

“I’m Depressed; What Causes Happiness?”

I am depressed right now and so is my friend. What causes happiness? I don’t want the chemical description, but what stuff, like situations and actions, causes happiness? I know that the Bible says that just because we are Christians, doesn’t mean we won’t suffer. But how would I get out of depression? I don’t want an answer like read your Bible and pray, because I do that every night, and here I am still depressed. There’s no fun in life anymore, and somewhere along the line, I lost the fire of the Spirit. I wish I could get it back.

I realize yours is a very serious question, and having walked through deep depression with our son several years ago, I would be the LAST person to give you the cliché of “read your Bible and pray more.”

Sometimes, depression is caused by a brain chemical imbalance. In that case, medications are the best way to adjust the brain chemistry. Sometimes, depression is caused by unconfessed sin. That needs to be faced, repented of, and confessed, both to God and to other people. Sometimes, depression is caused by loss and sorrow. The way out of that kind of depression is to embrace the grieving process. That means facing and feeling the pain of loss and grief so that you can let go of it. (That also means crying, yelling, journaling one’s feelings, or all of the above.)

One very wise person has said that an intrinsic part of happiness is having something to look forward to. I have found this to be true.

So what causes happiness? Generally speaking, it’s:

- cultivating a positive attitude (This is admittedly harder

for people with melancholy temperaments.)

- not having anything sad going on
- the presence of something worth anticipating
- having friends; healthy relationships is an important part of happiness

And probably the most important thing I have to offer you is the suggestion that you cultivate a grateful heart. People who get in the habit of looking for and expressing gratitude for the small and large blessings of life find themselves in better physical and emotional health. One of the best things you can do for yourself right now is to invest in a small notebook and write in your “Gratitude Journal” every single night before going to bed. Write down ten things you are grateful for, things in which God showed you He loves you, things that went well during the day. Things like parts of your body that work and aren’t in pain. Things that are easy to take for granted but which you would REALLY miss if they went away tomorrow, like your bed, running water, electricity, heating and air conditioning, having transportation, paved roads, lungs that breathe for you without having to think about it. . . you get the picture?

Usually, I suggest people write down three things, but if you’re really struggling with depression, ten will help more. It will help you focus on the many, many good things in your life instead of focusing on the flatness and darkness of your depression.

Let me know several months down the road how you’re doing, OK?

Sue Bohlin

“What Do You Think of Willow Creek?”

What do you think of the Willow Creek church model that so many churches are following?

Thank you for your thoughtful question. It is a common question today in light of the success that Willow Creek has enjoyed in the Chicago area and the emulation of that model around the world. The same concerns have arisen around Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church in California. (He is also the author of the best-seller *The Purpose Driven Life*.) Before I go much further in my response to your question I should let you know that I am an elder in a church that, in general, looks favorably on what these churches are attempting to do, although I have reservations about some of the particulars in their implementation. With that said, I should add that I believe that it is unwise to ever try to replicate what another church is doing in a wholesale manner. This indicates a dependency on technique over trust in God’s Spirit to build His church in a given location.

As is usually the case, this issue has to do with deeper concerns than just the music that is heard on Sunday or the preaching style of the pastor. The question at the heart of the issue is whether or not God has ordained both the *forms* of worship, teaching, and church structure, or only the *functions* of the New Testament church. I tend to think that scripture focuses on the functions of the church and that we are free to establish culturally appropriate forms to accomplish them with. As we like to say at our church, we are not a seeker church, a Willow Creek church, a charismatic church, or a Bible church. We are a church that incarnates Christ in the town of McKinney, TX. Our goal is to help people follow Christ, and we will use music, teaching styles and programs that accomplish that task. Our teaching will be biblical and

challenging, touching both the hearts and minds of our congregation. We desire to use the best music, both old and new, in genres that speak to the people walking through our doors.

The outcome over the last seven years has been encouraging. People are trusting in Christ and being baptized, they are growing in knowledge and grace, they are giving sacrificially and becoming involved in missions, and they are reaching out to the community in significant ways. Our numerical growth has been significant, but the spiritual growth of individuals is what has encouraged me the most.

If you are interested in reading more about the relationship between form and function within the New Testament church, let me recommend a book that might be helpful: *Sharpening The Focus Of The Church* by Gene Getz (Victor Books, 1984).

