

Trash Your Marriage in Eight Easy Steps – A Christian Perspective

Sue Bohlin helps us take a biblical perspective on eight activities and attitudes that will tear down our marriage. Fortunately, she also provides us eight Christian alternatives that will help build up our marriages.

The divorce rate is at an all-time high, and marriages are falling apart everywhere you look. Marriages of church-going people are crashing and burning especially fast. There are forces in our culture that contribute to marriage stresses such as pornography, the prevalence of drivenness, two-career families, and the dynamics of the blended family. But people also make foolish choices to destroy their marriages from within.

Talking about the family, Proverbs 14:1 says, “The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.” Ephesians 5:28 exhorts husbands to love their wives as their own bodies, nourishing and cherishing them. God’s plan is that we treasure and cultivate our marriages, but it’s very easy to trash them instead. Let’s take a tongue-in-cheek look at eight ways that people trash their marriages.

Be Selfish

The first step is to *be selfish*. My pastor once said that the AIDS of marriage is justified self-centeredness. Everything needs to revolve around you because, let’s face it, you *are* at the center of the universe, right? If you find something you like to do that ignores your spouses’ feelings and interests, go ahead and do it! Too bad if they don’t like it! You only go around once in life, so grab for all the gusto you can get!

Always insist on having things your own way. If you don't get your own way, throw a tantrum. Or freeze your spouse out. Get your kids involved in this game by saying things like, "Would you please ask your father to pass the salt?" Don't be afraid to withhold sex if your spouse isn't letting you have things your own way. There's a *lot* of power in that, so don't waste it!

If there's only enough money in your budget for what one of you wants, make sure you get what *you* want. Especially if you're the wage earner, or if you make more than the other. Money is power, and don't be afraid to use it against your spouse!

Make demands instead of requests. Wives, let your husband know that he *will* do things your way, or you'll make his life miserable. Husbands, when you want your wife to do something, just *tell* her to do it. "Please" and "thank you" are for the kids. This is your spouse you're talking about—they don't need it. Save all your courtesy for strangers; don't waste it on the person you said you'd spend the rest of your life with.

What we really mean to say:

Selfishness is guaranteed to hurt marriages, so ask for God's help in putting your husband or wife ahead of yourself so you *don't* trash your marriage.

Pick at Each Other

The second step is to *pick at each other*. If you know that something you do annoys your spouse, be sure to do it often. And intentionally. When she complains about it, tell her to buzz off, it's not as annoying as the stupid things she does to bug *you*. The more childish the annoying habit, the better.

Be critical of the smallest thing the other one says and does. Don't let your spouse get away with anything! Stay vigilant for every little offense. Be sure to address these small

details with an air of superiority . . . unless it works better for you to act like a martyr, as if you deserve the Nobel Prize for putting up with someone who doesn't squeeze the toothpaste from the end.

Always get the last word when you're arguing. Dr. Phil McGraw has said that the most accurate predictor of divorce is when people don't allow their partners to retreat with dignity. So make your spouse feel whipped and defeated at the end of a fight. As long as you win, that's what matters.

Let The Kids Be More Important

A third step to trashing your marriage is to *let the kids become more important than your spouse*. Moms, make your husband feel left out of the intimate, secret relationship between you and your baby. As the baby grows, continue to draw the line where it's you and your child on one side, your husband on the other. Keep your Mommy hat on all day and all night. Your kids don't care if your hair is brushed and if you put on perfume and a little makeup before Daddy comes home, so why should he?

Dads, invest all your energies into making your child succeed at what he's good at, or what you *want* him to be good at. Squeeze out Mom so that you will be your kid's favorite parent. Work so hard on homework and school projects that there's no time for family time.

Let the kids and your other priorities crowd out your "alone together" time. Date nights are for unmarried people! In order to be fulfilled as a person, it is essential to invest all your energies in parenting, career, housework, church commitments and hobbies, so don't worry if there isn't enough time left over for the two of you. It's no big deal. There's always tomorrow. Or next year.

What we really mean to say:

Hey! If you find yourself doing these things, *stop!* You don't have to trash your marriage!

Show Disrespect

Show disrespect for your spouse, especially in public. One of the best ways to disrespect your partner is ugly name-calling, especially about things he or she can't change. However, the old standbys of "stupid," "fat," "ugly," "weak," and "loser" are always effective, too.

Complain about your spouse to your friends. It's even more powerful if you do it in front of your spouse. Then, if he objects, punch him in the arm and say, "I'm just kidding! You take everything so *seriously!*"

There are a number of ways to show disrespect with nonverbal communication. Roll your eyes, cluck your tongue, narrow your eyes in contempt. The heavy sigh is a real winner, too.

Wives: Straighten out your husband when he makes a mistake, especially in front of others. Lecture him. Ridicule him: his feelings, his behavior, his dreams, his thoughts. Do everything you can to emasculate your husband. Husbands: Let your wife know you think your opinion is better than hers. Interrupt her when she's speaking.

Refuse to Meet Emotional Needs

Another easy way to trash your marriage is to *refuse to meet your spouse's emotional needs*.

Men and women need different things from their life partners. Dr. Willard Harley discovered and examined a pattern in his excellent book *His Needs, Her Needs*. Husbands' top needs, it turns out, are: first of all sexual fulfillment; second, recreational companionship; third, an attractive spouse; fourth, domestic support; and fifth,



admiration. Wives, if you want to trash your marriage, ignore his need for sex and that you be there for him in leisure time. Blow off his desire that you look your best and he can be proud that you're his wife. Make your home as stressful and chaotic as you can, and never, ever tell him what you admire about him.

Wives' top needs are: first of all affection; second conversations; third, honesty and openness; fourth, financial commitment; and fifth, family commitment. So guys, if you want to trash your marriage, don't show your wife you love and appreciate her. Don't talk to her. Close off your heart to her. Make her constantly worry about finances. Don't be a faithful husband and father.

Dr. Harley's got a Web site, MarriageBuilders.com, that has a lot of good, practical information for building strong marriages, so you'd better stay away from there if you're not interested in being intentional and constructive!

Remember, we're being tongue-in-cheek here. We want you to *build* your marriage, not *trash* it!

Treat Your Friends Better than Your Spouse

The sixth easy step to trashing your marriage is to *treat your friends better than your spouse*. Since a lot of men unfortunately don't even have friends, this is something women tend to do more. Women know how to treat their girlfriends. They call them up just to encourage them. They drop off flowers for no reason. They send them cards, and they listen intently to whatever's going on in their lives. They are emotionally invested in their friends. They are quick to mention when someone looks nice or does something well because women are usually good at affirming each other. If you want to trash your marriage, don't do any of these thoughtful kindnesses for your husband. If your girlfriend is having a

bad day, go out of your way to take her a wonderful casserole *and* fresh salad *and* dessert . . . but serve your husband Spaghetti-O's.

But husbands, if your wife needs you for something at home, and your buddy scores some tickets to a game, tell your wife "too bad, so sad." After all, she'll be around forever but tonight's hockey game won't. If someone at church or in the neighborhood needs something fixed, drop everything to take care of it, even if it means that the broken things around *your* house will continue to go unfixed.

Be a Pansy

Step number seven for trashing your marriage has two parts. Husbands, *be a pansy*. Retreat into the safety of passivity. Refuse to take initiative or responsibility in making plans or suggestions. That way, when things go wrong, you can say, "Don't blame me! It's not my fault!" These are great ways to trash your marriage.

Be His Mother

Wives, *be a mother* to your husband. When people ask how many children you have, say things like, "Two—three, if you count my husband." Tell him to wear a coat when it's cold and take an umbrella when it's raining, because he can't figure it out on his own. Be sure to say "I told you so" as often as possible. If he is passive or irresponsible, jump in and rescue him so he won't have to deal with the consequences of his own choices. Make sure he feels three years old. Tell him how to live his life, down to the smallest detail.

What we really mean to say:

Please, if you find yourself doing these things, ask for God's help in being *constructive* instead of *destructive*. We want to help you *build* your marriage, not *trash* it.

When You're Angry, Blow Up

Let's talk about one final way to trash your marriage. Yell and scream, or quietly say hurtful words; it doesn't matter. Inflicting pain is the important thing. Call each other names in the heat of your emotion. Dredge up the past and bring up old hurts. You can hit or slap with words as well as with hands, and they each leave a different kind of lasting damage to your spouse and to your marriage. Losing control when you're angry is a powerful way to hurt your spouse.

Build Your Marriage in Eight *Harder* Steps

Well, enough of ways to trash your marriage—how about eight steps to build it? All we have to do is look at the opposite of this article's negative, destructive steps.

To build your marriage, fight selfishness by developing a servant's heart. Commit yourself to acting in your spouse's best interests. Do at least one unselfish deed for your husband or wife every day.

Second, instead of picking at each other, choose to let things go. Be grace-givers. Remember that "love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8).

Third, be intentional in keeping your marriage at the center of your family. Have regular date nights, and schedule times away to invest in the intimacy of your relationship. Go to a FamilyLife Marriage Conference (www.familylife.com).

Fourth, commit to actively be respectful to your spouse by never saying anything negative to other people. Be kind in your words and actions. Treat each other as courteously and with the kind of honor you would bestow on a stranger or a dear friend.

Fifth, talk about your spouse's particular [emotional needs](#). Read Willard Harley's excellent book *His Needs, Her Needs*.

Find out which ones are most important to *your* partner, and do everything in your power to meet them.

Sixth, treat your husband or wife at least as well as you treat your friends. Be as thoughtful and encouraging and affirming as you can possibly be.

Seventh: Ladies, resign as your husband's mother. You married an adult; treat him with the respect an adult deserves. Men: Your wife needs a servant-leader—someone who refuses either passivity or tyranny—to love her as Christ loves the church.

And last, when you're angry, express it wisely and constructively. Use words like "I'm angry about this" instead of yelling or hurtful silence. If you're too mad to speak with self-control, wait till you cool down. And don't go to bed without dealing with the situation (Eph. 4:26).

You don't *have* to trash your marriage. You can treasure it instead.

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Feminism: A Christian Perspective

Sue Bohlin provides a Christian view on feminism. How does this prevalent view of women measure up from a biblical perspective?

This article is also available in [Spanish](#). 

The worldview of feminism has permeated just about every aspect of American life, education and culture. We see it in

the way men are portrayed as lovable but stupid buffoons on TV sitcoms. We see it in the way boys are punished and marginalized in school for not being enough like girls. We see it in politically correct speech that attempts to change the way people think by harassing them for their choice of words.

The anger and frustration that drove feminism's history is legitimate; women have been devalued and dishonored ever since the fall of man. Very real, harmful inequities needed to be addressed, and it's important to honor some of the success of feminist activists. But at the same time, we need to examine and expose the worldview that fuels much of feminist thought.

Modern-day feminism got its major start when Betty Friedan wrote her landmark book *The Feminine Mystique*, in which she coined the phrase "The Housewife Blahs" to describe millions of unfulfilled women. There are many reasons that women can feel unfulfilled and dishonored, but from a Christian perspective I would suggest that this is what life feels like when we are disconnected from God and disconnected from living out *His* purpose for our lives. As Augustine said, "We are restless, O God, until we find our rest in Thee."

Betty Friedan looked at unhappy, unfulfilled women and diagnosed the problem as *patriarchy*, which means a male-dominated society. If women are unhappy, the reason is that men are in charge.

The early feminists decided that women are oppressed because bearing and raising children is a severe limitation and liability. What makes women *different* from men equals *weakness*. The next step, then, was to overcome that difference so that women could be just like men. The invention of the birth control pill helped fuel that illusion.

Out of the consciousness-raising groups in the '70s came a shift in the view of women's differences. Instead of seeing those differences as weakness, they now saw those differences

as a source of pride and confidence. It was now a good thing to be a woman.

The next step in feminist thought was that women were not just *equal* to men, they were *better* than men. This spawned famous quotes like Gloria Steinem's comment that "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle."[\[1\]](#) Male-bashing became the sport of the '90s.

Feminism says, "The problem is patriarchy—male dominated society." The problem is actually the sin of people within a God-ordained hierarchy. In a fallen world, there are going to be problems between men and women, and especially abuses of power. We must not confuse the abuses of the structure with the structure itself.[\[2\]](#)

Feminism and the Church

Feminism has so permeated our culture that we should not be surprised that it has impacted the church as well. Religious feminists uncovered the "Church Women Blahs." People became aware that for the most part, women were relegated to service positions like making coffee and rocking babies. If a woman had gifts in teaching, shepherding, administration or evangelism, she was out of luck.

The *Magna Carta* for Christian feminists is Galatians 3:28: "In Christ there is no male or female." However, the context of this verse is not about equal rights, but that all believers have the same position of humility at the foot of the Cross. The issue is not capability, but God-ordained positions within a God-ordained authority structure of male leadership. Other biblical passages that go into detail about gender-dependent roles show that Galatians 3:28 cannot mean the obliteration of those roles.

There are two main areas where religious feminists seek to change gender roles: the role of women in the church, and the

role of women in marriage. The discussion has produced two camps: egalitarians and complementarians.

Egalitarians are the feminist camp, with an emphasis on equality of *roles*, not just *value*. They believe that hierarchy produces inequality, and that different means unequal. The solution, therefore, is to get rid of the differences between men's and women's roles. Women should be ordained, allowed to occupy the office of pastor and elder, and exercise authority over others in the church. Instead of differences in the roles of husband and wife, both spouses are called to mutual submission.

Egalitarians are reacting against a very real problem in the church. But the problem of authoritarian men, and women relegated to minor serving positions, is due to an abuse and distortion of the hierarchy God designed. Egalitarians reject the male authority structure along with the abuse of that structure.

Complementarians believe that God has ordained a hierarchy of authority in the church and within the family that reflects the hierarchy of authority within the Trinity. And just as there is equality in the Trinity, there is equality in the church and in marriage because we are all made in the image of God. Women are just as gifted as men, but there are biblical restrictions on the exercise of some of those gifts, such as not teaching men from a position of authority, and not occupying the office of pastor or elder. In marriage, wives are called to submit to their husbands. Mutual submission in marriage is no more appropriate than submission of parents to children.

Christian feminists did not evaluate whether the structures or hierarchies of leadership were there because God designed them that way. They just demanded wholesale change. But some things are worth keeping!

Feminism on Campus

As with the family and the church, feminism has had an impact on our college campuses. Abraham Lincoln once warned, "The philosophy of the school room in one generation will become the philosophy of government in the next." What happens on college campuses eventually affects the rest of the culture, and nowhere is feminism's pervasiveness more evident than in our colleges.

A new discipline of Women's Studies has arisen in many universities. These courses usually stress women's literature, treating with contempt anything written by "dead white European males." They often incorporate women's religions in the curricula, especially the Goddess worship of Wicca on campus. The main tenet of this pagan religion is that the worshipper is in harmony with Mother Earth and with all life. They worship the Goddess, which is described as "the immanent life force, . . . Mother Nature, the Earth, the Cosmos, the interconnectedness of all life."[\[3\]](#) Many witches (followers of Wicca, not Satanists) and pagans are involved in women's studies programs because, as one Wiccan Web site put it, "Many feminists have turned to Wicca and the role of priestess for healing and strength after the patriarchal oppression and lack of voice for women in the major world religions."[\[4\]](#)

Christianity is often portrayed on college campuses, and especially within Women's Studies, as an abusive religion. There are several reasons. First, because Christianity is hierarchical, teaching differentiation of roles and that some are to submit to and follow others. Second, their skewed view of the Bible is that Christianity teaches that women are inferior to men. Third, Christ was male, so he is insufficient as a role model for women and can't possibly understand what it means to be a woman. And fourth, since the language of the Bible is male-oriented and patriarchal (both of which are evil), it must be dismissed or changed.

