

“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 a 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

“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

“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

"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
Probe Ministries

"How Do I Show Jehovah's

Witnesses That Hell is Real?"

I'm having problems dealing with some questions given to me by Jehovah's Witnesses. Can you please help me?

The J.W. asked me the following: "Paul had a vision of Christ, right? So if Christ is God, then why does Paul say no one has seen God when he himself saw Christ and fell off the horse?"

How do I show Jehovah's Witnesses that hell is a real place of torment and fire? They insist that the soul dies and that everyone goes to the grave, known as Sheol or hell.

How do I show to Jehovah's Witnesses that more people go to heaven than the 144,000 people of the book of Revelation?

JW's are probably referring to John 1:18 which states, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only..." What this means is that no one has ever seen God in His full glory and splendor. Throughout the Bible, God has revealed himself in temporary, physical and veiled form which we can withstand. These are called theophanies. Such examples are Isaiah 6, Exodus 3, and Genesis 15. Jesus is God the Son clothed in flesh which Philippians 2:5-11 makes clear. So although we have not seen God in the fulness of His glory, we have seen temporary theophanies of God. Paul saw the glorified Christ and what happened? He was blinded. To see God in the fulness of glory would destroy us. Paul saw, although not in his total glory, the glorified Christ. That is why he was blinded.

How do I show Jehovah's Witnesses that hell is a real place of torment and fire? They insist that the soul dies and that everyone goes to the grave, known as Sheol or hell.

First of all, when one dies, his soul exists after the body dies. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:6 that we prefer to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord. In Matthew

10:28 Jesus states, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell." So there is such thing as a soul that survives the body. Hell is a real place. In Luke 16:19-31 Jesus tells the story of Lazarus and the rich man. JW's will say this is a parable. Even if it is a parable, it still tells a story about what is true. What does the story symbolize? Their explanation is not consistent with the text at all.

How do I show to Jehovah's Witnesses that more people go to heaven than the 144,000 people of the book of Revelation?

Concerning the idea that 144,000 go to heaven, ask this question. The 144,000 come from the "Sons of Israel" or the "Tribes of Israel." A word study shows that when that term is used, it is referring to literal Jews. This would eliminate a vast majority of JW's. Also Revelation 7:9 shows a multitude from every tribe and tongue. So heaven includes more than 144,000.

Hope this helps.

Patrick Zukeran
Probe Ministries

**"You are Intolerant,
Arrogant, Loud-Mouthed
Bullies"**

Re: Your article on [Wicca](#). I'm using the same measure that so called "Christians" use to condemn others: the Bible. I do not

see better people here. I see a bewildering growth of intolerance, and what is worse, of arrogance. My recent contacts with "Christians" have exposed me to a movement of arrogant, loud mouth bullies. I'm am not judging your heart Sir, but your aggression towards other groups. Christians are not to judge others, that is God's job. Christians are to love their neighbor as they do themselves. They are to hate what is "bad", not who is "Bad".

I think that Mr Grimassi's letter shows that he is a better "Christian" than you are Sir. I'm not a Wiccan, but from what I have seen from your narrow side, I would rather involve myself with the type of gentleness displayed by this Wiccan man, than with the spiteful arrogant status-worshiping bullies who call themselves "Christian."

Please take an honest look at what you have done. You begin your letter by complaining about the behavior of so-called Christians (who may, of course, not really be Christians at all). But why should you consider yourself justified in writing such hateful things about Christians? After all, even if some so-called Christians have behaved badly, why should you have the right to behave the same way?

Just look at some of the hateful things you've said about Christians in your letter: You refer to Christians as intolerant, arrogant, loud-mouthed bullies (but I personally know many Christians who are not like this at all). You conclude by lumping all Christians together and denouncing them as "spiteful arrogant status-worshiping bullies".

Then you say that you're not judging my heart, but my aggression toward other groups. But what is it that you're doing? Aren't you demonstrating the same aggression toward Christians which you say I'm demonstrating toward Wiccans? Indeed, isn't your unprovoked aggression against me even WORSE than my alleged aggression against Wiccans?

Actually, I sincerely bear no ill will toward Wiccans at all. Not the slightest bit. Raven Grimassi and I had a very cordial e-mail exchange about my article. Like you, I had a very high opinion of the way he expressed himself in his letter to me. He was very kind and courteous in every respect. And I did my uttermost to be just as kind and courteous to him.