Sincerely,

Don Closson
Probe Ministries

“There Is No Evidence for God or the Bible”

I read your article about the [evidence for God's existence](#). Although it was an interesting article, I didn't really see any evidence of God's existence in the article. I am a believer in God's existence. However, my belief is strictly faith based. I suppose it is possible that God does not exist. I choose to believe that he does. There are many things in the world we live in and our Universe that are truly amazing and

unexplainable. But just because something is strange, amazing, awesome, mind boggling or unexplainable, does not mean it is evidence of God's existence.

Just like the existence of God cannot be proven, the Holy Bible itself can not be proven that it is the inspired word of God. There simply is no evidence. It is faith that people have in that it is the word of God. It can never be proven. This is very hard for many Christians to accept, but it is the undeniable truth. You believe because you choose to believe and for no other reason.

I think perhaps you misunderstand the difference between evidence and proof. I agree with you that we do not have proof of God's existence or that the Bible is the Word of God. However, what we do have is very powerful evidence that choosing to put our trust in God in His word is a reasonable choice.

Recently my husband was up on the roof of our house putting up Christmas lights. From inside the house, I heard noises above my head that sounded like footsteps. And when I looked out the window, I saw a man's shadow on the ground that indicated there was a person on the roof. Since Ray had told me he was going up on the roof, I believed he was up there. Could I prove it from inside the house? No, but it was completely reasonable for me to look at the evidence and conclude my husband was putting up Christmas lights.

Sometimes people look evidence full in the face and then deny it. Our founder, Jimmy Williams, is fond of telling the story of the man who went to a psychiatrist convinced that he was dead. The psychiatrist was unsuccessful at talking him out of his illusion. Finally he asked him, "Do dead men bleed?" The patient said no, they don't. The psychiatrist pulled out his Swiss army knife, reached over and nicked the man's finger. Amazed, the patient exclaimed, "Well, how about that! Dead men DO bleed!"

See the difference between evidence and proof?

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“Why Wouldn’t God Let Me Commit Suicide?”

Hi Sue,

I just read your article [Do People Who Commit Suicide Go to Hell?](#). I believe everything you say to be true and biblical...and then I get stuck.

I have bi-polar depression, I thank God that I am now stable, but last year there were many times when I seriously considered suicide. I believe in God, His grace, and Christ’s death for all sinners, and I believe, like Romans 8 says that we can never be separated from Him – but my one question is, “Why am I still here? Wouldn’t it have been/be much easier to die and be with Him in His glory for eternity?” I mean I’m not sure that the suffering is worth it...

I believe God kept me from suicide...but I still wonder if it’s so easy to be with Him (in death) then where’s the catch?

Dear _____,

Bless your heart. I have friends who are bipolar and we have gone through some DEEP depression with our son over this.

What’s the catch, you ask?

Well, to make what’s probably a weak analogy, are you familiar

with the NBA draft that has signed young basketball players just out of high school? Oh wait, I see you are in another country. Oh well—I bet you can appreciate it anyway. . . There is a promise of money and fame and glory for these young athletes, so why “waste” their time in college when they could be making big bucks playing basketball? Sounds good—only, they are too young to appreciate the maturing process that happens in college. So often, they crash and burn once they turn professional because they’re not ready. The trials of being a college student, it turns out, are deeply beneficial for maturity and character development; they prepare students for life as professional athletes.

Our life on earth isn’t a holding tank or a detention center where we impatiently wait out our time until we’re given a “green light” to die and go to heaven. (I know, it’s easy to think of it this way, particularly for sensitive people who really hate living in a fallen world.) God’s purpose in leaving us on earth once we are saved is to grow holiness and maturity and strength in us, a process that would be short-circuited by an early death. It would mean we enter heaven in a state of “arrested development,” so to speak. Since the scriptures speak of being given power, authority and responsibilities in heaven, the only place and time we have to develop our stewardship is here on earth.

