing to those who are feeling powerless. Which would seem to describe this young girl whose parents have divorced and she's being shuttled between them. . .? Personal power is the draw to be able to cast spells for those who perceive themselves as personally powerless.

Since she's a teenager, she's not interested in lectures, but longs to be heard and listened to. She's dying for real conversation with someone who honestly cares about her. So I would ask her, "Tell me about what drew you to Wicca in the first place. How did you hear about it? Tell me about the spells and why that's interesting to you."

Ask the Lord to open opportunities for you to tell her about what the true God is like—tenderly loving and kind. Wiccan teachers tend to bash the image they hold of the Christian God, not understanding who He really is. People who are drawn to a loving, kind goddess are really looking for the feminine side of God, which we can see in the Psalms and in Jesus'

lament over Jerusalem. You may be able to ask her about her understanding of the Lord Jesus, and if she's open, you might be able to tell her about not only His personality and how He proved His love for her, but—amazingly—He promised (and delivered!) personal, supernatural power for those who trust Him! There is FAR more power in Christ living His life through us, empowering us supernaturally, than any spell or charm in any witchcraft book ever penned.

It's not surprising that she doesn't believe in Satan; Wicca doesn't believe in an evil entity. It's really about pantheism, with a non-personal deity that permeates everything. Unfortunately, not believing in Satan doesn't keep him from attacking people. Those who refuse to acknowledge a personal devil are more vulnerable to spiritual warfare than anybody.

I found a couple of articles on the web you may find helpful. The first is from Leadership U., Probe's sister site, on teen witchcraft.

<http://www.leaderu.com/theology/teenwitchcraft.html>

The second is from the Christian Research Institute on "Witnessing to Witches."

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Estates/6535/wittowit.htm>

I do hope this helps. I pray God will empower your words and let her see His love flowing to her through you.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin

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