Now about judging, it's important to understand that Jesus does not condemn all human judgments. If you carefully read Matt. 7:1-5, you will see that what Jesus warns against is hypocrisy. As Jesus says in v. 5: "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." The assumption, of course, is that once the plank is removed, the brother will see clearly enough to judge his brother rightly and without hypocrisy. Indeed, if Jesus forbid all human judgment, it would be impossible to administer church discipline against sinning Christians within the church (something which the Bible clearly commands us to do).

But that's not all. The Bible also urges Christians "to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). Paul tells Titus that church leaders "must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (Titus 1:9). These passages tell us that truth in doctrine is important and that we need to stand up for it, even refuting those who oppose it. Does this make Christians arrogant? Does this make Christians spiteful bullies? What is my defense against such accusations? Simply this.

What if Christianity is true? What if, as Jesus Himself claimed, there is no other way to God but through Him (John 14:6)? What if people who reject Christ, or who attempt to find salvation through some other religion, really will spend eternity in Hell? Would it be truly loving not to warn people of this potential tragedy? Would it really be loving not to

attempt to persuade them to embrace Christ while they still have opportunity? Would it really be loving to say nothing at all? For my part, I honestly don't think so.

Our ministry exists to share with others the arguments, evidence and reasonableness of biblical Christianity and to try to convince them that no other religion will ultimately save their souls. If Jesus really was who He claimed to be, then (in my opinion) it would be very unloving indeed to simply let people perish and not try to convince them to give their lives to Christ before the day of final judgment. The Bible warns us that we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and that those who have rejected Him will perish eternally. Frankly, I don't want this to happen to anyone.

I will pray for you.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“How Should a Christian View Civil Disobedience?”

How should a Christian view civil disobedience? Doesn't Paul's command to submit to governmental authority in Romans 13 preclude civil disobedience?

As I have said in [my article](#) on the subject, we are to obey government (Romans 13). But that is NOT an absolute command. If there was never a time when we would disobey government, then government would be God.

So the key question is *when* do we disobey government. I believe that the Scriptures teach that we obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29) when there is a direct, specific command given by government that would force us to disobey a direct command of Scripture. The Bible provides cases of this in the Old Testament (Hebrew midwives, many instances in the book of Daniel, etc.) and the New Testament (Acts 5).

The historical cases of Corrie Ten Boom, Rosa Parks, and Martin Luther King would all fit as examples. Erwin Lutzer (*Measuring Morality*) and Norman Geisler (*Christian Ethics*) deal with the issue of civil disobedience and obedience to Scripture in their books, if you would like to read more on the subject.

Your question about Romans 13 is more difficult. I take it that the Apostle Paul is giving a general principle rather than a universal pronouncement. Usually it is the case that “rulers hold no terror for those who do right.” But that is not always the case. There certainly are (and have been) tyrannical leaders.

It’s instructive, though, that Paul says this at a time when a corrupt leader (Nero) was in office. If nothing else it should remind us how much worse government leaders can be. Nevertheless, we are to obey those in authority (Romans 13) and pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2). Just as there are exceptions to total obedience (civil disobedience), so there are exceptions to leaders who “hold no terror.”

I might also encourage you to revisit [my article on the Probe web site](#) and a recent Breakpoint commentary by Chuck Colson on “Caesar and Christ” (www.breakpoint.org). I hope this helped a bit. God bless you.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

“How Can Computers Be Used to Share the Gospel?”

I teach technology in a private Christian school. I am putting together a list of How Computers Can Be Used To Share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Any help or insights you might have would be greatly appreciated.

Since we are really an apologetics ministry and not evangelistic, we're not really in that loop a whole lot. I would suggest you go to Google.com and type in the keywords “internet evangelism” and follow some of those links.

One thing that does come to mind is the fact that almost 100% of young people are online, and they are looking for relationships, even cyber-relationships, and looking for spirituality. So sharing the gospel in the context of developing online friendships in chat rooms (although one has to be waaaay careful there), online discussion groups, and blogging sites (weblogs. . . sort of personal diaries: see xanga.com) is a good strategy for sharing the gospel online.

I turned to our great friend of Probe, Keith Seabourn, Chief Technology Officer of Campus Crusade for Christ, for help in answering this question.

I have been using computers and the internet to share Jesus for over 10 years. We in Campus Crusade have found it to be extremely effective. I have several suggestions.

1. Visit Tony Whitaker's excellent Online Evangelism guide at www.web-evangelism.com/

2. For stories and statistics over several years, visit my personal website at www.seabourn.org. Specifically, visit my

newsletter archives on that site. Many newsletters tell stories. For compilations of responses and statistics, see the End of Year Reports for 1999 or 2001.