I understand your feelings of not being sure if the suffering is worth it, but that’s because of not having an adequate view of God and of heaven and of your future, not to mention not understanding the value of suffering. (If I may be so bold as to recommend my own article on that subject. . . it’s the best thing I’ve ever written: [“The Value of Suffering.”](#))

Yes, it would be a lot easier to be in heaven than to continue to live in a fallen world and a fallen body on earth, but God isn’t into “easy,” God is passionately committed to fashioning us into the image of His Son. I’m afraid there are no shortcuts, but you can be assured that every difficult day you

endure, every trial and every heartache, is being used to achieve that "weight of glory" in you (2 Cor. 4:17). God never wastes suffering, not a scrap of it. He redeems all of it for His glory and our blessing. Every single tear you have shed is so precious to your heavenly Father that He has them stored in a heavenly bottle. He hasn't turned away or forgotten you.

_____, I pray you will know His comfort and peace like a warm blanket enveloping your soul.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

(Follow-up e-mail from Sue)

I have continued to think about your question and my answer, and the Lord put it on my heart to send you a P.S.

I have a young friend (early 20's) who attempted suicide several years ago but survived. She couldn't understand why God didn't just take her to heaven, either. Why wouldn't He honor her (seemingly) reasonable request to be with Him in glory?

Well, not too long after her suicide attempt she met a wonderful man, got married, and just had a precious little baby. On both her wedding day and then especially when she first held her newborn infant in her arms, she was overwhelmed with thanksgiving that God DIDN'T take her home to be with Him when she wanted it. She realized that God still had blessings to lavish on her that couldn't come in heaven. As a cystic fibrosis patient, she understands that she also has certain trials and pain ahead of her, but the joy far outshines the darkness.

This brings up one of answers to the question, What is the purpose of life? –For God to bring glory to Himself by lavishing His love and grace on us. All of creation, including

the unseen realities in the heavenlies, is given the opportunity to see evidence of God's character and heart as He pours out His blessings on the people He made in His image. And that's one of the reasons why so many people who have been tempted to kill themselves are prevented from doing so—because God still has blessings in store and we need to be HERE on earth to receive them.

Warmly,

Sue

“My Prof Says Jesus Never Intended to Form a New Church”

I am a Christian and I attend a public college. One of my professors told our class that Jesus was a Jew who never intended (desired) to form a new Church (apart from the Jewish synagogue). Is this true? What does it mean for Gentiles like me? I have always been taught that because Jesus came and died and was resurrected all people who accept Him can enter into the kingdom? I believe God exists and I believe Jesus Christ truly was the Son of God, but I want to be able to justify my beliefs.

I'm glad you're thinking about these things and not just letting them slip by or, even worse, simply accepting your professor's claims as truth just because he is a professor. I'm curious to know what subject the professor teaches.

It's obviously true that Jesus was Jewish. God formed the

Jewish race through Abraham to be the people through whom He would send the Messiah, and Jesus was in the line of David, the great Jewish king.

Did Jesus intend to form a new church? Yes, but not as something totally new. It was to be, rather, the fulfillment of all that had gone before, sort of like a bulb coming to full flower. That it was linked with the past is seen in Matt. 5: 17,18 where Jesus said the Law had to be fulfilled, and in other passages in the Gospels which refer to the event of the coming of Christ as fulfilling some aspect of Old Testament teaching (8:17; 12:17ff; Mark 14:49; Luke 21:22ff), and in Heb. 1 where we read of the revelation of God to man, previously through the prophets, but now through the Son: one God revealing more of His plans by a different means. That it was new was indicated clearly by Jesus when He spoke of the Jews trying to put "old wine in new wineskins" (Matt. 9:17). In Mark 1: 27 we read where the Jews realized He brought "new teaching with authority." What was new was the fulfillment of the Law in Jesus and the revelation of salvation through faith in Him. The Law had been like a tutor teaching people about God and about our own sin and need for forgiveness. It was intended to prepare people for Christ (Gal. 3:24).

We Gentiles were always in God's mind for salvation through Christ (Matt. 12:18; cf. Isaiah 42:1). When Philip and Andrew brought a couple of Greeks to see Jesus, He said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Now the word was reaching the Gentiles, too. In Romans 9:30 through chap. 10, Paul talks about the Gospel reaching Gentiles as well as Jews.

My guess is that your professor would respond to this by arguing that the New Testament was written a long time after Christ, and that its message was constructed by people who wanted to make a new religion with Jesus as its founder. The case I have presented can only be argued from Scripture, for God's plan is made known through revelation; it cannot be reasoned to philosophically (although once known it can be

understood, perhaps, a little more thoroughly and clearly by reasoning). So if the professor denies the validity of the New Testament as the revealed Word of God, another argument must be made for that.

Here are links for a few articles on our Web site that will provide some help with that issue:

- [Are the Biblical Documents Reliable?](#)
- [Authority of the Bible](#)
- [The Christian Canon](#)

Thanks again for writing. I hope this helps.

Rick Wade

Probe Ministries

“I Need Resources for My Porn Addiction”

I need help with a problem. I need a number I can call—to a ministry that doesn't exist—from what I have been able to research. It might also be that I am, well, a little crazy to expect a match for myself. Is there a ministry that you all are aware of for people to get, like a prayer partner, when you are basically a sex(porn) addict? I can not deny my Lord, but I can't seem to control myself with this sin, without compounding it into a greater sin. I hope that doesn't sound too odd. Any help would be appreciated.

I do have some suggestions for you, and bless you for asking. Praise God, there IS help!!

Online, may I suggest these sites:

My favorite is Setting Captives Free, which has a blow-your-socks-off excellent online 60-day Bible study course (that is FREE!!) called "The Way of Purity." This Christ-centered course not only addresses the core issues that contribute to a porn addiction, but they provide online mentors for every student:

www.settingcaptivesfree.com

Dr. James Dobson provides resources here:

www.drjamesdobson.org/pornography-resources

Every Man's Battle has a great book, a great seminar to attend, and online support: www.everymansbattle.com

Help in Breaking Pornography Addiction: www.freed4life.me

One other resource: Neil Anderson has helped MANY men with sex addictions through his book *A Way of Escape*.

I pray for you, _____, that God will show you the way of escape through the glorious truth that your "old man" was crucified with Christ and the new you was raised with Him. . . and that the way out of this addiction is to stop trying harder (which I'm sure you are an expert at) and depend fully on Jesus to live HIS powerful, holy life through you. The way out of sexual addiction is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

I do hope this helps.

In His grip,

Sue Bohlin

Posted 2002; revised Aug. 2023

“How Are We to Give to the Poor?”

I am working on a topic for a Men’s breakfast on “giving to the poor.” Do you have any articles on this specific topic? I am not looking at giving in general—i.e. to the local church or biblical ministries. My topic is specifically “giving personally to the poor.” Are we as believers commanded to share with the poor? Is that any difference between poor “believers” and poor “non-believers”? Do we give to the poor to help them or to grow in our own walk with the Lord?

Thank you for your questions and for writing Probe.org. I want to speed you on your way with some input, links and rhetorical questions of my own to get you thinking. We pray your teaching / challenge / presentation goes well.

Your question, and it’s understandable why you ask it, kind of sets up a false dichotomy that we’re all prone to these days. The notion that teaching on giving in general is somehow separate from teaching on giving as individuals seems like an American, 21st-century presumption. Why wouldn’t one inform the other? The church, after all, is made up of Christians, one by one. So teaching to the church at large is teaching to each believer—the doing (giving) just sometimes gets done through an organization.

I don’t know of any overtly direct commands on giving in the New Testament. However, as you can see below, there is much taught on the topic, which takes generous giving of several kinds for granted.

That should free you up to teach or lead discussions, if you buy into it. Pray and pick from all of the teachings to share.

That's why I'm including some of the links on giving in general, below. Here's another good place to [start with Scriptures](#) and Bible study tools. Another set of Scriptures are [here](#).

What's more, it may be that your church has a very institutionalized way of giving. It could have big, church-wide or denominational programs for giving to the poor, to missions and other things commanded by God. This is okay in and of itself, but has a way of taking the individual out of the mix. Wasn't Jesus teaching disciples and followers rather than an institution? Too easy to cop out on our own responsibility or hide behind programs that way.

That's why the other links are there, about our own personal heart attitude in giving. Kerby Anderson talks about this and other issues in [A Biblical Perspective on Giving](#) (especially the final two parts).

Also, what about people in our lives who need help, who need money in particular? Yesterday, a friend of mine was in serious need. First, I bought him lunch. I spent hours driving on miles on icy roads to get a huge amount of money to lend him. Today, I gave a bit of cash. I kept remembering the Scripture "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (1 John 3:17). I am not like this—I always have better things to do and naturally wonder why people let things get so bad. The Spirit of God was leading me in God's gracious way to see a fellow believer and human made in His image which is so different than my own fleshly way. It was the most fulfilling day I've spent in months, by the way.

Your query about whether Christians are different than unbelievers in this sense leads me to say, yes, when it comes to choices in general, I need to prioritize the brother and sister over the stranger. Ideally, I help all of them or lead them to help. But God's Name and reputation is at stake,

according to John in his first epistle (1 John), when it comes to how we treat one another in the family of God. So again, fellow Christians are top priority—even while following after God's heart for the poor and oppressed in general.

What do you do when confronted with a panhandler or needy relative or friend? Not an easy answer. I need to ask myself:

- *IF I give, will I give gladly or grudgingly?*
- *How is God speaking to me these days about my own need to give?*
- *Am I giving already as a way of life or would it be just an impulse?*
- *Do I have anything to give the guy that will not put me or loved ones in great need or danger—where does wisdom come in to speak to me?*
- *Does he seem like he sincerely needs it or is he making a living on the street begging rather than working—is biblical discernment playing a role?*
- *Is it okay to ask that or do I feel guilty for even wondering?*

Believers have to wrestle with deep issues of Lordship (is God really in charge of my own money and things?) and stewardship (how exactly should I use what I've been given?—and it's ALL been given) and discernment (learning to know what's bad, questionable, good, better, best) well ahead of time or we're bobbing on the water when it comes to decisions in the moment.

Bottom line is: the heart of God is for the poor and oppressed. If I am seeking to love God and obey Him, to be like Him and reflect Him to others, I will care about the poor. If I honestly don't care, I need to ask Him to put that into my heart and change me. I need to meditate on all those Scriptures that tell me He cares for the poor and needy and wants me to. Meanwhile, I need to give by faith and participate in the changing.

Giving can look like writing a check to the Red Cross or, often better, a biblically-oriented relief group like Samaritan's Purse. Or it may be overtipping when witnessing to a waitstaff person. Or it could be just giving an (anonymous?) cash gift to someone who's hurting financially or who needs something they can't afford right now. It may be through the offering plate. Any way it's given, it needs to be out of a heart given over to God fully. This article offers good perspective on it: [Developing a Giving Heart](#) at Bible.org (note: this is part of a series that looks very promising to me on a trusted Web site).

These links may help as well:

- [Giving Can Improve Your Health; Science Says So](#) (*what's wrong w/it being good for us?*)
- [Charity and Compassion: Christianity Is Good for Culture](#) (*I can do my part to change culture, not just the one I'm helping right now*)
- ["What's the NT Understanding of Tithing?"](#)

I hope this helps. Please let me know how it goes if you get a chance, will you?

Blessings,

Byron Barlowe

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Why Didn't God Communicate to Us More Clearly?

Why is there so much confusion among believers and denominations? Why didn't God state everything in a simple, abridged manner to avoid this cluster of contradictory interpretations? This not only relates to young earth vs old earth, but on hundreds of doctrinal topics.

Thanks for your letter. You ask a very good question: "Why didn't God state everything in a simple, abridged manner to avoid this cluster of contradictory interpretations?"

Let me attempt to provide some possible options to consider. Before doing so, however, I must honestly admit that I do not know (with any certainty) why God did things the way He did. The only way I could know this would be if God had told me. And He hasn't. However, He may have given us some clues in the Bible itself.

First, I think we should always bear in mind that MOST of the Bible is readily comprehensible when read carefully. To be sure, there are "some things hard to understand" (2 Peter 3:16), but much of the Bible (when read carefully) is readily understandable.

Second, sometimes man's difficulty with biblical interpretation stems from sinfulness and a strong motivation not to WANT to understand what the text says. This, I think, is why Jesus sometimes spoke in parables. Parables revealed spiritual truth to those open to receive it, but hid the truth from those who rejected Jesus and His message. Along these lines, note in particular Jesus' statement in Matthew 13:10-17—

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.

"For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

"Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

"In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.'

"But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

"For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

(See also Isaiah 6:9-10; Mark 4:11-12; Luke 8:16-18; etc.). Thus, some of the difficulty with understanding God's word comes from man's sinfulness, hard-heartedness, and unbelief.

Finally, with those passages which are really difficult, and about which very good Christian scholars differ, I think we have a motivation to dig deeper into God's word, to study more diligently, to seek His meaning more carefully and prayerfully. By agonizing over difficulties, many Christians have gained a very deep knowledge of the Scriptures.

These are at least some POSSIBLE reasons why God's word is sometimes difficult to understand. I hope they help at least a little bit.

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries

“What is the New Covenant?”

What is the New Covenant?

The primary Old Testament passage pertaining to the New Covenant is Jeremiah 31:31-34. In this wonderful passage God promises to make a New Covenant with His people (v. 31), a covenant unlike the Mosaic covenant (v. 32). Under this New Covenant, God promises to write His laws on the hearts of His people (v. 33), to have intimate communion with them (vv. 33-34), and to forgive their sins (v. 34).

This New Covenant was inaugurated in the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. On the night of His betrayal and arrest, Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples. During the course of this meal He told them, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Luke 22:20).

In the New Testament, the book of Hebrews has a great deal to say about this New Covenant. In an article on “Covenant,” Trent Butler describes some of the special features of the New Covenant as related in the book of Hebrews :

“The emphasis is on Jesus, the perfect High Priest, providing a new, better, superior covenant (Heb. 7:22; 8:6). Jesus represented the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s new covenant promise (Heb. 8:8, 10; 10:16). Jesus was the perfect covenant Mediator (Heb. 9:15), providing an eternal inheritance in a way the old covenant could not (compare 12:24). Jesus’ death on the cross satisfied the requirement that all covenants be established by

blood (Heb. 9:18, 20) just as was the first covenant (Ex. 24:8). Christ's blood established an everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20)" (*Holman Bible Dictionary*, gen. ed. Trent C. Butler (Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), 312).

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries

"How Do I Handle My Husband's Porn Addiction?"

For the past year or so, I have been recording and watching where my husband visits hardcore porn sites. This has been extremely painful for me. What is wrong with me? He never seems interested in me, I have provided a good sexual relationship for us. He tries to hide this, I have confronted him twice, each time to be told "they aren't real people"—YES they are! He stays up until 3 or 4 a.m. each night and views this stuff. He sleeps until 2 or 3 in the afternoon. We have a daughter who is four, I wish he would spend more time with us. I have also viewed conversations he has had with coworkers regarding women he works with. I have viewed emails he has sent to online "whores" including pics and descriptions on what he would like to do with them. I am tired and starting to feel a little numb to all this. My doctors have told me to "learn to accept it or just leave." This is a little more complicated than that. I have asked for counselling once – he is TOTALLY against it. I am about to give up and ask him to leave, do you think this is too excessive and that I should give him another chance? I am tired and don't want to deal with it anymore. I hate that porn has ruined our marriage. Thank God for my closest friends and for the occasional

comment from other men. Help me, please.

I am so very, very sorry that you have to deal with your husband's addiction. PLEASE KNOW—this is not about you. There is nothing wrong with you. This is about him. You could be as gorgeous as a supermodel with the world's most perfect body and he would still have the addiction, because it's doing something for him that is completely separate from you.

I want to suggest some excellent resources for you to help you cope with a situation you can't change AND to bring glory to God in the process.

Porn-Free.org has a helpful essay, "Help for Christian Spouses of Sex Addicts" at www.porn-free.org/spousehelp_christian.htm

The Covenant Eyes blog has a helpful article, [7 Questions Wives of Porn Addicts Often Ask](#).

[Spouse Healing](#) article from the Sex Addiction Lifeline Foundation.

The very wise, very experienced Renee Dallas has an excellent website called "Wifeboat" with a section for [wives of men with porn addiction](#).

There are several articles on CafeMom.com. Do a search for "wives of porn addicts": thestir.cafemom.com/search.php?keyword=wives+of+porn+addicts.

Henry Rogers, a dear friend of Probe, has written a wonderful book on this called *The Silent War*. Having researched this difficult topic thoroughly, he says the first thing wives need to know is that IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU.

In fact, in a chapter called "The Wounded Wife," he reprints "Emily's Story":

"I write this out of love. Love for the porn addict, love for his wife, and most of all for the children. I pray this

chapter is used for God's glory and honor, that it might somehow prevent families from being destroyed.

"I remember listening to a panel of women James Dobson had on his radio program. They talked about being married for over 20 years and discovering their husbands were involved in pornography. It seemed so unfathomable to me that someone could be deceived for so long. I remember thinking how stupid those women were. Little did I realize I would be one of those women less than a month later.

"It was like a birth process. Pain, agony, sweat, tears, hours of intense hurt, and finally truth. My husband is a porn addict. I heard it. I reacted. For two weeks I was numb. Numb to after 20+ years knowing something was wrong, but not knowing what. A relief to finally know the truth. A relief to now live in reality in light and truth rather than the unreality of darkness and deception. My husband would never tell me the secrets of his past before our marriage. I always thought if I loved him enough some day he would tell me. If I loved him enough. . . .

"We always had a difficult marriage. My husband was always withdrawn and quiet. I thought I could help him. I was outgoing, attractive, and spontaneous. In our marriage I could never do anything good enough. I was constantly criticized and put down. I thought it was me so I started a self-improvement program, more counseling, more semi nars. I learned more was never enough. My world stopped, knowing something had died in me.

"My husband always seemed to be "tuned out" in another world. He worked long hours and often fell into bed at 2 a.m. I missed him. I begged him to come home. I raised the kids as he pursued his career. I told myself I needed to help him. I poured my heart and soul into his endeavor supporting and encouraging. There were still problems. When he was home he would go into his office and read his books,

newspapers, and reports, and again I would cry myself to sleep. I had others confront him. I gave this man every chance to tell me about his pornography addiction. Lies weave other lies. Secrets kill. Comparisons kill. I feel every time he looked at an image and masturbated he took away a part of me that God intended to be mine. I remember seeing him masturbate and he was in his own world, set on his own pleasure, stimulated and excited by images of women he didn't know. It was a feeling of betrayal and heart-wrenching emptiness that a woman feels when she learns that her husband is living a lie.

"Pornography tears at the very thread of a woman and her femininity. My heart was ripped and uprooted thrown somewhere into a desert with no place to find refuge. It's as if I wasn't enough. Not sexy enough. Not beautiful enough. Not thin enough. Not exciting enough. Women get significance from their relationships with their husbands and when he turns to another for satisfaction it cuts her deeply at the core.

"I started buying sexy nighties, acting sexier, and suddenly I realized I was bowing down to an idol. It hurt that he chose not to tell me ... to not allow me to come alongside him as his helper. To this day he refuses to see the pain that he caused. It amazes me as a wife how we are involved in every other area of a man's life his profit margin, his ability to manage, everything but when it comes to pornography, it's hidden in deception. A man's way seems right to a man. Porn addiction is very selfish. It takes and takes and doesn't give back. It's all for the user's pleasure.

"Another lie is that porn does not hurt anyone. Such a web of deception. 'And they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness' (Eph. 4:19). There are consequences and the stakes get higher. It takes one lie to

cover another. It saddens me how men can compartmentalize this sin. He has the little wife over here with precious children and this nasty sin over here for his private time, justifying it because he still loves his wife and children. You can't walk simultaneously in the darkness and the light.

"I'm a wife. I'm a wife of a porn addict. I'm relieved to know what it is, though I always knew something was wrong. Tears. Pain. Disgust. Betrayal. To face the death of a husband would be better than this. A widow has the support of the church. A porn addict leaves shame and divorce. It would be easier if he were dead. We wouldn't have to face the public humiliation and shame.

"Today is a new day. It's early morning and I must get breakfast for my children. I take each day as it comes now. Just for today. My husband still chooses his sin and refuses to take responsibility for it. I have to let him go and let the Lord deal with him. I can no longer be his excuse, his enabler. It's a new day and I'm moving on and my Deliverer is by my side. He is faithful. He will never leave me nor forsake me. He will never break His promise. To a woman who has been betrayed, this is my comfort. Hear my cry."

The Lord bless you as you seek Him on this. Again, I am so sorry.

Sue Bohlin