Feminism impacts dating relationships on campus. Heterosexual dating is often colored by an attempt to persuade women that all men are potential rapists and cannot be trusted. Even a remark meant to compliment a woman is taken as sexist and unacceptable. One woman, wearing a short skirt on campus, heard someone whistle appreciatively. She strode into the women's study center complaining, "I've just been raped!"

Angry feminists convey a hatred and fear of men as part of the feminist ideology. When it comes to dating, for a number of feminists, lesbianism is considered the only appropriate option. If men are brutes and idiots, why would anyone want to have an intimate relationship with one? In fact, there's a new acronym on campus, GUG: "Gay until graduation." But the fact is, most women really like men; that's always been a problem for feminists. Let's consider more problems that result from feminism.

The Problematic Legacy of Feminism

Feminists started from a reasonable point in recognizing a most unhappy aspect of life in a fallen world: women tend to be dishonored, disrespected, and devalued by many men. This is as true in religious systems as it is in society and political systems. Feminists started out trying to rectify this problem first by trying to prove that women were as good as men. Then they decided that women were better than men. They ended up trying to erase the lines of distinction between men and women altogether. This has resulted in tremendous confusion about what it means to be a woman, as well as what it means to be a man. And naturally, it has produced a lot of confusion in relationships as well. This confusion ranges from men who are afraid to open doors for women for fear of receiving a rude tongue-lashing, to women who are baffled in the workplace because the men they compete against at work won't ask them out on a date.

Radical feminist thought despised much of what it means to be

a woman—to be receptive and responsive and relational, to treasure marriage and family. Only masculine traits and behaviors and jobs were deemed valuable. Nonetheless, many young women are confused by the messages they are getting from the culture: that an education and a job are the only worthwhile pursuits, and the social capital of marriage and family is no longer valued. However, these same women feel guilty and confused for finding themselves still longing for marriage and family when they're supposed to be content without them. One college student said, "I've taken all the women's studies courses—I know that marriage and motherhood are traps—but I still want to do both." [\[5\]](#)

The legacy of feminism is the refusal of the God-given role of men to be initiator, protector and provider. And the God-given role of women to be responder, nurturer and helper is equally disdained. The consequence of this rebellion is relational confusion, especially in the home. Dads aren't communicating to their sons why it's a blessing to be male, because frankly, they're not sure that it is. The message of feminism is that being male is a joke or a curse. Moms aren't teaching their daughters the basic skill sets that homemakers need because they're too busy at their jobs and besides, haven't we been taught that being a homemaker is demeaning? As a mentoring Mom to mothers of preschoolers, I see how many young women are totally clueless about how to be a wife and mother because those essential skills just weren't considered important by their mothers. Radical feminism hates family and families, and we all suffer as a result.

Feminism says, "The problem is patriarchy—male dominated society." The problem is actually the sin of people within a God-ordained hierarchy. The heart of feminism is a rebellion against the abuses of this God-ordained hierarchy, but it's also a rebellion against God's plan itself. This is a perfect example of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Feminists believe they have the right to reinvent reality and to change

the rules to suit them. This rebellious belief system has had some disastrous effects on our culture and society.

For example, one of feminism's biggest achievements was the legalization of abortion. *Keeping* it legal is one of feminism's biggest goals: see, if women are to be truly free, then they must be free to decide whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term. A woman's ability to conceive, give birth, and nurture babies is seen as weakness and vulnerability, because women can be forced to be impregnated and to bear unwanted babies. Removing the consequence of sexual activity, and getting rid of unwanted pregnancy to cancel out a woman's so-called "weakness," is important to many feminists. So, since 1973, there have been over 40 million abortions in the U.S.{6}. But that only tells part of the story; "while some women report relatively little trauma following abortion, for many, the experience is devastating, causing severe and long-lasting emotional, psychological and spiritual trauma." {7} I have the privilege of helping post-abortal women grieve the loss of their babies and receive God's forgiveness for their sin. They know that feminism's insistence that abortion is every woman's right is a lie.

Another impact of feminism is seen in the feminization of American schools. Feminism's disrespect for men and boys has shaped schools and educational policy around values and methods that favor girls over boys. Competition, a natural state of being for many boys, is considered harmful and evil, to be replaced with girl-friendly cooperative, relational activities. "Schools are denying the very behavior that makes little boys boys. In Southern California, a mother was stunned to find out that her son was disciplined for running and jumping over a bench at recess." {8} My colleague Don Closson wrote, "Gender crusaders believe that if they can influence little boys early enough, they can make them more like little girls." {9}

To despise the glory of masculinity is to reject the very

image of God. To despise the treasure of femininity is to reject what the Bible calls the glory of man.^{10} That's the problem with feminism: it is a rejection of what God has called good. It has gone too far in addressing the inequities of living in a fallen world. It's a rebellion against God's right to be God and our responsibility to submit joyfully to Him.

Notes

1. Actually, I have discovered, it wasn't original with Ms. Steinem. She had this to say in a letter she wrote to *Time* magazine in autumn 2000: "In your note on my new and happy marital partnership with David Bale, you credit me with the witticism 'A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle.' In fact, Irina Dunn, a distinguished Australian educator, journalist and politician, coined the phrase back in 1970 when she was a student at the University of Sydney." Irina Dunn has confirmed this story, in an e-mail of January 28, 2002: "Yes, indeed, I am the one Gloria referred to. I was paraphrasing from a phrase I read in a philosophical text I was reading for my Honours year in English Literature and Language in 1970. It was "A man needs God like a fish needs a bicycle." My inspiration arose from being involved in the nascent women's movement at the time, and from being a bit of a smart-arse. I scribbled the phrase on the backs of two toilet doors, would you believe, one at Sydney University where I was a student, and the other at Soren's Wine Bar at Woolloomooloo, a seedy suburb in south Sydney. The doors, I have to add, were already favoured graffiti sites."

www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/414150.html

2. I am indebted to the wisdom and insight of Mary Kassian as expressed in her excellent book *The Feminist Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1992).

3. www.cog.org/wicca/about.html

4. Ibid.

5. Quoted by Barbara DeFoe Whitehead, *Mars Hill Audio Journal*

No. 61, Mar./Apr. 2003.

6. www.nrlc.org/abortion/aboramt.html

7. www.hopeafterabortion.com/aftermath/

8. William Pollack, *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998),

94. The entire quote is from Don Closson, "[The Feminization of American Schools](#)".

9. Ibid.

10. 1 Cor. 11:7

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Are We Alone in the Universe? A Biblical View of Aliens

Dr. Ray Bohlin provides a Christian view on the probability and meaning of life on other planets. From a biblical perspective, what would it mean to find evidence of life beyond this earth?



This article is also available in [Spanish](#).

Life on Mars?

There was great excitement in the media when a group of scientists from NASA announced they had found evidence of life on Mars. Their evidence, an alleged Martian meteorite, was vaulted to center stage, and everyone from CNN to *Nightline* ran special programs with interviews and video footage of the scientists and their prized specimen. President Clinton was so excited by the announcement that he praised the U.S. space program and took the opportunity to establish a bipartisan space summit headed up by Vice President Al Gore to study the

future of U.S. space research. Aren't we already doing that?

Anyway, clearly this announcement took the country by storm. Some of the scientists were embarrassingly gushing about how significant these findings were. The media frenzy was prompted by the early release of an article from the journal *Science*, the premier scientific journal in the U.S. The article was due out the following week, but *Science* decided to release it early because it had leaked out.

Here's what the excitement was about. A group of scientists had studied a meteorite that had been found in the ice of Antarctica. Previously, it had been determined that this meteorite had originated on Mars by studying the gaseous content of glass-like components of the meteor. The gas composition matched very well the atmosphere of Mars. This conclusion seems reasonable.

So, they presumed they had a meteor from Mars. Next they looked for evidence of life on and in the crevices of the meteor. They found two types of molecules that can form as a result of life processes, carbonates and complex molecules called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons or PAHs. They also found shapes in the rock that resembled those of known microfossils on Earth. Microfossils are fossils of one-celled organisms which are rather tricky to interpret.

Well, what does this mean? Obviously, the NASA scientists felt the things just mentioned provided ample evidence to conclude that life once existed on Mars. However, the chemical signs could all be due to processes that have nothing to do with life, and the supposed microfossils are 100 times smaller than any such fossil found on Earth. Other groups that studied this same meteorite concluded that either the temperature of formation of the chemicals was far too high to allow life (over 700 degrees C) or that other chemical signals for life were absent. John Kerridge, a planetary scientist from the University of California at San Diego, said, "The conclusion

is at best premature and more probably wrong.” But listen to the concluding statement in the paper in *Science*:

Although there are alternative explanations for each of these phenomena taken individually, when they are considered collectively, particularly in view of their spatial association, we conclude that they are evidence for primitive life on Mars.[{1}](#)

In plain English, there are reasonable non-life explanations for each of the evidences presented, but we just think that they mean there is life on Mars. The evidence **is** very equivocal and was challenged by many other scientists, but the media did not report that as fully. But maybe they are right! In fact, there is one simple explanation that is consistently ignored by media and scientists alike. If there really is, or has been, life on Mars, what could that possibly mean for evolution, and more importantly, does it somehow refute creation? We'll look at that next.

What Would Life on Mars Mean?

Because of the recent announcement of signs of life on Mars, many people were encouraged in their belief that we are not alone in the universe. These signs are far from certain and probably wrong, but if it's true, what would these results mean to evolutionists? Moreover, is there any reason for Christians to fear confirmation of life on Mars?

Let us assume, then, for the moment that the evidence from this Martian meteorite is legitimate evidence for life on Mars—life that at some point in the past actually existed on Mars. What would it mean?

For evolutionists the evidence is perceived as confirmation that life actually arises from non-life by purely chemical processes. In addition, evolutionists draw the conclusion that life must be able to evolve very easily since it did so on two

adjacent planets in the same solar system. Therefore, even though origin of life research is actually at a standstill, such a discovery seemingly confirms the notion that *some* chemical evolution scenario *must work*. I will address this assumption later.

On the other hand, some have stated that if there is life on Mars, creationism has been dealt a death blow. They rationalize that since (1) we now know that life can evolve just about anywhere, and (2) the Bible never speaks of life anywhere but on Earth, the Bible is, therefore, unreliable. Besides, they reason, why would God create life on a planet with no humans? However, since the Bible is absolutely silent on the subject of extra-terrestrial life, we can make no predictions about its possibility. God is certainly free to create life on planets other than Earth if He chooses.

Getting back to the evolutionists' glee at the possibility of life evolving on other planets, the real question is whether this is the proper conclusion if life is indeed found on Mars? The simple answer, inexplicably avoided by the media, is NO! The simplest answer to the possible discovery of life on Mars is that the so-called "Martian life" actually came from Earth!

Think about it this way. The meteorite that was found is supposed to have existed on Mars previously. How did it get to Earth? Well, it is hypothesized that a large meteorite crashed into Mars throwing up lots of debris into space, some of which finds its way to Earth and at least a few of which are found by Earthlings. If you are thinking with me, you now realize that the same scenario could have been played out on Earth.

Evolutionists suggest that the Earth was under heavy meteor bombardment until at least 3.8 billion years ago—about the time they say life appeared on Earth. Christian astronomer Hugh Ross states it this way:

Meteorites large enough to make a crater greater than 60

miles across will cause Earth rocks to escape Earth's gravity. Out of 1,000 such rocks ejected, 291 strike Venus, 20 go to Mercury, 17 hit Mars, 14 make it to Jupiter, and 1 goes all the way to Saturn. Traveling the distance with these rocks will be many varieties of Earth life.[{2}](#)

Ross also documents that many forms of microscopic life are quite capable of surviving such a journey. All this is quite well known in the scientific community, but I have not seen it mentioned once in any public discussion. I believe the reason is that the possibility of life having evolved on Mars is too juicy to pass up.

The Improbability of Life Elsewhere in the Universe

I would like to address the amazing optimism of so many that the universe is teeming with life. No doubt this is fueled by the tremendous success of such science fiction works as *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* which eloquently present the reasonableness of a universe pregnant with intelligent life forms.

Inherent within this optimism is the evolutionary assumption that if life evolved here, certainly we should not arrogantly suppose that life could not have evolved elsewhere in the universe. And if life in general exists in the universe, then, of course, there must be intelligent life out there as well.

This is the basic assumption of the SETI program, the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence. This is the program, now privately funded instead of federally funded, that searches space for radio waves emanating from another planet that would indicate the presence of intelligent life. But is such a hope realistic? Is there a justifiable reason for suspecting that planets suitable to life exist elsewhere in the universe?

Over the last two decades scientists have begun tabulating

many characteristics of our universe, galaxy, solar system, and planet that appear to have been finely-tuned for life to exist. Christian astronomer and apologist, Dr. Hugh Ross documents all these characteristics in his book *Creator and the Cosmos*, [\[3\]](#) and is constantly updating them. In the book's third edition (2001), Ross documents 35 characteristics of the universe and 66 characteristics of our galaxy, solar system, and planet that are finely-tuned for life to exist.

Some examples include the size, temperature, and brightness of our sun, the size, chemical composition, and stable orbit of Earth. The fact that we have one moon and not none or two or three. The distance of the Earth from the sun, the tilt of the earth's axis, the speed of the earth's rotation, the time it takes Earth to orbit the sun. If any of these factors were different by even a few percent, the ability of Earth to sustain life would be severely compromised. Recently it has been noted that even the presence of Jupiter and Saturn serve to stabilize the orbit of Earth. Without these two large planets present exactly where they are, the Earth would be knocked out of its present near circular orbit into an elliptical one causing higher temperature differences between seasons and subjecting Earth to greater meteor interference. Neither condition is hospitable to the continuing presence of life.

Ross has further calculated the probabilities of all these factors coming together by natural processes alone to be 1×10^{-166} ; that's a decimal point followed by 165 zeroes and then a one. A very liberal estimate of how many planets there may be, though we have only documented less than 100, is 10^{22} or 10 billion trillion planets, one for every star in the universe. Combining these two probabilities tells us that there are 10^{-144} planets in the entire universe that could support life. Obviously this is far less than one; therefore, by natural processes alone, we shouldn't even be here—let alone some kind

of alien life form.

So unless God created life elsewhere, we are alone, and for the materialistic evolutionist, this is a frightening thought.

Problems with Chemical Evolution on Earth

The statistics given above mean that we are really alone in the universe and that there is no hope of finding intelligent civilizations as in the television program *Star Trek*. While it means there is no one out there to threaten our survival, there is also no one out there to save us from our own mistakes.

This observation highlights why I believe the scientific community and the media became so excited about the possibilities of life on Mars. Efforts to determine how life could have evolved from non-living matter have been so fraught with problems that it makes the possibility of life elsewhere extremely remote. But if it could be proved that life evolved elsewhere, then it would demonstrate that life springs up rather easily, and we just haven't found the right trick here on Earth to prove it. But this just leapfrogs the problem.

But is the evolution of life from non-living chemicals really that impossible? The difficulties fall into three categories, the Chemical Problem, the Thermodynamic Problem, and the Informational Problem. These issues are presented comprehensively in a book by Thaxton, Bradley, and Olsen titled *The Mystery of Life's Origin*[\[4\]](#) and in a chapter in the edited volume by J. P. Moreland, *The Creation Hypothesis*.[\[5\]](#)

Chemical Problems are illustrated by the difficulty in synthesizing even the simplest building block molecules necessary for life from inorganic precursors. Amino acids, sugars, and the bases for the important nucleotide molecules that make up DNA and RNA were all thought to be easily synthesized in an early Earth atmosphere of ammonia, methane,

water vapor, and hydrogen. But further experiments showed this scenario to be unrealistic. Ammonia and methane would have been short-lived in this atmosphere; the multiple energy sources available would have destroyed the necessary molecules and water would have broken apart into hydrogen and oxygen. The oxygen was scrupulously avoided in all prebiotic scenarios because it would have poisoned all the necessary reactions.

Thermodynamic Problems arise from the difficulty in assembling all these complex molecules that would have been floating around in some prebiotic soup into a highly organized and complex cell. To accomplish the task of achieving specified complexity in life's molecules such as DNA and proteins, the availability of raw energy for millions of years is not enough. All systems where specified complexity is produced from simple components requires an energy conversion mechanism to channel the energy in the right direction to accomplish the necessary work. Without photosynthesis, there is no such mechanism in the prebiotic Earth.

The Informational Problem shows that there is no way to account for the origin of the genetic code, which is a language, without intelligent input. Informational codes require intelligent preprogramming. No evolutionary mechanism can accomplish this. Life requires intelligence.

So you can see why evolutionists would get excited about the possibility of finding evolved life elsewhere. It's because life is seemingly impossible to evolve here. So, if it did happen elsewhere, maybe our experiments are just missing something.

Independence Day, The Movie

In the movie *Independence Day*, an alien battle force swoops down on Earth with the intention of destroying the human race, sucking the planet dry of all available resources and then moving on to some other unlucky civilization in the galaxy.

But, those indomitable humans aided by good old American ingenuity outsmart those dull-witted aliens and Earth is saved. The story has been told many times, but perhaps never as well or never with such great special effects. The movie was a huge success.

But why are we continually fascinated by the possibility of alien cultures? The movie gave the clear impression that there must be great numbers of intelligent civilizations out there in the universe. This notion has become widely accepted in our culture.

Few recognize that the supposed existence of alien civilizations is based on evolutionary assumptions. The science fiction of *Star Trek* and the *Star Wars* begins with evolution. As I've stated earlier, evolutionists simply rationalize that since life evolved here with no outside interference, the universe must be pregnant with life. Astronomer Carl Sagan put it this way after he had reviewed the so-called success of early Earth chemical evolution experiments:

Nothing in such experiments is unique to the earth. The initial gases, and the energy sources, are common throughout the Cosmos. Chemical reactions like those in our laboratory vessels may be responsible for the organic matter in interstellar space and the amino acids found in meteorites. Some similar chemistry must have occurred on a billion other worlds in the Milky Way Galaxy. The molecules of life fill the Cosmos.[{6}](#)

Sagan strongly suggests that the probabilities and chemistry of the universe dictate that life is ubiquitous in the galaxy. But as I stated earlier, the odds overwhelmingly dictate that our planet is the only one suitable for life in the universe. And the chemistry on Earth also indicates that life is extremely hard to come by. The probability of life simply

based on chance occurrences is admitted by many evolutionists to be remote indeed. Many are now suggesting that life is inevitable because there are yet undiscovered laws of nature that automatically lead to complex life forms. In other words, the deck of cards is fixed. Listen to Nobel Laureate and biochemist, Christian de Duve:

We are being dealt thirteen spades not once but thousands of times in succession! This is utterly impossible, unless the deck is doctored. What this doctoring implies with respect to the assembly of the first cell is that most of the steps involved must have had a very high likelihood of taking place under the prevailing conditions. Make them even moderately improbable and the process must abort, however many times it is initiated, because of the very number of successive steps involved. In other words, contrary to Monod's affirmation, the universe was—and presumably still is—pregnant with life.[*{7}*](#)

The only problem with de Duve's suggestion is that we know of no natural processes that will lead automatically to the complexity of life. Everything we know of life leads to the opposite conclusion. Life is not a product of chance or necessity. Life is a product of intelligence.

Without Divine interference we are alone in the universe and without Christ we are—and should be—terrified. The gospel is as relevant as ever.

Notes

1. *Science*, 16 August 1996, 273:924-30.
2. *Creator and the Cosmos*, NavPress, 2001, p. 210.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 145-199.
4. Lewis and Stanley, 1984.
5. InterVarsity Press, 1994, pp. 173-210.
6. *Cosmos*, Random House, 1980, p. 40.
7. *Vital Dust*, Basic Books, 1995, p. 9.

Boys Are From Mars, Girls Are From Venus: Raising Gender-Healthy Children

Sue Bohlin begins with the concepts from John Gray's best-seller and applies them to understanding and supporting our child's gender to develop a healthy self understanding. Recognizing the wide variation among children, she is still able to apply biblical truth from a Christian perspective to give sound advice on this important topic.

Gender Differences

John Gray's best-seller *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*[\[1\]](#) woke up millions of people to the truth that men and women are different, and different is good. The politically correct lie that gender is a culturally bound social construct was shown to be just that, a lie, because life doesn't work that way.

In this article I look at gender differences in boys and girls, examining the importance of supporting our children's gender to encourage a healthy self-concept as a possible means of preventing the development of homosexuality. (While I by no means wish to oversimplify this very complex subject, there are nonetheless patterns that show up in many people who experience same-sex attraction.[\[2\]](#))

(Disclaimer: I do realize I am painting these gender differences in broad strokes. Not every boy and not every girl

will follow along these lines. However, these generalizations are true for the vast majority of children, as well as adults.)

Boys get their sense of self from achievement. They're wired to be self-reliant. One of my son's first whole sentences was, "Me do it!" They think they get extra brownie points for doing things on their own. For boys, asking for help means admitting defeat, and being offering help means being disrespected. When I used to say, "Let Mommy help you" to my two sons, they would be offended and I never knew why. If I could do it over again, I would tell them, "Let's see if you can do it on your own. If it doesn't work, I'll be glad to help."

Girls, on the other hand, get their sense of self from relationships. Most everything is about people, and asking for help is a way to build a bridge to other people. When a girl is offered help, she often feels loved and valued. So when a Daddy from Mars lets his little girl struggle on her own, because that's what a boy would appreciate, she can feel hurt and abandoned.

Boys are very linear in their thinking; they focus on one thing at a time. Girls are usually multi-taskers, able to juggle several things at once. Both of these are strengths. I finally learned to show respect for my boys' one-thing-at-a-time kind of thinking by giving them my full attention when they were talking to me. Although *I* knew that I could focus on them even if my hands were busy, they didn't think I was really listening. It's also important for men to realize that girls can do more than one thing at a time without being disrespectful, like simultaneously embroider and truly listen to someone talk.

Boys, being linear, tend to focus on a goal, whereas girls can enjoy the process as well. I frustrated my kids so many times when they'd be dressed and ready for a soccer game and I'd think, "We've got 10 minutes before we have to leave! Let's

get the living room vacuumed!" They would be focused on the goal of playing soccer and I'd drive them crazy with my emphasis on the process of running a household.

Boys tend to be competitive and girls cooperative. That makes sense since boys get their sense of self from achieving, and girls get their sense of self from relationships. There has been a definite anti-male bias in many of our schools over the past several years where competition is seen as evil and hurtful, so it's been removed whenever possible. This means educational policy has been directed *against* boys' very nature.^{3} They often achieve more through competition, even friendly competition, and that includes building relationships. Boys (and men) bond best with other guys shoulder-to-shoulder, engaged in a competition or a common task. Girls (and women) bond best face-to-face. We need to support these differences for each gender to be who God made them to be.

Boys are action-oriented. Many little boys naturally throw themselves into a chair rather than sit in it. They are naturally active, which frustrates both parents and teachers, but the solution is not to drug them or try to turn them into girls. We need to change our expectations of what makes for acceptable levels of activity in boys, and provide safe channels for all that energy.

Where boys are primarily action-oriented, girls are primarily verbal. This verbal nature of females is not a design flaw; God, who defines Himself as "the Word" in the Bible, imparted that part of His own nature to girls and women. Girls' very wordiness is what allows them to connect with other people, to be the relational beings that God intended.

These differences really show up when kids get hostile. Boys will often get physical when they're mad or frustrated. The testosterone that flows through boys' bodies is part of their physical hostility, and it needs to be respected. This very

same tendency to hit or kick when angered is usually channeled into the glory of adult masculinity where a man will fight to protect his family or his country.

When girls get hostile, they use their tongues. It's not true that "sticks and stones can hurt my bones but names will never hurt me." Unfortunately, more long-term damage can be inflicted with hurtful words than by hitting or kicking. That's why it's so important to teach girls what Proverbs teaches about the destructive power of the tongue,[{4}](#) and to work at using their verbal skills to uplift and encourage and nurture.

Follow God's Rules for Marriage and Family

Although there is no one-size-fits-all explanation for why homosexuality develops, many who struggle with same-gender attraction can identify unhealthy patterns of relating in their families as they were growing up.

One of the ways that the development of a homosexual identity can be prevented is by following God's rules for marriage and the family.[{5}](#)

First, Both husband and wife have clearly defined roles. Children need to see that mothers and fathers are not interchangeable, and there are distinct roles that men and women fulfill. They need to know that a man shows his masculinity by protecting and providing for his family, using his strength to serve them and not hurt them. They need to see the beauty of femininity expressed in their mother's nurturing and intuitive capabilities.

Second, The father is an involved leader, and is warm and affectionate toward his children. All children, but most especially boys, long for their dads' acceptance, praise and physical affection. When boys don't get it, it creates an

emotional void of a sense of intimate connection with a man, and a boy can grow up not comfortable with being male.

Third, The mother loves and nurtures her family without being controlling. Girls need their mothers to show them that being a female is a good and lovely gift from God, and boys need their mothers to love and respect them without smothering.

Fourth, The father loves the mother. In showing love for his wife, the father creates the climate in which a little girl can believe it is safe and good to be a woman, and men can be trusted. When a boy sees his father loving his mother, cherishing and protecting her, he sees a man going beyond himself, the glory of masculine strength. He sees that being a man is a good and wonderful gift from God.

Fifth, The mother shows respect for the father. For the daughter, her mother's esteem for her father again shows that men are to be trusted, that women can enjoy and celebrate men. The mother's view of the father can become her view of him—and her view of men in general. Many lesbians deeply believe that men are idiots or brutes, worthless and repulsive, and something desperately sad shaped that belief.

If a boy's mother treats his father with love and respect, it says being a man is a good thing. But a weak father who accepts contempt, or a mean father who fights back, can both lead the boy to choose to identify with his mother and against his father. This just confuses his developing gender identity.

Following God's command to love wisely and well usually produces emotionally healthy kids.

Affirm Children's Gender

A wise person once said that it's easier to build a healthy child than repair an adult. The best way to build emotionally healthy children who accept and enjoy their gender is for us as parents (and grandparents and teachers) to affirm boys in

their masculinity and girls in their femininity.

Boys and girls are definitely created differently from conception, and we should support those God-ordained differences. Boys who are typically active boy need to hear words of affirmation and acceptance for what makes them boys. A friend of mine recently took her little boy for a walk down to the lake. Along the way she said, "Parker, let's look for frogs and toads. Mommy is so glad God made you a little boy so you could like yucky things like frogs and toads." When they got back to the house, his grandmother asked, "So how was your walk?" and Parker said, "Mommy's glad that I'm a boy because I like yucky things like frogs and toads!"

Boys who are NOT typically boy, those who prefer quieter pursuits like reading and music and the performing arts, especially need to be supported in their masculinity. These boys can grow up to be the King Davids in our world, and we need them! I should also point out that these sensitive, quieter types, when cherished in their masculinity, grow up to be the best kind of husbands, and men with a shepherd's heart. All boys need to hear their parents affirm their existence with comments like "I'm so glad God made you a boy" and "You're going to make a fine man when you grow up." They need to hear that a boy can be a good strong male whether or not they play sports and like rough stuff.

Feminine little girls need to be admired and cherished for their girlishness. A little girl in a new dress can be praised by her mother and friends all day long, but she won't really believe she's beautiful until her daddy tells her she is. And girls need to hear the "b" word—they they are beautiful. It's a part of the feminine heart. Not every girl or woman is beauty-pageant material, but there are many kinds of beauty, and we all need to hear that we are beautiful. Girls who aren't typically girly, the tomboys and "jockettes," especially need to be appreciated for their particular expression of femininity by praising and encouraging them.

They need to know that one can be a soft, feminine lady AND a strong leader or a great athlete.

Every child's heart longs to hear "I'm so glad you're you, and I love you just the way you are."

Understanding Gender Differences

I think it's crucial for us as adults to understand gender differences in children and support them with a sense of humor, not condemnation.

One of my friends tells of an elaborate classroom Christmas craft where the kids were to fill socks with rice, tie them off and decorate them to be snowmen—a craft created by mothers of girls. The boys filled the socks with rice, tied them off and gleefully announced, "Look! A snow worm!"

I remember hearing another friend informing her young boys, "We don't roughhouse. We play quietly and gently." She didn't mean to, but she was trying to teach her boys to be girls. NOT a good plan!

Those who experience same-gender attraction, especially men, are usually uncomfortable and insecure in their masculinity or femininity. Homosexuality isn't primarily a sexual issue, but an emotional one, and it often starts with not being comfortable or confident in the gender God chose for us. So it's important to be on the lookout for signs that children might be struggling with their gender identity and may be vulnerable to developing a homosexual identity later:

- Kids who don't fit in.
- Kids who lack a close relationship with their father, especially boys.
- Kids who wear clothes and play with toys associated with the other gender.
- Boys who are TOO good, everyone seeing them as "the good little boy."

- Poor peer relationships, not bonding with other children their same sex, often lonely.
- Kids who are bullied and shamed by other kids.

In closing, let me give three suggestions for raising emotionally healthy children with a strong sense of gender:

- Cultivate warm, affectionate, respectful relationships—between husband and wife, and between parents and children. A hurtful relationship with the same-sex parent, whether real or just perceived, is the number one contributor to the later development of homosexuality.^[6] Both boys and girls, but especially boys, need a daddy's approval, acceptance and affection. Girls develop problems with gender identity from not being protected and cherished. They need to be encouraged toward feminine things with a close and loving relationship with Mom.
- Cherish and support your child's gender. Understand the God-designed differences and tell them how special it is to be a boy or a girl.
- When you see patterns of inappropriate gender behavior, lovingly correct it. For instance, boys don't wear girls' clothes or makeup or jewelry. And boys don't play with Barbies the way girls do. However, it's OK to play with Barbies the way BOYS would! That would include physical aggression and sound effects as well as nurturing behavior.

God knew what He was doing when he chose each child's gender, and we would be wise to support His choice.

Notes

1. Gray, John. *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.
2. For example, see *Portraits of Freedom*, Bob Davies [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001], 9-10. Also, I highly recommend Don Schmierer's excellent book *An Ounce of*

Prevention: Preventing the Homosexual Condition in Today's Youth [Word, 1998].

3. Please see my colleague Don Closson's article on the Probe Web site, "The Feminization of American Schools" at www.probe.org/the-feminization-of-american-schools/.

4. E.g., Prov. 18:21, 21:23, 25:23, 26:28.

5. I am indebted to Scott Lively's insight in his online book, *Seven Steps to Recruit-Proof Your Child* at www.defendthefamily.com/pfrc/books/sevensteps/Chapter5/index.html.

6. Lecture by Dr. Joseph Nicolosi, "Prevention of Male Homosexuality," Focus on the Family's *Love Won Out* conference, May 6, 2000, Dallas, Texas.

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Myths Christians Believe – False Beliefs Exposed

Sue Bohlin identifies and examines some common false beliefs held by many Christians. These beliefs, which are countered by biblical scripture, range from considerations of angels to heaven to salvation to "God helps those who help themselves."

Angels, Good and Bad

In this article we examine some of the myths Christians believe.

There are lots of misconceptions about angels and devils that come from non-biblical sources ranging from great literature to films to the comic strips in our newspaper.

One myth about angels is that when a loved one dies, he or she becomes our guardian angel. While that can be a comforting thought, that's not what Scripture says. God created angels before He created the physical universe; because we know they sang together in worship and shouted for joy at the creation (Job 38:7). When believing loved ones die, they stay human, but they become better than they ever were on earth, and better than the angels. No angel was ever indwelt by God Himself, as Christians are!

An even greater myth that many people believe is the image of Satan as an ugly red creature with pitchfork, horns, and a tail who gladly reigns in hell. For this misconception we have several authors to thank, mainly the 13th century work of Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, written in the 1700s. The biblical image of Satan is of an angel who has fallen to irredeemable evil and depravity but yet can transform himself into a beautiful angel of light. (2 Cor. 11:14) He can make himself appear winsome, which is why people can be attracted to the occult. But Satan is not the king of hell. Jesus disarmed him at the Cross, made a public spectacle of him and the rest of the demons, and made him into a defeated foe destined for an eternity of torment in the lake of fire. (Col. 2:15, Rev. 20:10)

Another misconception about Satan that many people believe is that he is the evil counterpart to God. In C.S. Lewis' preface to the *Screwtape Letters*, he answers the question of whether he believes in "the Devil":

Now, if by 'the Devil' you mean a power opposite to God and, like God, self-existent from all eternity, the answer is certainly No. There is no uncreated being except God. God has no opposite. No being could attain a "perfect badness" opposite to the perfect goodness of God; for when you have taken away every kind of good thing (intelligence, will, memory, energy, and existence itself) there would be none of him left.

If I Do Everything Right, Life Will Work Smoothly.

A very common myth that many Christians believe is, “If I do everything right, life will work smoothly.” We seem to be immersed in an attitude of entitlement, believing that God owes us an easy and comfortable life if we serve Him. We expect to be able to avoid all pain, and we look for formulas to make life work. Frankly, many of us are addicted to our own comfort zones, and when anything disturbs our comfort zone, we feel betrayed and abandoned by God.

So when life doesn't go so smoothly, we often jump to one of two conclusions. Either we must be sinning, or God is out to get us. The book of Job draws back the curtain on the unseen drama in the heavenlies and shows us that when problems come, it doesn't have to be one of these two options. Sometimes things are going on behind the scenes in the heavenly realm that have nothing to do with our sin. And since God is totally good, it's a lie from the pit of hell that when bad things happen, God is out to get us in some kind of cosmic sadistic power play.

Even when we do everything right—although NOBODY does everything right, not even the holiest, most disciplined people—things can go wrong. The Bible gives us insight into why it might be happening. First, we live in a fallen world, where bad stuff happens because that's the consequence of sin. This includes natural disasters like hurricanes and tornadoes and floods, and includes moral disasters like divorce and abuse and murder.

Secondly, we live in a spiritual battle zone. Unseen demonic enemies attack us with spiritual warfare. God has provided spiritual armor, described in Ephesians 6, but if we don't put it on, His armor can't protect us.

Third, we have an inaccurate view of suffering. We think that

if we're suffering, something is wrong and needs to be fixed. But 1 Peter 4:19 says that some people suffer according to the will of God. That doesn't sound very nice, but that's because we often think the most important thing in life is avoiding pain. But God isn't committed to keeping us comfortable, He's creating a Bride for His Son who needs to shine with character and perseverance and maturity.

The Lord Jesus promised that we would have tribulation in this world. (John 16:33) The word for tribulation means pressure; it means we get squeezed in by trouble. Jesus said that in the world we would have pressure, but in Him we have peace. Life won't always work smoothly, no matter how well we live, but we always have the presence and power of God Himself to take us through it.

God Won't Give Me More Than I Can Handle.

People get baffled and angry when bad things happen, and it just gets worse when God doesn't make the difficult situation go away. We start wondering if God has gone on vacation because we're nearing our breaking point and God isn't stepping in to make things better.

The problem with this myth is that God is in the business of breaking His people so that we will get to the point of complete dependence on Him.[{1}](#) Brokenness is a virtue, not something to be protected from. When the apostle Paul pleaded with God to remove his thorn in the flesh, God said no. Instead, He responded with an amazing promise: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul realized that his weakness was the very key to experiencing God's strength and not his own.

One of my friends ministered as a chaplain at Ground Zero in New York after the Sept. 11 attacks. She got so tired and exhausted that she knew it was more than she could bear. That's when she discovered that her exhaustion took her out of

God's way and He could shine through her, ministering with His strength through her profound weakness.

I love this definition of brokenness: "Brokenness is that place where we realize that all the things we counted on to make life work, don't." [{2}](#) God makes life work. Formulas don't. Our own efforts don't. Trustful dependence on Him plugs us into the power source for life. And that often happens when we've crossed over the line of what we can handle on our own.

God Helps Those Who Help Themselves.

This myth has been repeated so many times that many people think its in Scripture. It's not. In fact, the truth is exactly the opposite. A heart full of self-dependence and self-reliance says to God, "I don't need You, I can do it myself. I can handle life without You." God honors our choices and the exercise of our will; He doesn't push His help on us. He waits for us to ask for it. He can't help those who help themselves because we're too busy *doing* to receive His strength and His help. It's like the way you can't fill a cup with coffee when it's already full of tea. Jesus said, "Apart from Me, you can do nothing." (John 15:5) But that doesn't stop lots of us from trying! The truth is, God doesn't help those who help themselves; God helps the helpless.

Two Myths About Heaven

The first myth is perpetuated by the many jokes and comics about St. Peter at the pearly gates. Many people believe that if our good deeds outweigh our bad deeds, St. Peter will let us into heaven. It doesn't work that way.

God has one standard for getting into heaven: absolute perfection and holiness. The person who has sinned the smallest sin is still guilty and cannot be perfect and holy. It's like a balloon: once it's popped, there's nothing anyone can do to make it whole again. Only one Person has ever

qualified for heaven by being perfect and holy—the Lord Jesus. When we trust Christ as our Savior, He does two things for us: He pays the penalty for our sin, which keeps us out of hell, and He exchanges our sin for His righteousness, which allows us into heaven.

Another myth is that heaven is like a big socialist state where everybody gets a standard issue harp and halo and we all sit around on clouds all day praising God in a never-ending church service. Doesn't sound all that great, does it?

Fortunately, heaven's a whole lot better than that. For one thing, the reason we think worshiping God for all eternity is boring is because we don't know God as He really is. We're like the six-year-old boy who declared that "girls are stupid, and kissin' 'em is even stupider." Kids don't have a clue how great love can be, and we don't have a clue how wonderful God is.

Heaven is no socialist state. There will be varying degrees of reward and responsibility in heaven, depending on the way we lived our life on earth. All believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, when God will test our works by passing them through the fire of motive. If we did things in His strength and for His glory, they will pass through the refining fire and emerge as gold, silver and costly stones. If we did things in our own flesh and for our glory or for the earthly payoff, we will have gotten all our strokes on earth, and our works will be burned up, not making it through the testing "fire."

There are different types of rewards in heaven: a prophet's reward, a righteous man's reward, and a disciple's reward. Some will receive the crown of life, or a martyr's crown, and there's also the crown of righteousness. Our lives in heaven will be determined by the choices, sacrifices, and actions of earth. Some will be very wealthy, and others will be "barely there." You can check our Web site for the scriptures about

this.{3}

Myths About the Bible and Salvation

Many non-Christians believe a myth that is accepted by a lot of Christians as well—that the Bible has been changed and corrupted since it was written. The historical evidence actually makes a rather astounding case for the supernatural protection and preservation of both Old and New Testaments.

As soon as the New Testament documents were written, people immediately started making copies and passing them around. There are so many copies in existence that the New Testament is the best-documented piece of ancient literature in the world. And because there are so many copies, we can compare them to today's Bible and be assured that what we have is what was written.

The Old Testament scribes were so meticulous in copying their manuscripts that they were obsessive about accuracy. They would count the middle letter of the entire original text and compare it to the middle letter of the new copy. If it didn't match, they'd make a new copy. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, they demonstrated that this collection of Old Testament scriptures has been faithfully preserved for two thousand years.

Many people believe that certain parts of the Bible have been corrupted or deleted, such as supposed teaching on reincarnation. However, this is just hearsay from people who do not understand how the canon of scripture was decided on. From the beginning of the church, Christians recognized the 27 books that make up the New Testament as God's inspired word, and the writings that weren't inspired were eventually dropped. We have some great articles on our Web site that explain about the reliability of the Bible.{4}

Many Christians believe another myth: "I believe in Jesus, but

surely God will let people of other faiths into heaven too.” Many seem to think that being a “good Muslim” or a “sincere Buddhist” should count for something.

This does make sense from a human perspective, but God didn’t leave us in the dark trying to figure out truth on our own. He has revealed truth to us, both through Jesus and through the Bible. So regardless of what makes sense from our limited human perspective, we need to trust what God has said.

And Jesus, who ought to know because He is God in the flesh, said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me.” (John 14:6) No other religion deals with the problem of sin and God’s requirement of perfection and holiness on God’s terms. There may be many ways to Jesus, but there’s only way to the Father. It’s God’s heaven, and He makes the rules: it’s Jesus or nothing.

Notes

1. I am indebted to Dr. Al Meredith, the pastor of Wedgwood Baptist Church in Ft. Worth, Texas, for this perspective. Wedgwood Baptist was the site of the massacre the night of the “See You At the Pole” celebration when seven youth and staff members were killed and seven others wounded by a crazed gunman.

2. Jeff Kinkade, pastor of Reinhardt Bible Church in Garland, Texas.

3. [“Probe Answers Our E-Mail: Help Me Understand Rewards in Heaven.”](#)

4. [“Are the Biblical Documents Reliable?”](#). Also, [“The Authority of the Bible”](#) and [“The Christian Canon”](#).

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Philosophical Taoism: A Christian Appraisal

The Chinese translation of John 1:1 reads, "In the beginning was the Tao..." Are Taoism and Christianity compatible? Dr. Michael Gleghorn says that even though there are some similarities, Christianity's uniqueness remains separate from all philosophies, including Taoism.



This article is also available in [Spanish](#).

Taoism and the Tao

The philosophy of Taoism is traditionally held to have originated in China with a man named Lao-tzu. Although most scholars doubt that he was an actual historical figure, tradition dates his life from 604-517 B.C. The story goes that Lao-tzu, "saddened by his people's disinclination to cultivate the natural goodness he advocated,"^{1} decided to head west and abandon civilization. As he was leaving, the gatekeeper asked if he would write down his teachings for the benefit of society. Lao-tzu consented, retired for a few days, and returned with a brief work called *Tao-Te Ching*, "The Classic of the Way and Its Power."^{2} It "contains 81 short chapters describing the meaning of Tao and how one should live according to the Tao."^{3} The term *Tao* is typically translated into English as "way", but it can also be translated as "path," "road" or "course."

The chief object of philosophical Taoism "is to live in a way that conserves life's vitality by not expending it in useless, draining ways, the chief of which are friction and conflict."^{4} One does this by living in harmony with the Tao,

or Way, of all things: the way of nature, of society, and of oneself. Taoist philosophers have a particular concept that characterizes action in harmony with the Tao. They call it *wu-wei*. Literally this means “non-action,” but practically speaking it means taking no action that is contrary to nature. Thus, “action in the mode of *wu-wei* is action in which friction – in interpersonal relationships, in intra-psychic conflict, and in relation to nature – is reduced to the minimum.”[\[5\]](#)

But if we are to live in harmony with the Tao, we must first get some idea of what it is. And this presents something of a difficulty, for *Tao-Te Ching* begins by asserting that words are not adequate for explaining the Tao: “The Tao . . . that can be told of is not the eternal Tao.”[\[6\]](#) But if words cannot fully explain the Tao, they can at least suggest it. In chapter 25 we read:

There was something undifferentiated and yet complete,
Which existed before heaven and earth.
Soundless and formless, it depends on nothing and does not
change. It operates everywhere and is free from danger.
It may be considered the mother of the universe.
I do not know its name; I call it Tao.[\[7\]](#)

This passage says a lot about the Tao. For instance, it is prior to the physical universe.[\[8\]](#) It is independent and does not change. It operates everywhere. And it apparently gave birth to the universe. If this is so, you may be thinking that the Tao sounds awfully similar to the Christian God. However, some of these similarities are more apparent than real – and there are also major differences.

God and the Tao

In philosophical Taoism, “Tao” is the term used to signify ultimate reality. “Tao is that reality . . . that existed prior to and gave rise to all other things, including Heaven

and Earth and everything upon or within them.”{9} For this reason one might initially think that what a Taoist means by the Tao is virtually synonymous with what the Christian means by God. But is this really so?

After Lao-tzu, the most important representative of philosophical Taoism was a man named Chuang-tzu, believed to have lived sometime between 399-295 B.C. He is the author of a text called the *Chuang Tzu*. While the thought of these two men is certainly different, there are also important similarities. One of these concerns the relationship of the Tao to the physical universe. In words reminiscent of *Tao-Te Ching*, the *Chuang Tzu* declares, “Before heaven and earth came into being, Tao existed by itself from all time. . . . It created heaven and earth.”{10}

The most interesting part of this statement is the assertion that the Tao created heaven and earth. How are we to understand this? Does Chuang-tzu view the Tao as Creator in the same sense in which Christians would apply this term to God? Probably not. In addressing such questions one commentator has written: “Any personal God . . . is clearly out of harmony with Chuang Tzu’s philosophy.”{11} Properly speaking, Taoists view the Tao more as a *principle* than a *person*. Indeed, some scholars speak of the Tao as “an impersonal force of existence that is beyond differentiation.”{12} So how does the concept of the Tao compare with the Christian view of God in the Bible?

Both the Tao and God are similarly credited with creating heaven and earth. This similarity may offer an initial point of contact between Christians and Taoists, a way to begin a meaningful dialogue about the nature of ultimate reality. As Christians we should always acknowledge any common ground that we might share with those from other religious perspectives. In Acts 17 Paul does this very thing when he speaks at the Areopagus in Athens. In verse 28 he quotes with approval from two pagan poets to help illustrate something of the nature of

God.

But Paul also made distinctions between the Christian doctrine of God and the views of the Athenians. In the same way, we also need to notice how the Tao differs from a biblical view of God. The greatest difference is that the Tao is impersonal whereas God is personal. The Tao is like a force, principle or energy; the Christian God is a personal being. It's crucial to realize that ultimate reality cannot be both personal and impersonal at the same time and in the same sense. Let's look at the reasons to believe that ultimate reality is personal.

Morality and the Tao

Philosophical Taoism teaches that the Tao, or ultimate reality, is impersonal. If this is so, then what becomes of morality? Can an impersonal force be the source of objective moral values that apply to all men, at all times, in all places? Is an impersonal force capable of distinguishing between good and evil? Or can such distinctions only be made by personal beings? And what of that haunting sense of obligation we all feel to do what is good and avoid what is evil? Can we be morally obligated to obey an impersonal force? Or does our nagging sense of moral obligation seem to presuppose a Moral Lawgiver to whom we are morally accountable?

Such questions are important because each of us, if we're honest, recognizes that there is an objective distinction between moral good and evil. Such distinctions are not ultimately dependent on our preferences or feelings; they are essential to the very nature of reality. But the Tao is neither capable of making such distinctions, nor of serving as the source of such objective moral values. Only a personal agent can fill such roles. "The ultimate form of the *Tao* is beyond moral distinctions."[\[13\]](#)

The doctrine of moral relativism is explicitly taught in the

writings of Chuang-tzu. He writes, "In their own way things are all right . . . generosity, strangeness, deceit, and abnormality. The Tao identifies them all as one."[\[14\]](#) This statement helps clarify why the notion of a personal God is inconsistent with Taoist philosophy. Persons make moral distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil. But according to Chuang-tzu, the impersonal Tao identifies them all as one.

This has serious implications for philosophical Taoists. If the goal of the Taoist sage is to live in harmony with the Tao, then shouldn't moral distinctions be abandoned? If the Tao makes no such distinctions, why should its followers do so? Indeed, Chuang-tzu belittles those who embrace such distinctions declaring that they "must be either stupid or wrong."[\[15\]](#)

Biblical Christianity, however, teaches that there are such things as objective moral values. The source of such values is the eternal, transcendent, holy God of the Bible. Unlike the Tao, the Christian God is not beyond moral distinctions. On the contrary, John tells us, "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5) And Moses describes Him as "A God of faithfulness and without injustice." (Deut. 32:4) And while Taoism proclaims an *impersonal* principle which judges no one, the Apostle Paul describes a *personal* God to whom we are morally accountable and who will one day judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31; Rom. 1:18-2:6). In summary, a personal Moral Lawgiver provides a better explanation of objective moral values than does an impersonal principle.

Persons and the Tao

We've seen that philosophical Taoism and biblical Christianity differ on the nature of ultimate reality. Taoists view ultimate reality (i.e. the Tao) as an impersonal force that brought the universe into being. Christians view ultimate reality (i.e. God) as the personal Creator of the universe.

The law of non-contradiction says it's impossible for ultimate reality to be both personal and impersonal at the same time and in the same sense. Thus, if one of these views is true, the other certainly must be false.

I argued that if objective moral values are real (and we all live as if they are), then it is more reasonable to believe that the source of such values is personal, rather than impersonal. Now I want to continue this line of thought by arguing that the existence of human persons is best explained by appealing to a personal Creator rather than to an impersonal principle like the Tao. To help us see why this is so, let's briefly consider some of the differences between a personal being and an impersonal principle.

First, personal beings (like men and women) possess such attributes as intellect, emotion, and will. That is, they have the ability to think, feel, and take considered action. An impersonal principle can do none of these things. In addition, a personal being has the ability to form and maintain relationships with other persons. But again, this is something that an impersonal force simply cannot do. If a cause must always be greater than the effect it produces, then does it make more sense to believe that the ultimate cause of human persons is personal or impersonal?

The Bible says that men and women are created in the image of God. (Gen. 1:26-27) God is described as possessing all the attributes of a personal being. He thinks, knows and understands. (Ps.139) He experiences emotions such as sorrow (Gen. 6:6) and joy. (Matt. 25:21; Jn. 15:11) He is described as working "all things after the counsel of His will." (Eph. 1:11) Finally, He is able to form and maintain relationships with other persons. (Jer. 1:5; Gal. 1:15) Indeed, this was true even before God created anything, for from all eternity the three distinct persons of the Godhead – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – have enjoyed intimate communion and fellowship with one another. (Jn. 14-17)

It's crucial to realize that the impersonal Tao possesses none of these personal attributes. But if that which is personal is superior to that which is impersonal, then it seems more reasonable to believe that the ultimate cause of human persons must likewise be personal. And thus the personal God of the Bible provides a better explanation for the existence of human persons than does the impersonal Tao.

Evangelism and the Tao

I've emphasized that one of the crucial differences between philosophical Taoism and biblical Christianity is the nature of ultimate reality. Taoists hold that the Tao is impersonal; Christians hold that God is personal. I've argued that it is more reasonable to believe that both objective moral values and human persons come from a source that is ultimately personal rather than impersonal. I wish to conclude by providing one more line of evidence for this position.[{16}](#)

At the end of chapter 67 of the *Tao Te Ching* we read this statement: "When Heaven is to save a person, Heaven will protect him through deep love."[{17}](#) What does such a statement mean? Although it may be argued that it was simply intended as a figure of speech, it's interesting that the author should apparently feel led to ascribe personal attributes to what is supposed to be an impersonal Heaven.

For instance the phrase, "When Heaven is to save a person," seems to imply a considered action on Heaven's part. But only persons can take considered action; an impersonal force cannot do so. In addition, the second half of the sentence speaks of Heaven's protecting a person through "deep love." But an impersonal force is incapable of love. Such love seems once again to require a personal agent.

Another interesting statement from the *Tao Te Ching* occurs at the end of chapter 62:

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Why did the ancients so treasure this DAO? Is it not because it has been said of it: "Whosoever asks will receive; whosoever has sinned will be forgiven"? Therefore is DAO the most exquisite thing on earth.{18}

This passage also ascribes personal attributes to the impersonal Tao. Specifically, the Tao is said to forgive sinners. This raises two difficulties. First, "forgiveness" means that a moral standard has been broken. But the *Tao* is beyond such moral distinctions!"{19} Second, only persons can exercise forgiveness. An impersonal force is incapable of such a thing.

Such statements may open the door for Christians to tell their Taoist friends about the deep love and forgiveness of God revealed in the Bible. Jesus spoke of God's deep love when He said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) And the Apostle John spoke of God's continued willingness to forgive His children when he wrote, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) Since only persons are capable of love and forgiveness, it seems more reasonable to believe that the personal God of the Bible, rather than the impersonal Tao of Taoism, is the ultimate source of such precious gifts.

Notes

1. Huston Smith, *The World's Religions* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), 197.
2. Ibid.
3. Kenneth Boa, *Cults, World Religions and the Occult* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990), 57.
4. Smith, 200.
5. Ibid.
6. *Tao-Te Ching*, trans. Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), 139.

7. Ibid., 152.
8. However, in chap. 7 of Chan's translation we read, "Heaven is eternal and earth everlasting." There are some apparent inconsistencies in Tao Te Ching.
9. Robert Henricks, *Confucius, the Tao, the Ancestors, and the Buddha: The Religions of China*, in *Great World Religions: Beliefs, Practices and Histories, Part IV* (n.p.: The Teaching Company Limited Partnership, 1998), 14.
10. Chuang Tzu, trans. Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 194.
11. Ibid., 181.
12. Dean C. Halverson and Kent Kedl, "Taoism," in *The Compact Guide to World Religions*, ed. Dean C. Halverson (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996), 224.
13. Ibid.
14. Chuang Tzu, trans. Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 184.
15. Ibid., 206.
16. In this section I have relied heavily on the observations and insights of Halverson and Kedl in *The Compact Guide to World Religions*, 227-230.
17. Tao-Te Ching, trans. Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 171.
18. Richard Wilhelm (trans. into German). *Tao Te Ching*. H.G. Oswald (trans. into English) (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 55, cited in Halverson, ed., *The Compact Guide to World Religions*, 229.
19. Halverson, ed., *The Compact Guide to World Religions*, 229.

Integrity – A Christian Virtue

Kerby Anderson helps us understand the true meaning and importance of the Christian virtue of integrity. From a biblical worldview perspective, integrity is a critical element of a Christ centered life. Understanding integrity will help us incorporate it in our daily walk with Jesus Christ.



This article is also available in [Spanish](#).

Integrity and the Bible

The subject of this article is the concept of integrity—a character quality that we often talk about but don’t see quite as regularly in the lives of public officials or even in the lives of the people we live and work with.

The word *integrity* comes from the same Latin root as *integer* and implies a wholeness of person. Just as we would talk about a whole number, so also we can talk about a whole person who is undivided. A person of integrity is living rightly, not divided, nor being a different person in different circumstances. A person of integrity is the same person in private that he or she is in public.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talked about those who were “pure in heart” (Matt. 5:8), implying an undividedness in following God’s commands. Integrity, therefore, not only implies an undividedness, but a moral purity as well.

The Bible is full of references to integrity, character, and moral purity. Consider just a few Old Testament references to

integrity. In 1 Kings 9:4, God instructs Solomon to walk with “integrity of heart and uprightness” as his father did. David says in 1 Chronicles 29:17, “I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity.” And in Psalm 78:70-72 we read that “David shepherded them with integrity of heart, with skillful hands.”

The book of Proverbs provides an abundance of verses on integrity. Proverbs 10:9 says that, “He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out.” A person of integrity will have a good reputation and not have to fear that he or she will be exposed or found out. Integrity provides a safe path through life.

Proverbs 11:3 says, “The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the falseness of the treacherous will destroy them.” Proverbs is a book of wisdom. The wise man or woman will live a life of integrity, which is a part of wisdom. Those who follow corruption or falsehood will be destroyed by the decisions and actions of their lives.

Proverbs 20:7 says, “A righteous man who walks in his integrity; How blessed are his sons after him.” Integrity leaves a legacy. A righteous man or woman walks in integrity and provides a path for his or her children to follow.

All of these verses imply a sense of duty and a recognition that we must have a level of discernment of God’s will in our lives. That would certainly require that people of integrity be students of the Word, and then diligently seek to apply God’s Word to their lives. The book of James admonishes us to be “doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (James 1:22). That is my goal in this article as we talk about integrity.

Corruption

As we examine integrity, I would like to talk about its

opposite: corruption. We claim to be a nation that demands integrity, but do we really? We say we want politicians to be honest, but really don't expect them to be; perhaps because often we aren't as honest as we should be. We say that we are a nation of laws, but often we break some of those same laws—like speed limits and jaywalking— and try to justify our actions.

A powerful illustration can be found in the book, *The Day America Told the Truth*, by James Patterson and Peter Kim.[\[1\]](#) Using a survey technique that guaranteed the privacy and anonymity of the respondents, they were able to document what Americans really believe and do. The results were startling.

First, they found there was no moral authority in America. "Americans are making up their own moral codes. Only 13 percent of us believe in all the Ten Commandments. Forty percent of us believe in five of the Ten Commandments. We choose which laws of God we believe in. There is absolutely no moral consensus in this country as there was in the 1950s, when all our institutions commanded more respect."

Second, they found Americans are not honest. "Lying has become an integral part of American culture, a trait of the American character. We lie and don't even think about it. We lie for no reason." The authors estimate that 91 percent of us lie regularly.

Third, marriage and family are no longer sacred institutions. "While we still marry, we have lost faith in the institution of marriage. A third of married men and women confessed to us that they've had at least one affair. Thirty percent aren't really sure that they still love their spouse."

Fourth, they found that the "Protestant [work] ethic is long gone from today's American workplace. Workers around America frankly admit that they spend more than 20 percent (7 hours a week) of their time at work totally goofing off. That amounts

to a four-day work week across the nation.”

The authors conclude by suggesting that we have a new set of commandments for America:

- I don't see the point in observing the Sabbath (77 percent).
- I will steal from those who won't really miss it (74 percent).
- I will lie when it suits me, so long as it doesn't cause any real damage (64 percent).
- I will cheat on my spouse; after all, given the chance, he or she will do the same (53 percent).
- I will procrastinate at work and do absolutely nothing about one full day in every five (50 percent).

We may say that we are a nation that wants integrity, but apparently a majority of us lack it in our own personal lives.

The Traits of Integrity

Honesty

I would now like to turn our focus toward four key traits found in a person of integrity. One of those traits is honesty.

We talked about some of the findings from the book *The Day America Told the Truth*. The authors found that nearly everyone in America lies and does so on a fairly regular basis. Truth telling apparently is no longer a virtue people try to adopt for their lives. We may say we want people to tell the truth, but we don't do it ourselves.

That is the problem with corruption; it is corrosive. We believe we can be dishonest just a little bit. We say we want people to be honest, but then we cheat on our taxes. We say we want people to obey the laws, but then we go “just a little” over the speed limit. We want to be honest just enough to ease

our conscience.

It's a little like the story of the man who sent a letter to the Internal Revenue Service. He said, "I cheated on my income taxes, and felt so bad that I couldn't sleep. Enclosed find a check for \$150. And if I still can't sleep I'll send the rest of what I owe."

Many of us can relate to that man. We want to be honest, but sometimes we find it easier to be dishonest. So we try to find a way to compromise our values so that a little bit of lying doesn't bother our conscience.

Trustworthiness

Another characteristic of a person of integrity is trustworthiness. A person of integrity is unimpeachable. He or she stands by principles no matter what the consequences. A person of integrity realizes there are moral absolutes even in a world of relative values.

In Tom Clancy's novel, *Clear and Present Danger*, Jack Ryan is about the only noble character in the book. As he begins to uncover this clandestine government plot, he is confronted by the antagonist who makes fun of Jack Ryan's principles. He says, "You're a boy scout, Jack. Don't you get it? It's all grey. It's all grey."

I wonder how often people of integrity hear a similar statement in corporate board rooms or the halls of government. It's all grey. There are no absolute right and wrong values. It's all relative.

A person of integrity knows that it isn't all grey. There are principles worth standing by and promoting. There are values that should govern our lives. We have a responsibility to follow God's law rather than the crowd.

When the book of Proverbs talks of the "integrity of the

upright" it implies that we adhere to God's will and God's laws. We have a duty to obey God's absolute commands in our lives and become men and women of integrity.

"Private" Life

There is a popular book on the market entitled, *Who You Are When Nobody's Looking*. Who are you when nobody's looking? Will I see the same person that I see when you are in a group of people? Do you do the right thing no matter what the circumstances?

There was a newspaper story years ago about a man in Long Beach who went into a KFC to get some chicken for himself and the young lady with him. She waited in the car while he went in to pick up the chicken. Inadvertently the manager of the store handed the guy the box in which he had placed the financial proceeds of the day instead of the box of chicken. You see, he was going to make a deposit and had camouflaged it by putting the money in a fried chicken box.

The fellow took his box, went back to the car, and the two of them drove away. When they got to the park and opened the box, they discovered they had a box full of money. Now that was a very vulnerable moment for the average individual. However, realizing the mistake, he got back into the car and returned to the place and gave the money back to the manager. Well, the manager was elated! He was so pleased that he told the young man, "Stick around, I want to call the newspaper and have them take your picture. You're the most honest guy in town.

"Oh, no, don't do that!" said the fellow.

"Why not?" asked the manager.

"Well," he said, "you see, I'm married, and the woman I'm with is not my wife."[\[2\]](#)

Apparently he had not considered the consequences of his

actions. Even when he was doing something right, it turned out he was also doing something wrong. A person of integrity is integrated and authentic. There is no duplicity of attitudes and actions.

When the apostle Paul lists the qualifications for an elder in the church, he says “he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (1 Tim. 3:7). This is not only a desirable quality for church elders, it is a quality we should all aspire to. Christians should be “above reproach” in their public testimony before the watching world.

In the next section we will talk more about the importance of a public testimony of integrity and conclude our study.

Public Testimony

I would like to conclude our discussion by addressing the importance of integrity in our daily lives.

It’s been said that we may be the only Bible some people ever read. In other words, people around us often judge the truthfulness of Christianity by its affect in our lives. If they see us as hypocrites, they may not go any further in their investigation of the gospel.

Every day we rub shoulders with people who are watching us. Your life will demonstrate to them whether Christianity is true or false. They make value judgements about you by your attitudes and actions. Have we made the right choice?

After his Sunday messages, the pastor of a church in London got on the trolley Monday morning to return to his study downtown. He paid his fare, and the trolley driver gave him too much change. The pastor sat down and fumbled the change and looked it over, counted it eight or ten times. And, you know the rationalization, “It’s wonderful how God provides.” He realized he was tight that week and this was just about

what he would need to break even, at least enough for his lunch. He wrestled with himself all the way down that old trolley trail that led to his office. Finally, he came to the stop and got up, and he couldn't live with himself. He walked up to the trolley driver, and said, "Here. You gave me too much change. You made a mistake." The driver said, "No, it was no mistake. You see, I was in your church last night when you spoke on honesty, and I thought I would put you to the test." [\[3\]](#)

Fortunately the pastor passed the test. Do you pass the test when unbelievers look at you and your life and wonder if the gospel is true? It's a convicting question. When we live lives of integrity, opportunities for evangelism and ministry surface. When we don't, those opportunities dry up.

I have been encouraging you to develop a life of integrity. In some respects, it's a life-long process. But we have to begin somewhere. Our lives are the collection of choices we have made in the past³/₄ both good choices and bad choices. Perhaps you have seen the poem:

Sow a thought, reap an act.
Sow an act, reap a habit.
Sow a habit, reap a character.
Sow a character, reap a destiny.

I would encourage you to begin to focus on the verses and biblical principles delineated here. If you want to be a person of integrity, it won't happen overnight. But if you don't make a deliberate plan to be a person of integrity, it will never happen at all.

Notes

James Patterson and Peter Kim, *The Day America Told the Truth* (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991).

Dallas Times Herald, 23 Sept. 1966.

Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations* (Assurance

Publishers, 1990).

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Sexual Purity – A Biblical Worldview Perspective Remains Truth

Dr. Bohlin uses a passage from Proverbs to provide us insight into the importance of sexual purity for our age. This important biblical worldview concept is still valid today even in this age where sexual promiscuity is trumpeted from the media.

Medical Reasons for Sexual Purity

As our society prepares to enter the 21st century, one trend and long-time staple of our culture looms ever larger on the horizon. The places to which one can escape in order to avoid sexual temptation continue to shrink. Children cannot be allowed to roam unsupervised through the neighborhood video stores because of the racks of videos with alluring covers of scantily clad exercisers and playmates of the year. The aisles of popular new releases contain images from R-rated movies that were only found in skin magazines thirty years ago. A trip to the grocery store can take you past the book aisle with suggestive covers on romance novels which contain graphic descriptions of sexual encounters. Billboards for beer, cars, and movies all use sex to sell. Radio stations readily play songs today that were banned from the airwaves decades ago. A trip to the mall takes you past stores with only sex to sell. Your home is invaded with sexually explicit images over even

the free non-cable channels and your home computer. Unwelcome mail enters your home selling well-known sex magazines that continue to earn millions of dollars every year.

From the moment Adam and Eve were ashamed of their nakedness, sexual temptation has been in our midst. But except for brief periods in declining cultures, the temptations had to be sought after. There were places where one could be relatively safe from the sights and sounds which inflame lust and desire. Those days are over. Oh, sure, you can have blocks installed on your computer or phone and the local video store will allow you to put a screen on your children's rentals. But the fact that such systems are necessary and only voluntary should be enough to tell us of the pervasiveness of sex in our society. Sexual purity is a rare and often scorned virtue today. When a Hollywood couple makes it known that they are saving sex for marriage, people ask, "Why would you do that?"

While sex is clearly pervasive in our society, you don't have to look very far to find plenty of reasons to avoid sexual relations outside of marriage. The biblical words for *fornication* or *sexual immorality* refer to all sexual activity outside of marriage, and the Scriptures clearly state that all such activity is forbidden (Lev. 18 & 20; Matt. 15:19; 1 Cor. 6:9-10,18; 1 Thess. 4:3). But a person may rationalize that while sexual activity outside of marriage is sin, "I can always be forgiven for my sin, and as long as I am not found out, who gets hurt?" Paul answers this resoundingly in Romans 6. "May it never be!" cries the apostle. By allowing sin to reign in our hearts we effectively say that Christ's death and resurrection has no power in our life.

If this is not powerful enough, consider the physical consequences of sexual immorality that exist today. In the 1960s there were only two STDs: syphilis and gonorrhea. Today there are over 25, and 1 in 5 Americans between the ages of 15 and 55 has a viral STD. That number is 1 in 4 if bacterial infections are included. There are 12 million new infections

every year with 60 percent of these among teenagers.

Chlamydia and gonorrhea can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease which often results in sterility. Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) frequently produces genital warts which can develop into cancer. Rampant HPV infection is the primary reason that women are urged to have Pap smears on a yearly basis. If you are sexually active outside of marriage and "lucky," you may only contract herpes, but even this is an embarrassing, bothersome, incurable infection. But you may get AIDS, which will kill you. Since the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) can lie dormant for years before developing into deadly AIDS, your sex partner may not know that he or she is infected. The fact is, if you are sexually active outside of marriage, it is almost guaranteed that you will contract at least one STD.

But information is not enough. Why is sexual purity within marriage so important to God? And what do we do to avoid falling into sexual sin with so much temptation swirling around our heads? We will now turn to explore some time tested advice from Scripture to see what we must do and why.

The Naturalistic Rejection of the Mystical Nature of Marriage

In his book *Reason in the Balance*, Phillip Johnson brilliantly documents the vise grip of philosophical naturalism in science, law, and education in the United States. Our populace has been taught for so long that matter, energy, space, and time are all that exists that it has infected every form of cultural discourse, including our sexual behavior. Freedom of choice and personal fulfillment are praised as the ultimate virtues because, for the naturalist, sex is just a physical act that fulfills a basic need and instinct of every person. People should be free to pursue whatever sexual expression they choose to meet that basic physiological need. And this

need is only created by our fundamental drive to reproduce and spread our genes into the next generation. In the naturalistic worldview, sex becomes simply a basic need and marriage just a relative cultural expression to satisfy that need for some, but not all people.

That is why so many people, including Christians, look at Scripture's clear statements condemning sex outside of marriage as antiquated and old-fashioned. "Oh," they say, "they applied to the people of that time, but not now. Not as we prepare to enter the 21st century!" But this raises some important questions. First, do the Scriptural injunctions against any sex outside of marriage really apply today? The answer, of course, is, "Yes, they do." We recognize readily what the Bible has to say about sex, and we see all about us the physical, emotional, and relational consequences of sexual immorality. Since God is sovereign, He established these consequences as warning signs not to transgress His principles. But second, just why is sexual fidelity so important to God?

The first reason is because God's intentions for marriage were clearly stated right from the beginning. Genesis 2:18-25 makes it plain that God's design was one man and one woman for life. Jesus used this passage as the basis for His teaching on divorce in Matthew 19: "What God has joined together, let no man break apart." As Creator, God has every right to tell us what He wants.

Second, the Father has used the marriage union as an analogy for His relationship with Israel in the Old Testament and the church's relationship with Jesus in the New Testament. Isaiah 1:21, Jeremiah 2:20, 3:1-10, and especially Ezekiel 16:15-34 accuse Israel of playing the harlot, chasing after other gods and ignoring her rightful "husband." God's union with Israel was to be forever. He was faithful, but Israel was not. The Lord rained down His judgment on the unfaithfulness of Israel

and Judah. In Ephesians 5 Paul tells husbands that they are to love their wives as Christ loves the church. Elsewhere, Jesus is spoken of as the bridegroom and the church as His bride, another relationship that is to be forever. Jesus will be faithful. Will the church? Our marital and sexual relationships are to mirror the Lord's special relationships with Israel in the Old Testament and the church in the New. God hates divorce and any sexual relationships outside of marriage, because He hates it when His faithfulness to us is spurned by our turning to other gods. This is true whether they be the pagan gods of old, which are still around, or the modern gods of self, money, power, and sex.

Well, we may know what is right, but knowing what is right is often not the same as doing what is right. Now, I want to look at a passage in Proverbs that instructs its readers concerning dangers, both obvious and subtle, of sexual temptation.

A Young Man Lacking Sense Meets a Harlot

It is hard for some to imagine that the Bible contains explicit advice on how to avoid sexual temptation. But the entire chapter of Proverbs 7 is devoted to exactly that. In the first five verses, Solomon essentially pleads with his son to listen and guard his words carefully concerning the adulteress.

My son, keep my words,
And treasure my commandments within you.

Keep my commandments and live,
(sounds like serious stuff!)

And my teaching as the apple of your eye.

(actually the "pupil" or "little man of your eye." This was meant therefore to be a precious truth to be closely guarded and kept.)

Solomon goes on in verse 3:

Bind them on your fingers;
Write them on the tablet of your heart.

Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
And call understanding your intimate friend.

That they may keep you from an adulteress,
From the foreigner who flatters with her words.

In verses 6-9, King Solomon takes the role of an observer,
telling his son what he sees unfolding before him.

For at the window of my house,
I looked out through my lattice,

And I saw among the naive,
I discerned among the youths,
A young man lacking sense.

Passing through the street near her corner;
And he takes the way to her house.

In the twilight, in the evening,
In the middle of the night and in the darkness.

Solomon speaks of one who is young, inexperienced, and lacking judgment. His first clue was that he purposefully walks down her street and actually heads straight to her house in the middle of the night. As Charlie Brown would say, "Good grief!" The young man's intent is probably harmless. He is curious, perhaps hoping for a glimpse of the adulteress plying her wares to someone else on the street. Sin is probably not on his mind. He just wants to see what the real world is like. That kind of thinking is still heard today. "I just need to know what is out there so I can warn my family and others around me." In reality, our young fool was looking for titillation and was confident that he could withstand the temptation.

This is precisely why Solomon says he is lacking sense. The

apostle Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 10:12, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." Overconfidence is our worst enemy in the face of temptation. I am reminded of two contrasting characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Boromir and Faramir. Boromir and Faramir were brothers. Boromir, the elder, was renowned for his exploits in war. He was his father's favorite and the principal heir. He was confident, however, that were he to wield the One Ring, the Ring of Power, he would not be corrupted by it and could use it to defeat the armies of the evil Sauron. However, his overconfidence and lust for power lead him to attempt to steal the ring from the designated Ring-bearer. His foolishness caused the Fellowship of the Ring to be split apart under attack and led eventually to his death. He thought he could stand, but he fell.

His brother Faramir, however, had a more realistic picture of his sinful nature. When confronted later with the same opportunity to see and even hold the Ring, he refused. He knew the temptation would be strong and that the best way not to yield to the lust for power was to keep the temptation as far away as possible. Faramir, though perceived to be weaker than his brother, was, in a sense, actually the wiser and stronger of the two. He took heed and did not fall and later played a significant role in the final victory over the forces of evil.

What about you? Do you consider yourself strong enough to resist the temptations presented in movies, books, commercials, etc.? Do you walk into the movie theater blindly, lacking sense, uninformed as to why this movie is R-rated or even PG-13? Are you a headstrong Boromir, or a wise Faramir who knows his weakness in the face of temptation and avoids it whenever possible?

The Schemes of the Adulteress

As we continue in our walk through Proverbs 7, Solomon now focuses his attention on the schemes of the seductress. Our

young man lacking sense is walking down her street, right past her house. Solomon continues in verse 10:

And behold, a woman comes to meet him,
Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart.

She is boisterous and rebellious;
Her feet do not remain at home;

She is now in the streets, now in the squares,
And lurks by every corner.

Wow! What a surprise! A woman comes to meet him! Can't you just hear Gomer Pyle exclaiming at the top of his lungs, "Surprise! Surprise! Surprise!" Surprise, indeed! This is only what was expected. Her boisterousness lends an air of fun and frivolity. Let's face it, if sin weren't so enjoyable we wouldn't fall prey to it so easily. Solomon next gives the impression that she is everywhere to be found. As I pointed out earlier, that is even more true today. Even a widely proclaimed family movie like *Forrest Gump* surprised many with scenes that were unnecessary and sexually explicit. If you were surprised, you shouldn't have been. Check these things out beforehand. Don't act like a young man lacking sense and wander down the street of temptation unaware. Remember that Jesus extended the moral law from our actions to our thought life. If we simply lust after a woman, we have already committed adultery in our hearts (Matt. 5:27-28).

Solomon next turns to the woman's tactics:

So she seizes him and kisses him,
(Suddenness can put you off your guard unless you have predecided what you would do, whether it is a real seduction, a scene in a movie, TV program, or book. Will you close your eyes, leave, change channels, skip a few pages? What? Know beforehand!)

And with a brazen face she says to him:

"I was due to offer peace offerings;

Today I have paid my vows.

(I'm not such a bad person. See, I do a lot of the same things you do. You're not going to reject and judge me, are you?)

Therefore I have come out to meet you,

To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you."

Ah, the ultimate weapon with a man: female flattery. Men are suckers when they're told that they are needed. It was he, particularly, that she was waiting for. Not just anybody. If a man senses he is needed, he will be very reluctant to say no. Men usually hate to disappoint.

Solomon continues:

"I have spread my couch with coverings,

With colored linens of Egypt.

I have sprinkled my bed

With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.

Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning;

Let us delight ourselves with caresses."

As she continues her assault on the male ego by indicating all the trouble she has gone through just for him ("Don't hurt my feelings now," she says), she creates a sensual picture that is meant to arouse him and draw him in. Be realistic. This sounds inviting, even from the pages of Scripture. This should be a loud tornado siren in your ear to tell you: "There, but for the grace of God, go I!" The adulteress finishes her seduction with the assurance that no one need ever know, in verses 19 and 20. She says:

"For the man is not at home,

He has gone on a long journey;

He has taken a bag of money with him,

At the full moon he will come home."

This rationalization of “no one will know” is true not only of an affair, but also of what we allow into our minds through the privacy of our computer, videos rented when no one else is home, magazines stashed away in a secret place, or visits to parts of town where we certainly don’t expect to find anyone we know. But it’s a lie. These things cannot be hidden for a lifetime. Either you will slip up sooner or later, or you will poison your mind to such an extent that the outward temptation can no longer be resisted. Moses speaks to Israel in Numbers 32:23 warning them that if they do not obey the Lord, “their sin will find them out.”

The Young Man Capitulates and Must Face the Consequences

As we have seen, the young man in Proverbs 7 has walked right into temptation’s snare and has been totally mesmerized by the pleas and schemes of the adulteress. I have made many parallels to today as to how prevalent sexual temptation is. Now we will see the young man’s demise and the consequences of his actions. Beginning in verse 21:

With her many persuasions she entices him;
With her flattering lips she seduces him.

Suddenly he follows her,
(probably as if in a trance)
As an ox goes to the slaughter,
(silently and dumbly)
Or as a stag goes into a trap,

Until an arrow pierces through his liver,
As a bird hastens to the snare,
(again blindly and without knowledge)
So he does not know that it will cost him his life.

He capitulates without a word, mesmerized by her seduction. The analogy to the ox, the deer, and the bird point out that

each of them walk blindly, silently, and unknowingly to their death. So it is with the young man lacking sense. While he will not die in a physical sense, though he may if he contracts AIDS, he will die in the sense that his life will never be the same. Not only will the shame and guilt be difficult to overcome, but there will be severed relationships that may never be repaired. There may also be consequences that can never be removed and scars that may never be healed, such as a child out of wedlock or a broken marriage in which children are the real victims. But even if the sin is with pornography, remember your sins will find you out. You may keep up appearances for awhile but your ministry, your family, and your relationship with God will slowly rot from the inside out. Solomon closes with some final warnings and observations:

Now therefore, my sons, listen to me,
And pay attention to the words of my mouth.

Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways,
(do not give your mind opportunity with impure material)
Do not stray into her paths.

For many are the victims she has cast down,
And numerous are all her slain.

Her house is the way to Sheol,
Descending to the chambers of death.

Your best defense is to first realize that none are immune. Remember Boromir and Faramir from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Boromir, the stronger, older brother, thought he could resist the power of the One Ring and use it to defeat the enemy. In the end, his lust for power drove him to irrationality and eventually to his death. Faramir, however, assessed his weakness correctly and refused to even look at the Ring when the opportunity arose, knowing its seductive power. He not only lived but was used mightily in the battles that followed. No one was capable of totally resisting the power of the Ring.

Those who actually gazed upon the Ring, handled it and even used it, resisted only through an extreme exercise of will often aided by the intervention and counsel of others or circumstances (Frodo, Bilbo, and Samwise). Those who totally yielded to it were destroyed by it (Gollum).

Many have faltered before you and many will come after you. Your first mistake would be to think of yourself as above this kind of sin or immune to it. Don't kid yourself. It can ruin you physically! It can ruin you emotionally! It can ruin you spiritually!

Purity affirms who we are; we are made in the image of God. Purity affirms our relationship to Jesus Christ as His bride. Purity affirms women as a treasure God created for us as a companion and helpmate and not as an object for us to conquer.

Pray and ask forgiveness for any involvement in pornography, R- rated movies, and lustful thoughts. Commit to predecide what to do about those sudden temptations, commit to purity, commit to wives and husbands (or future wives and husbands) to be faithful in the power of the Holy Spirit. Martin Luther said that you cannot stop birds from flying over your head, but you can certainly stop them from making a nest in your hair. Some temptation is unavoidable, but as far as it depends on you, give it no opportunity to set up residence in your mind.

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Christian View of Government

and Law

Kerby Anderson helps us develop a biblically based, Christian view of both government and the laws it enforces. Understanding that the New Testament does not direct a particular type of government, Kerby leads us to understand how the principles of the New Testament will help us select governmental models that are conducive to Christian life and witness.

Christian View of Government

Government affects our lives daily. It tells us how fast to drive. It regulates our commerce. It protects us from foreign and domestic strife. Yet we rarely take time to consider its basic function. What is a biblical view of government? Why do we have government? What kind of government does the Bible allow?

Developing a Christian view of government is difficult since the Bible does not provide an exhaustive treatment of government. This itself is perhaps instructive and provides some latitude for these institutions to reflect the needs and demands of particular cultural situations. Because the Bible does not speak directly to every area of political discussion, Christians often hold different views on particular political issues. However, Christians are not free to believe whatever they want. Christians should not abandon the Bible when they begin to think about these issues because there is a great deal of biblical material that can be used to judge particular political options.

The Old Testament teaches that God established government after the flood (Gen. 9:6). And the Old Testament provides clear guidelines for the development of a theocracy in which God was the head of government. These guidelines, however, were written for particular circumstances involving a covenant

people chosen by God. These guidelines do not apply today because our modern governments are not the direct inheritors of the promises God made to the nation of Israel.

Apart from that unique situation, the Bible does not propose nor endorse any specific political system. The Bible, however, does provide a basis for evaluating various political philosophies because it clearly delineates a view of human nature. And every political theory rests on a particular view of human nature.

The Bible describes two elements of human nature. This viewpoint is helpful in judging government systems. Because humans are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–27), they are able to exercise judgment and rationality. However, humans are also fallen creatures (Gen. 3). This human sinfulness (Rom. 3:23) has therefore created a need to control evil and sinful human behavior through civil government.

Many theologians have suggested that the only reason we have government today is to control sinful behavior because of the Fall. But there is every indication that government would have existed even if we lived in a sinless world. For example, there seems to be some structuring of authority in the Garden (Gen. 1–2). The Bible also speaks of the angelic host as being organized into levels of authority and function.

In the creation, God ordained government as the means by which human beings and angelic hosts are ruled. The rest of the created order is governed by instinct (Prov. 30:24–28) and God's providence. Insect colonies, for example, may show a level of order, but this is due merely to genetically controlled instinct.

Human beings, on the other hand, are created in the image of God and thus are responsible to the commands of God. We are created by a God of order (1 Cor. 14:33); therefore we also seek order through governmental structures.

A Christian view of government differs significantly from views proposed by many political theorists. The basis for civil government is rooted in our created nature. We are rational and volitional beings. We are not determined by fate, as the Greeks would have said, nor are we determined by our environment as modern behaviorists say. We have the power of choice. Therefore we can exercise delegated power over the created order. Thus a biblical view of human nature requires a governmental system that acknowledges human responsibility.

While the source of civil government is rooted in human responsibility, the need for government derives from the necessity of controlling human sinfulness. God ordained civil government to restrain evil (cf. Gen. 9). Anarchy, for example, is not a viable option because all have sinned (Rom. 3:23) and are in need of external control.

Notice how a Christian view of human nature provides a basis to judge various political philosophies. For example, Christians must reject political philosophies which ignore human sinfulness. Many utopian political theories are based upon this flawed assumption. In *The Republic*, Plato proposed an ideal government where the enlightened philosopher-kings would lead the country. The Bible, however, teaches that all are sinful (Rom. 3:23). Plato's proposed leaders would also be affected by the sinful effects of the Fall (Gen. 3). They would not always have the benevolent and enlightened disposition necessary to lead the republic.

Christians should also reject a marxist view of government. Karl Marx believed that human nature was conditioned by society, and in particular, the capitalist economy. His solution was to change the economy so that you would change human nature. Why do we have greed? Because we live in a greedy capitalist society. Marx taught that if society changed the economy from capitalism to socialism and then communism, greed would cease.

Christians should reject the utopian vision of marxism because it is based upon an inaccurate view of human nature. The Bible teaches that believers can become new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17) through spiritual conversion, but that does not mean that the effects of sin are completely overcome in this life. The Bible also teaches that we will continue to live in a world tainted by sin. The view of Karl Marx contradicts biblical teaching by proposing a new man in a new society perfected by man's own efforts.

Since civil government is necessary and divinely ordained by God (Rom. 13:1–7), it is ultimately under God's control. It has been given three political responsibilities: the sword of justice (to punish criminals), the sword of order (to thwart rebellion), and the sword of war (to defend the state).

As citizens, Christians have been given a number of responsibilities. They are called to render service and obedience to the government (Matt. 22:21). Because it is a God-ordained institution, they are to submit to civil authority (1 Pet. 2:13–17) as they would to other institutions of God. As will be discussed later, Christians are not to give total and final allegiance to the secular state. Other God-ordained institutions exist in society alongside the state. Christians' final allegiance must be to God. They are to obey civil authorities (Rom. 13:5) in order to avoid anarchy and chaos, but there may be times when they may be forced to disobey (Acts 5:29).

Because government is a divinely ordained institution, Christians have a responsibility to work within governmental structures to bring about change. Government is part of the order of creation and a minister of God (Rom. 13:4). Christians are to obey governmental authorities (Rom. 13:1–4, 1 Peter 2:13–14). Christians are also to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13–16) in the midst of the political context.

Although governments may be guilty of injustice, Christians should not stop working for justice or cease to be concerned about human rights. We do not give up on marriage as an institution simply because there are so many divorces, and we do not give up on the church because of many internal problems. Each God-ordained institution manifests human sinfulness and disobedience. Our responsibility as Christians is to call political leaders back to this God-ordained task. Government is a legitimate sphere of Christian service, and so we should not look to government only when our rights are being abused. We are to be concerned with social justice and should see governmental action as a legitimate instrument to achieve just ends.

A Christian view of government should also be concerned with human rights. Human rights in a Christian system are based on a biblical view of human dignity. A bill of rights, therefore, does not grant rights to individuals, but instead acknowledges these rights as already existing. The writings of John Locke along with the Declaration of Independence capture this idea by stating that government is based on the inalienable rights of individuals. Government based on humanism, however, would not see rights as inalienable, and thus opens the possibility for the state to redefine what rights its citizens may enjoy. The rights of citizens in a republic, for example, are articulated in terms of what the government is forbidden to do. But in totalitarian governments, while the rights of citizens may also be spelled out, power ultimately resides in the government not the people.

A Christian view of government also recognizes the need to limit the influence of sin in society. This is best achieved by placing certain checks on governmental authority. This protects citizens from the abuse or misuse of governmental power which results when sinful individuals are given too much governmental control.

The greatest threat to liberty comes from the exercise of

power. History has shown that power is a corrupting force when placed in human hands. In the Old Testament theocracy there was less danger of abuse because the head of state was God. The Bible amply documents the dangers that ensued when power was transferred to a single king. Even David, a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22), abused his power and Israel experienced great calamity (2 Sam. 11–21).

Governmental Authority

A key question in political theory is how to determine the limits of governmental authority. With the remarkable growth in the size and scope of government in the 20th century, it is necessary to define clearly the lines of governmental authority. The Bible provides some guidelines.

However, it is often difficult to set limits or draw lines on governmental authority. As already noted, the Old Testament theocracy differed from our modern democratic government. Although human nature is the same, drawing biblical principles from an agrarian, monolithic culture and applying them to a technological, pluralistic culture requires discernment.

Part of this difficulty can be eased by separating two issues. First, should government legislate morality? We will discuss this in the section on social action. Second, what are the limits of governmental sovereignty? The following are a few general principles helpful in determining the limits of governmental authority.

As Christians, we recognize that God has ordained other institutions besides civil government which exercise authority in their particular sphere of influence. This is in contrast to other political systems that see the state as the sovereign agent over human affairs, exercising sovereignty over every other human institution. A Christian view is different.

The first institution is the church (Heb. 12:18–24; 1 Pet.

2:9–10). Jesus taught that the government should work in harmony with the church and should recognize its sovereignty in spiritual matters (Matt. 22:21).

The second institution is the family (Eph. 5:22–32, 1 Pet. 3:1–7). The family is an institution under God and His authority (Gen. 1:26–28, 2:20–25). When the family breaks down, the government often has to step in to protect the rights of the wife (in cases of wife abuse) or children (in cases of child abuse or adoption). The biblical emphasis, however, is not so much on rights as it is on responsibilities and mutual submission (Eph. 5:21).

A third institution is education. Children are not the wards of the state, but belong to God (Ps. 127:3) and are given to parents as a gift from God. Parents are to teach their children (Deut. 4:9) and may also entrust them to tutors (Gal. 4:2).

In a humanistic system of government, the institutions of church and family are usually subordinated to the state. In an atheistic system, ultimately the state becomes a substitute god and is given additional power to adjudicate disputes and bring order to a society. Since institutions exist by permission of the state, there is always the possibility that a new social contract will allow government to intervene in the areas of church and family.

A Christian view of government recognizes the sovereignty of these spheres. Governmental intervention into the spheres of church and family is necessary in certain cases where there is threat to life, liberty, or property. Otherwise civil government should recognize the sovereignty of other God-ordained institutions.

Moral Basis of Law

Law should be the foundation of any government. Whether law is

based upon moral absolutes, changing consensus, or totalitarian whim is of crucial importance. Until fairly recently, Western culture held to a notion that common law was founded upon God's revealed moral absolutes.

In a Christian view of government, law is based upon God's revealed commandments. Law is not based upon human opinion or sociological convention. Law is rooted in God's unchangeable character and derived from biblical principles of morality.

In humanism, humanity is the source of law. Law is merely the expression of human will or mind. Since ethics and morality are man-made, so also is law. Humanists' law is rooted in human opinion, and thus is relative and arbitrary.

Two important figures in the history of law are Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) and William Blackstone (1723-1780). Rutherford's *Lex Rex* (written in 1644) had profound effect on British and American law. His treatise challenged the foundations of 17th century politics by proclaiming that law must be based upon the Bible, rather than upon the word of any man.

Up until that time, the king had been the law. The book created a great controversy because it attacked the idea of the divine right of kings. This doctrine had held that the king or the state ruled as God's appointed regent. Thus, the king's word had been law. Rutherford properly argued from passages such as Romans 13 that the king, as well as anyone else, was under God's law and not above it.

Sir William Blackstone was an English jurist in the 18th century and is famous for his *Commentaries on the Law of England* which embodied the tenets of Judeo-Christian theism. Published in 1765, the *Commentaries* became the definitive treatise on the common law in England and in America. According to Blackstone, the two foundations for law are nature and revelation through the Scriptures. Blackstone

believed that the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom, and thus taught that God was the source of all laws. It is interesting that even the humanist Rousseau noted in his *Social Contract* that one needs someone outside the world system to provide a moral basis for law. He said, "It would take gods to give men laws."

Unfortunately, our modern legal structure has been influenced by relativism and utilitarianism, instead of moral absolutes revealed in Scripture. Relativism provides no secure basis for moral judgments. There are no firm moral absolutes upon which to build a secure legal foundation.

Utilitarianism looks merely at consequences and ignores moral principles. This legal foundation has been further eroded by the relatively recent phenomenon of sociological law. In this view, law should be based upon relative sociological standards. No discipline is more helpless without a moral foundation than law. Law is a tool, and it needs a jurisprudential foundation. Just as contractors and builders need the architect's blueprint in order to build, so also lawyers need theologians and moral philosophers to make good laws. Yet, most lawyers today are extensively trained in technique, but little in moral and legal philosophy.

Legal justice in the Western world has been based upon a proper, biblical understanding of human nature and human choice. We hold criminals accountable for their crimes, rather than excuse their behavior as part of environmental conditioning. We also acknowledge differences between willful, premeditated acts (such as murder) and so-called crimes of passion (i.e., manslaughter) or accidents.

One of the problems in our society today is that we do not operate from assumptions of human choice. The influence of the behaviorist, the evolutionist, and the sociobiologist are quite profound. The evolutionist and sociobiologist say that human behavior is genetically determined. The behaviorist says

that human behavior is environmentally determined. Where do we find free choice in a system that argues that actions are a result of heredity and environment? Free choice and personal responsibility have been diminished in the criminal justice system, due to the influence of these secular perspectives.

It is, therefore, not by accident that we have seen a dramatic change in our view of criminal justice. The emphasis has moved from a view of punishment and restitution to one of rehabilitation. If our actions are governed by something external, and human choice is denied, then we cannot punish someone for something they cannot control. However, we must rehabilitate them if the influences are merely heredity and environmental. But such a view of human actions diminishes human dignity. If a person cannot choose, then he is merely a victim of circumstances and must become a ward of the state.

As Christians, we must take the criminal act seriously and punish human choices. While we recognize the value of rehabilitation (especially through spiritual conversion, John 3:3), we also recognize the need for punishing wrong-doing. The Old Testament provisions for punishment and restitution make more sense in light of the biblical view of human nature. Yet today, we have a justice system which promotes no-fault divorce, no-fault insurance, and continues to erode away the notion of human responsibility.

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Ten Lies of Feminism: A

Christian Perspective

Sue Bohlin examines how this prevalent view of women measures up from a biblical perspective.

This essay examines the ten lies of feminism that Dr. Toni Grant suggests in her book *Being a Woman*.[{1}](#)

At its inception, the feminist movement, accompanied by the sexual revolution, made a series of enticing, exciting promises to women. These promises sounded good, so good that many women deserted their men and their children or rejected the entire notion of marriage and family, in pursuit of “themselves” and a career. These pursuits, which emphasized self-sufficiency and individualism, were supposed to enhance a woman’s quality of life and improve her options, as well as her relations with men. Now, a decade or so later, women have had to face the fact that, in many ways, feminism and liberation made promises that could not be delivered.[{2}](#)

Lie #1: Women Can Have It All

The first lie is that women can have it all. We were fed an illusion that women, being the superior sex, have an inexhaustible supply of physical and emotional energy that enable us to juggle a career, family, friendships and volunteer service. Proponents of feminism declared that not only *can* women do what men do, but we *ought* to do what men do. Since men can’t do what women can do—have babies—this put a double burden on women. It wasn’t enough that women were already exhausted from the never-ending tasks of child-rearing and homemaking; we were told that women needed to be in the work force as well, contributing to the family financially.

Scripture presents a different picture for men and women. The Bible appears to make a distinction between each gender’s primary energies. The commands to women are generally in the

realm of our relationships, which is consistent with the way God made women to be primarily relational, being naturally sensitive to others and usually valuing people above things. Scripture never forbids women to be gainfully employed; in fact, the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 is engaged in several part-time business ventures, in real estate and manufacturing. Nonetheless, it is the excellent care of her husband, her children, her home and her community that inspires the praise she is due. Titus 2 instructs older women to mentor younger women, and teach them to care for their husbands and children and homemaking responsibilities. The God-given strengths of a woman were given to bring glory to God through her womanly differences

Lie #2: Men and Women are Fundamentally the Same

Apart from some minor biological differences, feminism strongly suggested that males and females are fundamentally the same. Culture, it announced, was responsible for turning human blank slates into truck-wielding boys and doll-toting girls. This lie has been very effective at changing the culture. My husband Ray and I offer a seminar at Probe's *Mind Games* conferences called "Guys Are From Mars, Girls Are From Venus," where we go over the major differences between the sexes. Men, for instance, tend to be more goal-oriented and competitive, where women are more relational and cooperative. Men are active; women are verbal. This is intuitively obvious to the adults in our audience, but it is often new news to high school and college students. We find adults nodding with smiles of recognition, some of them nudging each other in the ribs. In the younger members of the audience, though, we see "the lights come on" in their eyes as they are exposed to something that is obvious and they probably already knew was true, but feminism's worldview had been feeding them a lie. They have been so immersed in this cultural myth that they had accepted it without question. One young man came up to me

after a session and said he totally disagreed with me, that there are no real differences between males and females. I asked him if he treated his guy friends the same way he treated his girl friends, and he said, "Of course!" I asked, "And this doesn't cause you any problems?" He said no. With a smile, I suggested he come talk to me in ten years after he'd had a chance to experience real life!

The truth is that God created significant differences between males and females. We can see evidence of this in the fact that Scripture gives different commands for husbands and wives, which are rooted in the differing needs and divinely-appointed roles of men and women.

Lie #3: Desirability is Enhanced by Achievement

The third lie of feminism is that the more a woman achieves, the more attractive and desirable she becomes to men. The importance of achievement to a man's sense of self—an element of masculinity that is, we believe, God-given—was projected onto women. Feminism declared that achieving something, making a mark in the world, was the only measure of success that merited the respect of others. Women who believed this myth found themselves competing with men. Now, competition is appropriate in the business and professional world, but it's disastrous in relationships.

Men do respect and admire accomplished women, just as they do men, but personal relationships operate under a different set of standards. Men most appreciate a woman's unique feminine attributes: love, sensitivity, her abilities to relate. Women have been shocked to discover that their hard-won accomplishments haven't resulted in great relationships with men. Sometimes, being overeducated hampers a woman's ability to relate to men. Men's egos are notoriously fragile, and they are by nature competitive. It's threatening to many men when a

woman achieves more, or accomplishes more, or knows more than they do. Feminism didn't warn women of the double standard in relationships: that achievement can and does reap benefits in our careers, but be a stumbling block in our relationships.

The question naturally arises, then, Is it bad for a woman to have a higher degree of education than the man in a relationship? Is it troublesome when a woman is smarter than the man? Should a woman "dumb down" in order to get or keep her man? In the words of the apostle Paul, "May it never be!" A woman living up to the potential of her God-given gifts brings glory to God; it would be an insult to our gracious God to pretend those gifts aren't there. The answer is for women to understand that many men feel threatened and insecure about this area of potential competition, and maintain an attitude of humility and sensitivity about one's strengths; as Romans exhorts us, "Honor[ing] one another above yourselves" (12:10).

Not surprisingly, God already knew about the disparity between the sexes on the issue of achievement. Throughout the Bible, men are called to trust God as they achieve whatever God has called them to do. It's important for men to experience personal significance by making a mark on the world. But God calls women to trust Him in a different area: in our relationships. A woman's value is usually not in providing history-changing leadership and making great, bold moves, but in loving and supporting those around us, changing the world by touching hearts. Once in a while, a woman does make her mark on a national or global scale: consider the biblical judge Deborah, Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher, and Indira Gandhi. But women like these are the exception, not the rule. And we don't have to feel guilty for not being "exceptional."

Lie #4: The Myth of One's "Unrealized Potential"

Lie number four says that all of us—but especially women—have

tremendous potential that simply *must* be realized. To feminism's way of thinking, just being average isn't acceptable: you must be *great*.

This causes two problems. First, women are deceived into thinking they are one of the elite, the few, the special. Reality, though, is that most women are ordinary, one of the many. All of us are uniquely gifted by God, but few women are given visible, high-profile leadership roles, which tend to be the only ones that feminism deems valuable. We run into trouble when we're operating under a set of beliefs that don't coincide with reality!

Consequently, many women are operating under unrealistically high expectations of themselves. When life doesn't deliver on their hopes, whether they be making class valedictorian, beauty pageant winner, company president, or neurosurgeon, women are set up for major disappointment. Just being a cog in the wheel of your own small world isn't enough.

This brings us to the second problem. A lot of women beat themselves up for not accomplishing greatness. Instead of investing their life's energies in doing well those things they *can* do, they grieve what and who they are *not*. Just being good, or being good at what they do, isn't enough if they're not the *best*.

Romans 12:3 tells us, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought." Rather than worrying about our unrealized potential for some sort of nebulous greatness, we ought to be concerned about being faithful and obedient in the things God has given us to do, trusting Him for the ultimate results. And we ought to not worry about being ordinary as if there were some stigma to it. Scripture says that God is pleased to use ordinary people, because that's how He gets the most glory. (See 1 Corinthians 1:26-31.) There is honor in being an ordinary person in the hand of an extraordinary God.

Lie #5: Sexual Sameness

The fifth lie of feminism is that men and women are the same sexually. This lie comes to us courtesy of the same evil source that brought us the lies of the sexual revolution.

The truth is that women can't separate sex from love as easily as men can. For women, sex needs to be an expression of love and commitment. Without these qualities, sex is demeaning, nothing more than hormones going crazy.

The cost of sex is far greater for women than for men. Sex outside of a committed, loving relationship—I'm talking about marriage here—often results in unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and profound heartbreak. Every time a woman gives her body away to a man, she gives a part of her heart as well. Sexual "freedom" has brought new degrees of heartache to millions of women. The lie of sexual equality has produced widespread promiscuity and epidemic disease. No wonder so many women are struggling with self-esteem!

God's commands concerning sex take into account the fact that men and women are not the same sexually or any other way. He tells us to exercise self-control before marriage, saving all sexual expression for the constraints of a marriage relationship, and then to keep the marriage bed pure once we are married. When we follow these guidelines, we discover that God's laws provide protection for women: the security of a committed relationship, freedom from sexual health worries, and a stable environment for any children produced in the union. This high standard also protects men by providing a safe channel for their sexual energies. Both chaste single men, and faithful husbands, are kept safe from sexual diseases, unwanted pregnancies with women other than their wives, and the guilt of sexual sin.

Lie #6: The Denial of Maternity

Many women postponed marriage and childbearing to pursue their own personal development and career goals. This perspective denies the reality of a woman's reproductive system and the limitations of time. Childbearing is easier in a woman's 20s and 30s than in her 40s. Plus, there is a physical cost; science has borne out the liabilities that older women incur for themselves and their babies. Midlife women are more prone to have problems getting pregnant, staying pregnant, and then experiencing difficult deliveries. The risk of conceiving a child with Down's Syndrome is considerably higher in older mothers.^{3} Fertility treatment doesn't work as well for women over 40.^{4}

There is also a spiritual dimension to denying maternity. When women refuse their God-ordained roles and responsibilities, they open themselves to spiritual deception and temptations. 1 Timothy 2:15 is an intriguing verse: "But women will be saved through childbearing." One compelling translation for this verse is, "Women will be *kept safe* through childbearing," where Paul uses the word for *childbearing* as a sort of shorthand for the woman's involvement in the domestic sphere—having her "focus on the family," so to speak.⁽⁵⁾ When a married woman's priorities are marriage, family and the home, she is kept safe—protected—from the consequences of delaying motherhood and the temptations that beleaguer a woman trying to fill a man's role. For example, I know one married woman who chose to pursue a full-time career in commercial real estate, to the detriment of her family. She confessed that she found herself constantly battling the temptation to lust on two fronts: sexual lust for the men in her office and her clients, and lust for the recognition and material things that marked success in that field. Another friend chose her career over having any children at all, and discovered that like the men in her field, she could not separate her sense of self from her job, and it ultimately cost her her marriage and

her life as she knew it. The problem isn't having a career: the problem is when a woman gets her priorities out of balance.

Lie #7: To Be Feminine Is To Be Weak

In the attempt to blur gender distinctions, feminists declared war on the concept of gender-related characteristics. The qualities that marked feminine women—softness, sweetness, kindness, the ability to relate well—were judged as silly, stupid and weak. Only what characterized men—characteristics like firmness, aggressiveness, competitiveness—were deemed valuable.

But when women try to take on male qualities, the end result is a distortion that is neither feminine nor masculine. A woman is perceived as shrill, not spirited. What is expected and acceptable aggression in a man is perceived as unwelcome brashness in a woman. When women try to be tough, it is often taken as unpleasantness. Unfortunately, there really is a strong stereotype about “what women should be like” that merits being torn down. A lot of men are threatened by strong women with opinions and agendas of their own, and treat them with undeserved disrespect. But it is not true that traditionally masculine characteristics are the only ones that count.

There really is a double standard operating, because the characteristics that constitute masculinity and femininity are separate and different, and they are not interchangeable. To be feminine is a special kind of strength. It's a different, appealing kind of power that allows a woman to influence her world in a way quite distinct from the way a man influences the world. It pleased the Lord to create woman to complement man, not to compete with him or be a more rounded copy of him. 1 Corinthians 11:7 says that man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. Femininity isn't weakness; it's the glorious, splendid crown on humanity.

Lie #8: Doing is Better Than Being

In his book *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*[\[6\]](#), John Gray pointed out that men get their sense of self from achievement, and women get their sense of self from relationships. Feminism declared that the male orientation of *what you do* was the only one that mattered; *who you are*, and how important you are to the people in your world, didn't count for as much.

This lie said that active is good, passive is bad. Traditional feminine behaviors of being passive and receptive were denounced as demeaning to women and ineffective in the world. Only being the initiator counted, not being the responder. "To listen, to be there, to receive the other with an open heart and mind—this has always been one of the most vital roles of woman. Most women do this quite naturally, but many have come to feel uneasy in this role. Instead, they work frantically on assertiveness, aggression, personal expression, and power, madly suppressing their feminine instincts of love and relatedness."[\[7\]](#)

Women's roles in the family, the church, and the world are a combination of being a responder and an initiator. As a responder, a wife honors her husband through loving submission, and a woman serves the church through the exercise of her spiritual gifts. As an initiator and leader, a woman teaches her children and uses her abilities in the world, such as the woman of Proverbs 31. God's plan is for us to live a balanced life—sometimes active, sometimes passive; sometimes the initiator, sometimes the responder; at all times, submitting both who we are and what we do to the Lordship of Christ.

Lie #9: The Myth of Self-Sufficiency

The ninth lie is the myth of self-sufficiency. Remember the famous feminist slogan that appeared on everything from bumper

stickers to t-shirts to notepads? “A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle.” The message was clear: women don’t need men, who are inferior anyway. The world would be a better place if women ran it: no wars, no greed, no power plays, just glorious cooperation and peace.

The next step after “women don’t need men” was logical: women don’t need anybody. We can take care of ourselves. Helen Reddy’s hit song “I Am Woman” became feminism’s theme song, with the memorable chorus, “If I have to, I can do anything / I am strong / I am invincible / I am woman!”

Of course, if women don’t need anybody except themselves, they certainly don’t need God. Particularly a masculine, patriarchal God who makes rules they don’t like and insists that He alone is God. But the need to worship is deeply ingrained in us, so feminist thought gave rise to goddess worship. The goddess was just a female image to focus on; in actuality, goddess worship is worship of oneself.[\[8\]](#)

The lie of self-sufficiency is the same lie that Satan has been deceiving us with since the Garden of Eden: What do you need God for? We grieve the Lord’s heart when we believe this lie. Jeremiah 2:13 says, “My people have committed two sins: they have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.” God made us for Himself; believing the lie of self-sufficiency isn’t only futile, it’s a slap in God’s face.

Lie #10: Women Would Enjoy the Feminization of Men

The tenth lie of feminism is that women would enjoy the feminization of men. Feminists believed that the only way to achieve equality of the sexes was to do away with *role* distinctions. Then they decided that that wasn’t enough: society had to do away with *gender* distinctions, or at the very least blur the lines. Women embraced more masculine

values, and men were encouraged to embrace more feminine characteristics. That was supposed to fix the problem. It didn't.

As men tried to be "good guys" and accommodate feminists' demands, the culture saw a new type of man emerge: sensitive, nurturing, warmly compassionate, yielding. The only problem was that this "soft man" wasn't what women wanted. Women pushed men to be like women, and when they complied, nobody respected them. Women, it turns out, want to be the soft ones—and we want men to be strong and firm and courageous; we want a manly man. When men start taking on feminine characteristics, they're just wimpy and unmasculine, not pleasing themselves or the women who demanded the change. There is a good reason that books and movies with strong, masculine heroes continue to appeal to such a large audience. Both men and women respond to men who fulfill God's design for male leadership, protection, and strength.

Underlying the women's liberation movement is an angry, unsubmitive attitude that is fueled by the lies of deception. It's good to know what the lies are, but it's also important to know what God's word says, so we can combat the lies with the power of His truth.

Notes

1. Toni Grant, *Being a Woman: Fulfilling Your Femininity and Finding Love*. New York: Random House, 1988.

2. Ibid, 3.

3. March of Dimes, "Pregnancy After 35," www.marchofdimes.com/professionals/14332_1155.asp.

4. Jodi Panayotov, "IVF & Older Women – How Successful is IVF After 40?" ezinearticles.com/?IVF-and-Older-Women-How-Successful-is-IVF-After-40?&id=636335.

5. Andreas Kostenberger, "Saved Through Childbearing?" (*CBMW [The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood] News*, Sept. 1997), p. 3.

6. John Gray, *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

7. Grant, 9.

8. Mary Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1992), p. 159.

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