3. For a broad overview of what Campus Crusade is doing to use the Passion of the Christ movie for online evangelism, see www.seabourn.org/newsletters/0401/thepassion.html.

These are some initial ways for you to explore. There are many, many more.

Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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“Where Was God Between Cain and Abel, and Noah?”

I am conversing with a Wiccan. One of her reasons for turning away from Christianity is that God was silent after dealing with Cain and Abel up to the time of Noah and the flood. For nearly two thousand years pagan civilizations thrived, say in Sumeria and Mesopotamia. Where was this monotheistic God at this time in history? In her mind this God is uninvolved and therefore heartless for bringing a flood. Where in the Bible does it say God was involved with man during this time? I must say this got me thinking. Can you please help me out here?

God was indeed involved in the affairs of His creation between the time of Cain and Abel and the Flood. The clearest example

of His involvement (in a clearly miraculous sense) can be found in Genesis 5:24 – “And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him” (see also Heb. 11:5). Clearly, such an event requires Divine intervention.

Obviously, this one example is enough to prove God’s involvement in the affairs of men and the world between the time of Cain and Abel and the Flood. But God is actually constantly involved in the affairs of the world. In the first place, the world only exists because God created it (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16; etc.). And the universe is continuously upheld in existence by the word and power of God (Heb. 1:3). Thus, God’s involvement with His creation is continuous. And God has revealed Himself to man not only in the Bible and Christ (special revelation), but also in creation (Psalm 19:1-4; Rom. 1:18-23), providential acts of kindness (Acts 14:17), and conscience (Rom. 2:14-15) – all examples of what is called general revelation. Such revelation is also continuous and ongoing to all men, at all times, in all places.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

“How Do We Use Critical Thinking with the Bible?”

I was involved in a religious cult for a number of years and am still seeking. I’ve done lots of bible reading and have shared thoughts with many, many people. After reading some info on your site, I was left wondering: If a person takes the

bible as the written word, how can it be that critical thinking would have to be applied? Does it not say "My sheep know my voice?"

My chief concern is that it would seem the most simple-minded person should be able to hear the truth and recognize it. Otherwise, truth is only for the intelligent. Does it really need to be that complicated?

Dear _____,

First of all, praise God for bringing you out of the cult! A dear friend of mine is still working through the lies that marked her life because of a cult's influence on her entire family. I am so glad you have supernatural assistance available to you for working through the differences between the lies and the truth, the deception and the light, just for the asking!

I think of critical thinking as a filter through which we examine truth claims. We ask questions of people and writings to find out if they are reliable—questions like,

- *What do you mean by that? (Defining terms)*
- *Where do you get your information?*
- *How do you know this is true?*
- *What if you're wrong?*

When it comes to the Bible, which claims to be the very word of God, these questions are still helpful. "What do you mean by that?" is an important question to ask when we come to the text. We need to discern whether something is literal or figurative, historical or poetic or prophetic. That's why it's so important to read and study the WHOLE Bible and not just verses here and there. The writers (and God inspiring the writers) had a definite meaning in mind when they wrote down the biblical text, and it's important for us to bring our

understanding in line with their intent. For instance, when Jesus said, "I am the vine," did He mean He was green and stringy? Or was He speaking in figurative language? When we read the rest of John and see that He drew analogies a lot to help us understand spiritual truth, we can see that He wasn't speaking literally at this point.

The answer to the question, "Where do you get your information?" is that the Bible is revelation. God speaks to us from "outside the box," so to speak, from His throne in heaven to us down on earth, giving us perspective and understanding we could never figure out on our own. The Bible claims to be God's own thought, feelings and words, and the worldview that results from reading the Bible is more consistent with reality than any other worldview.

When we look at the reliability of the biblical documents, we can see that we can trust that the Bible we have today has been reliably handed down from the original documents (or very very close). The support for the Bible being the actual word of God is so strong that it answers the question "How do you know this is true?" We have several articles on the issue of biblical reliability that I invite you to read and enjoy:

[Are the Biblical Documents Reliable?](#)

[Authority of the Bible](#)

[How I Know Christianity is True](#)

I think you make an excellent point about even the most simple-minded person being able to recognize truth and respond to it. That's one of the things I personally love about a relationship with Christ and reading and studying the Bible: God has communicated to us very clearly on the most important issues, while still tantalizing us with the unfathomable depths of His mind and spirit to keep us interested for all eternity.

The fact that mentally retarded children can understand that Jesus is God's Son, He loves them and came to die on the cross in their place, and then choose to trust Him as Savior and Lord, shows me that the most basic and essential truths are accessible to everyone.

Thanks for writing!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries